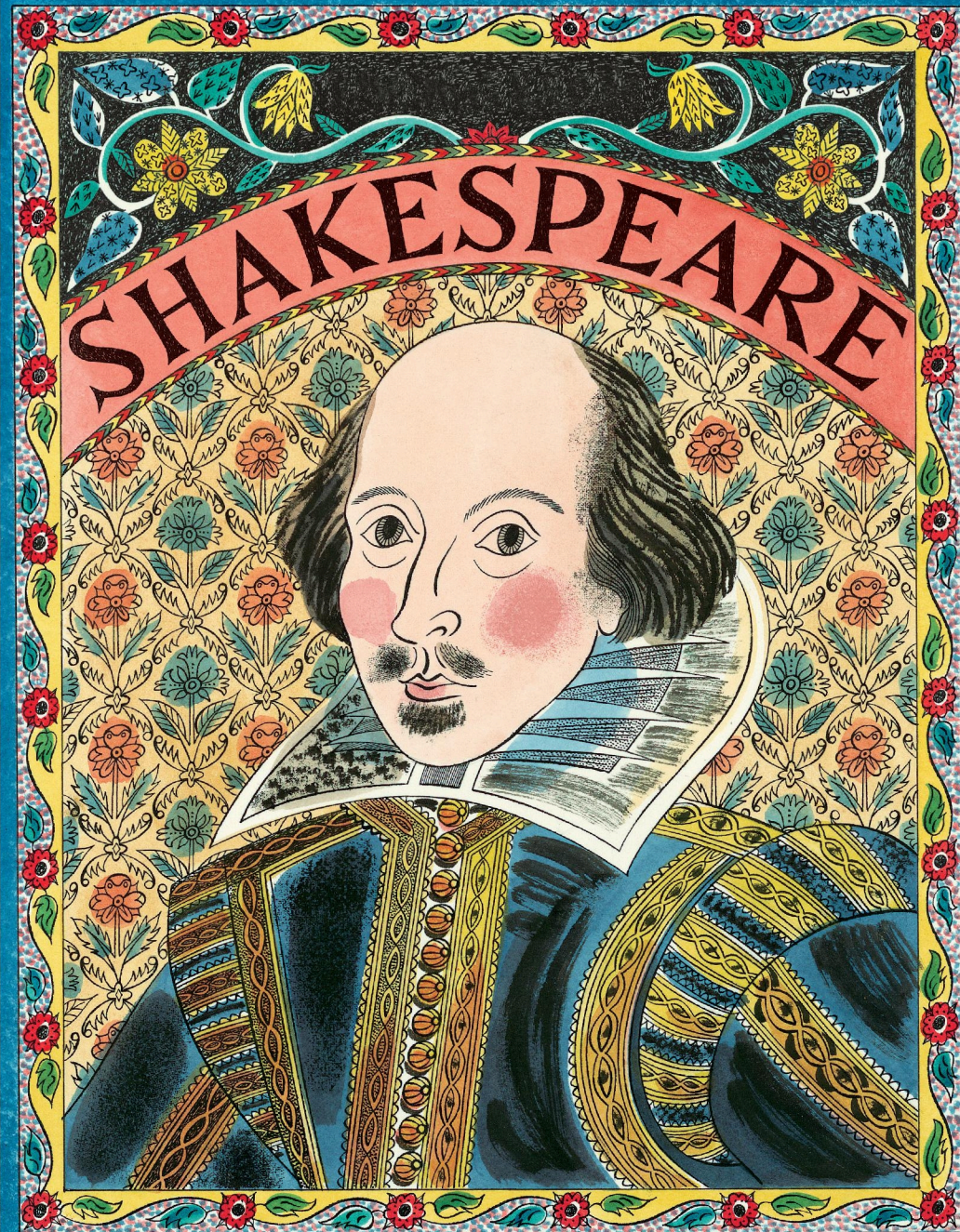


To the Reader

To read or not to read this book?
It's in your hands, so take a look.
The plays by gentle Shakespeare here
With pictures through each play appear
For you and friends to laugh, to cry,
To sink in thought, to wonder why.
For you will find on every page
The lives of us in every age;
And though the *Folio's* a fact,
Our aim's to give you plays to act.

Michael Rosen





[To Speed] To the forest, sirrah! [Enter Outlaws]

OUTLAW ONE: [Draws his sword on Valentine]
Stand, sir, and throw us that you have about ye!

SPEED: Sir, we are undone! These are the villains
That all the travellers do fear so much.

VALENTINE: My friends –

OUTLAW ONE: That's not so, sir – we are your enemies!
Whence came you?

VALENTINE: From Milan.

OUTLAW ONE: What, were you banished thence?

VALENTINE: I was.

OUTLAW TWO: For what offence?

VALENTINE: I killed a man!

OUTLAW ONE: [To Outlaw Two] By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat friar,
This fellow were a king for our wild faction!

SPEED: [To Valentine] Master, be one of them. It's an honourable kind of
thievery.

OUTLAW TWO: [To Valentine] Are you content to be our general?
To make a virtue of necessity
And live, as we do, in this wilderness?

VALENTINE: I take your offer and will live with you. [All cheering]

OUTLAW ONE: Come, go with us! [Exit all. Enter Proteus]

PROTEUS: Now Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy,
To be corrupted with my worthless gifts. [Enter Silvia who refuses to talk
to Proteus. Enter Julia disguised as a boy. She sees Proteus trying to woo Silvia]

JULIA: [To the audience] Doth this Sir Proteus that I do love
Often resort unto this gentlewoman? [She hides and watches]

SILVIA: Thou subtle, perjured, false, disloyal man!

PROTEUS: Vouchsafe me yet your picture for my love.

SILVIA: I am very loath to be your idol, sir.
Send to me in the morning and I'll send it.
[Exit Silvia. Julia emerges. Proteus does not recognise her in disguise]

PROTEUS: Now boy, what is thy name?

JULIA: Sebastian.

PROTEUS: I like thee well.
Go presently and take this ring with thee,
Deliver it to Madam Silvia. [Giving her the ring that Julia gave to him in
Verona. Pointing to a window]
That's her chamber. Tell my lady
I claim the promise for her heavenly picture.
Your message done, hie home unto my chamber. [Exit Proteus]

JULIA: [To the audience] How many women would do such a message?
This ring I gave him when he parted from me! [Enter Silvia]
[To Silvia] Lady Silvia, I am sent on
From my master, Sir Proteus, madam.

SILVIA: Go give your master this [Handing Julia a picture] tell him from
me,
One Julia, that his changing thoughts forget,
Would better fit his chamber than this shadow.

JULIA: Madam, he sends your ladyship this ring.
[Offering her the ring which Silvia refuses to take]

SILVIA: The more shame for him that he sends it me! [Exit Silvia]



THE CAST

OBERON

King of the fairies

TITANIA

Queen of the fairies

PUCK

servant of Oberon

HELENA

young woman
in love with Demetrius

HERMIA

young woman
in love with Lysander

DEMETRIUS

young man
in love with Hermia

LYSANDER

young man
in love with Hermia

BOTTOM

weaver,
amateur actor

PETER QUINCE

craftsman,
amateur playwright

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

[Enter Puck running towards audience]

PUCK: The King doth keep his revels here tonight.

Take heed the Queen come not within his sight,
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy stolen from an Indian king.
She never had so sweet a changeling,
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild.
But she withholds the lovely boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.
But room, fairy! Here comes Oberon.

[He hides. Enter Oberon and Titania from different directions]

OBERON: Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA: What, jealous Oberon?

We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[She stalks off to the other side of the stage and goes to sleep on the ground]

OBERON: Go thy way! I shall torment thee for this injury.

My gentle Puck, come hither. *[Puck comes forward]*

Fetch me a flower –

The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.

PUCK: I'll put a girdle round about the earth

In forty minutes. *[Exit Puck]*

OBERON: Having once this juice,

I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.