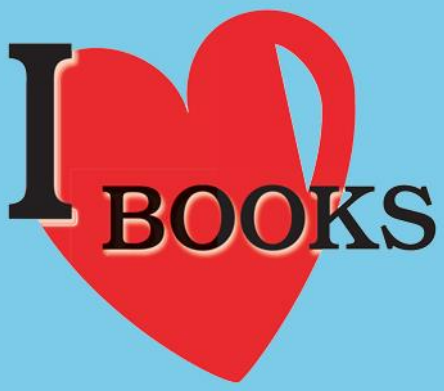



Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

extracts from

# World of Shakespeare Picture Book

Written by

**Rosie Dickins**

Illustrated by

**Galia Bernstein**

Published by

**Usborne Publishing Ltd**

**All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator**

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

# LONDON

*Would I were in an alehouse in London!*
A character in *Henry V*



TO SHAKESPEARE, London was the great city where he came to make his fortune as an actor and playwright. It was then a dirty, noisy, bustling place, home to around 200,000 people.



OLD ST PAUL'S, painted in 1616 by John Gipkin
This shows an open-air sermon beneath the tower.

## OLD ST PAUL'S

The tower of Old St Paul's Cathedral towered over the city (until it burned down and was replaced by a domed building, which still stands today). St Paul's churchyard was full of booksellers and printers. It was here that Shakespeare's poems were first printed and sold.



LONDON MAP, 1588

The playhouses changed their shows almost every day – meaning lots of work for an ambitious playwright and actor like Shakespeare.

## STREETS

London street names often told you what you could find there. You could buy bread in Bread Street, milk in Milk Street and honey in Honey Lane, or order new clothes from the tailors in Threadneedle Street.



## BEYOND THE LIMITS

There were strict controls on entertainments inside the city limits. So the playhouses clustered in seedy districts on the outskirts, alongside dog and bear-fighting pits, taverns, brothels and gambling dens.



## Old London Bridge

This was the only bridge across the river in the city. It was a broad, stone bridge, built over with shops and houses. The end was guarded by a gatehouse and locked at night. Above the gate, the heads of rebels and traitors were displayed on spikes, as a grisly warning to those passing underneath.





Frost Fair of 1683-84, painted in 1685
In very cold weather, if the Thames froze, there would be ice-skating and 'frost fairs' like this, when market stalls and entertainments were set up on the ice. In the distance, you can see the arches of Old London Bridge.





## The River Thames

The River Thames connects London to the sea. In Shakespeare's day, it was busy with boats: sailing ships laden with exotic cargoes, ferries carrying ordinary people around, and fancy barges for the rich and powerful – including a grand golden one for the Queen.

*The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne, Burned on the water.*

Shakespeare describes a royal barge in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

## Dirt and death

The city streets were awash with filth and human waste. In crowded, dirty conditions, disease was a constant threat. A disease known as the plague was especially deadly. Recurring outbreaks forced playhouses to close and killed Londoners by the thousand.




Plague Scene, woodcut from 1625
This old woodcut shows a skeleton dancing on the coffins of plague victims and pleads: 'Lord have mercy on London.'

The streets were so smelly, people carried bottles or balls of perfume to ward off the stink.



# The Globe

Shakespeare's own playhouse, the Globe, stood on the south bank of the River Thames in London. In its heyday, it was known as 'the glorie of the Banke'. Today a replica Globe stands on almost the same spot.

A flag was raised, and a trumpet blown, to announce the start of a play.

The Globe was a round, wooden building with an open-air stage in the middle. There was no lighting, so plays had to finish before dusk.

A penny bought you standing room in the yard. Two pence bought a seat in a gallery.

Playgoers would shout, whistle and even throw things if they didn't like something.

In hot weather, groundlings were also known as 'stinkards'.

The balcony was mostly used by musicians, but it was also used for balcony scenes.

The doors at the back of the stage led to the 'tiring house' where actors could change their costumes.

Nuts were a popular snack with playgoers and the floor of the yard crunched underfoot with discarded shells.



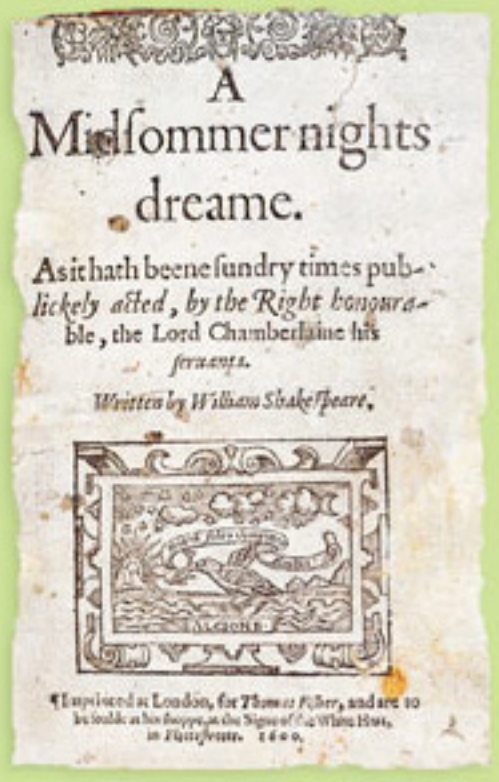
*This wooden O*
Shakespeare describes the playhouse in *Henry V.*

## Stolen timbers

The Globe was built in 1599 from the timbers of another playhouse. Shakespeare's company dismantled the old playhouse and rebuilt it on a new site after having problems with their landlord.

# COMEDIES

SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES are among his most popular plays. Full of sparkling romance and knockabout jokes, they still thrill audiences today.


A
Midſommer nights
dreame.

As it hath beene ſundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his ſeruants.

Written by William Shake-ſpeare.

¶ Imprinted at London, for Thomas Fisher, and are to be ſolde at his ſhoppe, at the Signe of the White Hinde, in Fleetſtreet. 1600.

An early printed edition of one of Shakespeare's most famous comedies

## MAGIC AND MAYHEM

Most of the comedies focus on young lovers overcoming hardships, from family arguments and jealous rivals to shipwrecks and separation – with a lot of comic confusion and witty wordplay along the way.


A mischievous fairy, Puck, causes magical mayhem.

PUCK, drawn in 1908 by Arthur Rackham

*Lord, what fools these mortals be!*


Puck laughs at human lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

## HAPPY ENDINGS

Although these plays are comedies, they aren't funny all of the time. Difficult things do happen and not everyone gets what they want. But the characters don't suffer for long and there is always a happy ending – usually with the main characters getting married.

*The rain it raineth every day.*

*Twelfth Night*


Melancholy songs often help to balance the comedy.


Argumentative lovers Beatrice and Benedick embrace at the end of a 1993 film of *Much Ado About Nothing.*

### SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

Two Gentlemen of Verona
The Comedy of Errors
Love's Labour's Lost
A Midsummer Night's Dream
The Merry Wives of Windsor
Much Ado About Nothing
As You Like It
Twelfth Night

## LIGHT AND DARK

Not all of Shakespeare's comedies are as light-hearted as the ones described here, or follow the same pattern. Some, often known as 'problem plays', have a darker side (see page 18). Others, written later in Shakespeare's life, are more like magical adventure stories (see page 26).



## Twelfth Night

This tangled story has a lovesick duke wooing a reclusive lady. But the lady prefers the duke's serving boy – while the 'boy' (a girl in disguise) pines for the duke. More confusion is caused by mischievous servants and a lost twin. But it all finishes happily, with a triple wedding.

*If music be the food of love, play on...*

In the opening lines of *Twelfth Night*, the duke calls for music while he talks about love.



Stephen Fry plays Malvolio, one of the servants, on stage in 2012. Malvolio has been tricked into thinking the lady loves *him*, and puts on yellow stockings to impress her.



TITANIA AND BOTTOM, a 19th-century painting by John Fitzgerald
In *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* magic makes the fairy queen, Titania, fall madly in love with an actor named Bottom – who has magically been given a donkey's head.

## A Midsummer Night's Dream

In this enchanting play, fairy magic makes two pairs of runaway lovers fall in and out of love with each other. Meanwhile, a group of amateur actors rehearses an amusingly awful play. It ends with the lovers reunited, their weddings blessed by their families and the fairies.



A small fairy waits upon her queen.

*What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?*

When Bottom brays like a donkey, Titania thinks he sounds like an angel.

## As You Like It

When her wicked uncle usurps the throne, Rosalind runs away to the forest, disguised as a boy, to look for her exiled father. There, quarrels are made up, families are brought back together, and Rosalind finds true love.

*Under the greenwood tree*
*Who loves to lie with me...*
*Here shall he see*
*No enemy*
*But winter and rough weather.*

Song from *As You Like It*



ROSALIND IN THE FOREST, painted about 1868
by John Everett Millais