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Will Shakespeare Mysteries

The STINKY Stolen Toenails

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Illustrated by Sammy Elgie

ANDERSEN PRESS

Chapter 1

✱ Introduction to me, a GENIUS ✱ A little bit about my best friend, TYBALT, and my family ✱ London and heads on sticks ✱ Why Stratford-upon-Avon is very boring ✱ Some of TYBALT'S poetry, for which I apologise.

The name's Shakespeare.

Will Shakespeare.

Or possibly, Will Shaksper. Or Will Shackspeare – I've not decided yet. My teacher, MASTER HOBSON, says that no one, especially not teachers, will ever really care how English is spelled.

Or spelt.

(Master Hobson says that the most **important** subject we learn in school is Latin, the language spoken by the ANCIENT ROMANS. Personally, I don't see why it's so important. After all, it's not as if we can talk to the ANCIENT ROMANS: they are all EXTREMELY DEAD. However, when I asked Master Hobson why we still had to learn Latin, he answered me in Latin, which didn't really help.)

But HOWEVER my name is written, I bet you've heard of me.

You must have done.

Because . . .

I am the **GREATEST**

PERSON-WHO-SOLVES-CRIMES

in the **WORLD**!

(I feel like there should be a word for a person who solves crimes. Maybe I will make one up.)

Or, at least, I WILL be the greatest **PERSON-WHO-SOLVES-CRIMES**: I actually just solved my first **crime** yesterday!

My **BEST** friend, TYBALT, helped a bit, and he's

decided to write a poem about what we did. But I think **EVERYONE** will want to know about my crime-solving genius, and the best way to make that happen is for me to write a PROPER STORY about it.

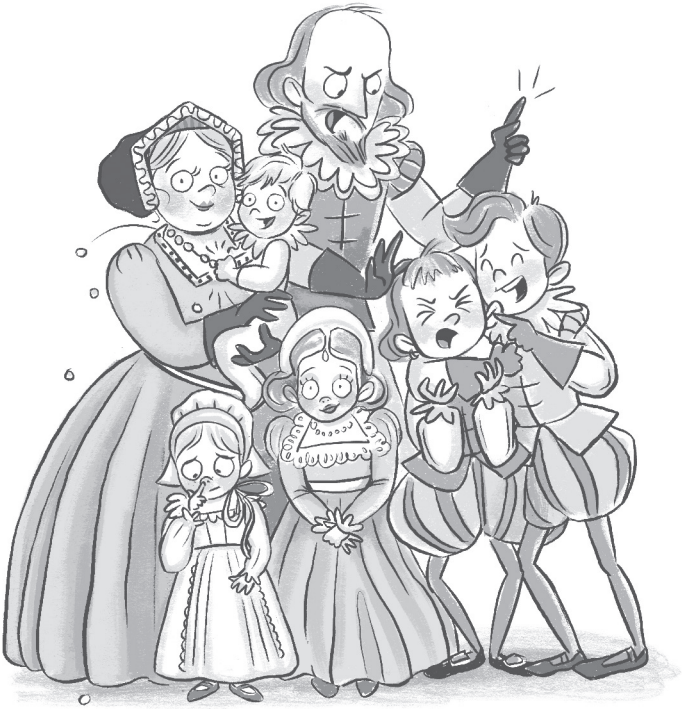
Luckily, I'm almost as good at WRITING STORIES as I am at solving crimes!

Now, there are two big challenges I have to face in my quest to become the GREATEST PERSON-WHO-SOLVES-CRIMES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

NOTE TO SELF: IS THERE A BETTER WORD FOR THIS??

First, my family. I love them a lot, but they are **EXTREMELY DULL.**

This is my family: me, my mum, my dad, my brother Gilbert, my sisters Joan and Anne and my other brother Richard (who is currently a **baby** and



therefore, extra dull). If I was making this up, I would give my parents exciting jobs. My dad would be an **ACTOR**, or maybe a PIRATE if we lived anywhere near the sea. My mum would be a spy working for the queen. Unfortunately, in reality:

- **my dad makes gloves, and**

- **my mum looks after him, us and the house, which is obviously a very important job, but not exciting.**

Gilbert, Joan and Anne are too young to have jobs yet, so they get to spend all their time being **silly** and/or ANNOYING. Gilbert is SUPER ANNOYING because he is **taller** and **stronger** than me, even though he is two years younger, and he somehow manages to be good at every sport he tries, and therefore thinks he is

MASTER PERFECT PANTS.

(I have seen his pants, and believe me, they are the **OPPOSITE** of **PERFECT**. They are, in fact, **GRIM**.)

The second challenge is my home. I live in a town called **Stratford-upon-Avon,** which is probably the most boring town in the whole of England, or maybe even **THE WORLD**.

Honestly, NOTHING ever happens here.

It's not like **London**, where my cousins live. **London** is the capital city, and the **queen** mostly stays there in a big palace stuffed with **GOLD AND JEWELS.** She has her own magician and her own executioner and the keys to a prison called the **Tower of London**. She probably keeps the keys in her **knickers** for safety.

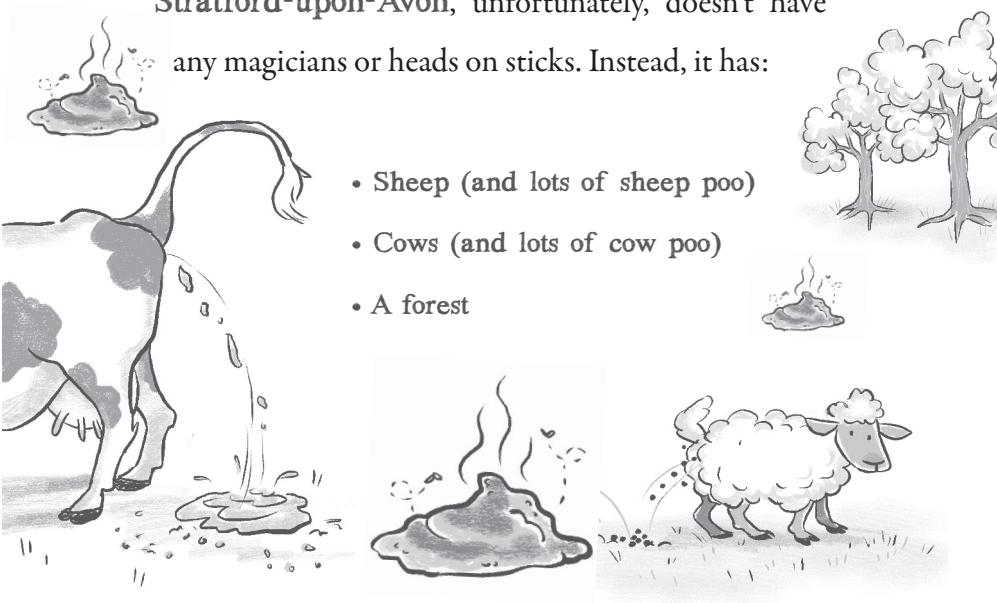
Royal Tudor undies

(Maybe that is why she looks **cross** in her portraits, because it can't be very comfortable sitting on a big set of iron door keys all the time.)

People who irritate the queen get **LOCKED UP** in the Tower, then they usually get their heads (or other body parts) **chopped off**. Then the heads (or other body parts) get **STUCK ON STICKS** and put on the top of London Bridge. A bit like party decorations, but more green and runny and with **more maggots**.

Stratford-upon-Avon, unfortunately, doesn't have any magicians or heads on sticks. Instead, it has:

- Sheep (and lots of sheep poo)
- Cows (and lots of cow poo)
- A forest



My dad is on the town council. They have made a poster to encourage people to visit **Stratford-upon-Avon**, but I don't think it is going to help.

DO YOU LOVE FIELDS*?

Then you will love Stratford-upon-Avon! We have lots!

*Fields may also contain sheep/cow/horse poo and adders.

The Stratford-upon-Avon Guild of Merchants and Aldermen are not responsible for any poo or snakebite related injuries.

My mum says **fairies** and **elves** live in the forest, which does sound a little bit exciting, but I have not had time yet to check if this is true. TYBALT says I am too scared to check, but that is **RUBBISH**, I am just **extremely busy.**

Also, there is no point in listening to TYBALT. He is great in lots of ways, and is a genius when it comes to Latin (Master Hobson **LOVES** him), but he has no imagination. He cannot imagine all the horrible things a fairy might do if it catches you, e.g. turn you into a **donkey** or a **carrot**, or a thing that is half-donkey, half-carrot and that spends all its time trying to eat itself.

TYBALT'S house is across the road from mine on Henley Street. He is lucky because his dad was born in Morocco and has travelled to lots of different countries and is a **goldsmith**, so he is definitely more

interesting than my dad. However, TYBALT has recently started only wearing black and writing lots of bad **poems**, so I do worry that he is coming down with the plague or something.

Anyway, back to the plan, which is for me to become the greatest **PERSON-WHO-SOLVES-CRIMES IN THE WORLD**. As I said, I have been worried that Stratford-upon-Avon is **too boring** for any completely baffling, yet also exciting, crimes to be committed there.

VERY
very
rare

But I was **WRONG**. So, what happened was—

Oh – TYBALT wants me to show you the beginning of his poem about my brilliant crime-solving work.

Awesome poem by me Tybalt

This is what he's written so far:

This is the tragic story of Ronaldo and Judy
Their families fell out because their
grandads were rude-y
Ron wants to marry Judy,
but her dad just says no
Hey nonny nonny nonny, eeny, meeny, miny, mo.

I'm not sure about this. It does rhyme, but that last line doesn't make much sense. Also, why has he not mentioned the almost-fatal **SLEEPING POTION** and the **MISSING BODY PARTS**?

Still, he is letting me borrow his stack of spare paper to write this down – my own version of what happened. There will be blud, or possibly blood! And **SCARY THINGS** with **TEETH**!! And an escape from probably almost **CERTAIN DEATH**!!!

This is going to be the title:

THE TRUE AND BELIEVABLE ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST CRIME SOLVED BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, THE GREATEST PERSON-WHO-SOLVES-CRIMES IN THE WORLD, ASSISTED BY TYBALT, HIS FRIEND.

Turn the page, dear reader, if you dare . . .