

Intro to Theatre and Shakespeare

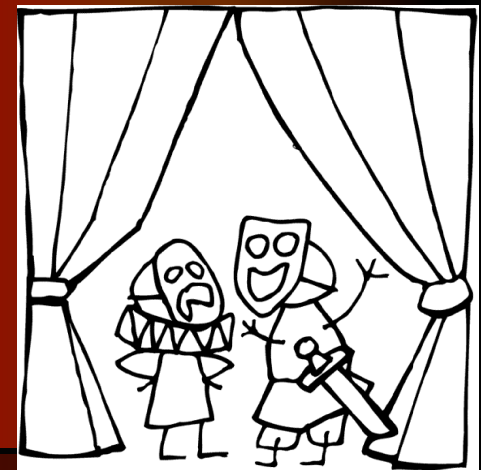


The history of

THEATRE!

What is drama?

- Take a moment to brainstorm what you know about theatre and drama.
- *How did drama and theatre begin?*
- *What do you need to put on a play?*
- *Who do you need to put on a play?*



So what is it?

- Drama is a play written in prose or verse that tells a story through dialogue and actions. It is enacted onstage for a live audience.



“Theatre is two boards and a passion....”

- Yes, but what else do you need?

A good story!

- Setting – where and when the play takes place
- Characters – person appearing in a play
- Plot – the events in a play or story
- Conflict – struggle between characters that advances the plot
- Climax – turning point in the story's action
- Resolution – ending; “tying up loose ends”

So how did theatre begin?

- Storytelling!
- With no television, movies, or often even a written language – most cultures depended on stories to entertain, instruct, and even explain the unknown.
- **Passing on tradition and culture**
 - Examples
 - Narrative, storytelling
 - Folktales
 - Religious ritual and ceremony

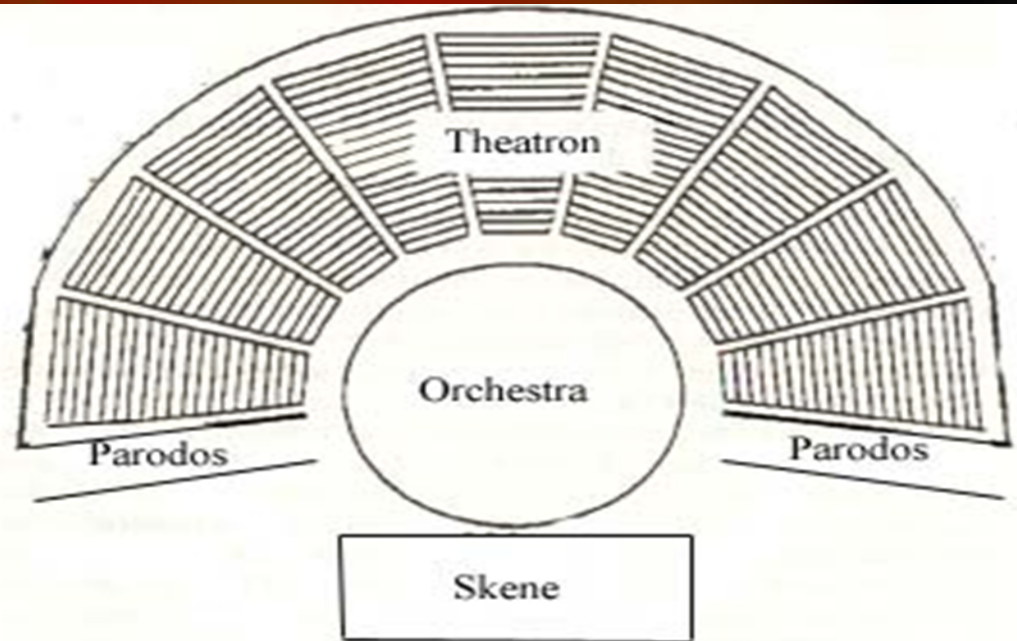


Greek Theatre



- Dionysus, god of wine and celebration, was honored at the dramatic festivals.
- Business and activities were suspended during the week-long festivals held three times per year.

- Festivals were competitions, with a three-tragedy cycle and a satyr play
- No sets, few props, no microphones
- Actors' lines marked the passage of time and the setting.



Parts of a Greek Theater

Greek Theatre

- Because Greek tragedy and comedy originated with the chorus, the most important part of the performance space was the *orchestra*, which means 'a place for dancing' (*orchesis*).
- A tragic chorus consisted of 12 or 15 dancers (*choreuts*), who may have been young men just about to enter military service after some years of training.
- Athenians were taught to sing and dance from a very early age. The effort of dancing and singing through **three tragedies and a satyr play** was likened to that of competing in the Olympic Games.

The Greek Chorus



- Plays were initially held with just the chorus singing/chanting the lines.
- In 534 BCE Thespis was credited with creating the first actor (thespians). The character spoke lines as a god.
- This begins the concept of DIALOGUE – the character interacts with chorus

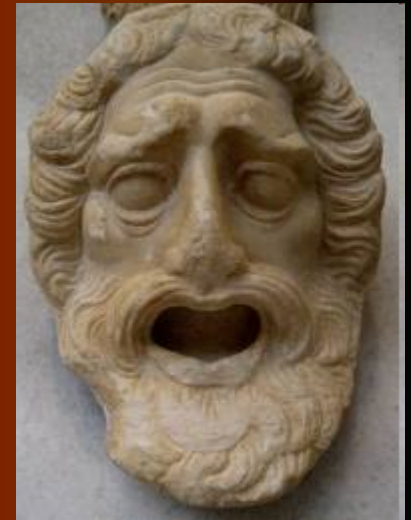
The Origin of Actors

- Aeschylus – earliest Greek tragedy writer brought idea of second actor.
- Sophocles – brought third actor – no more than three actors on stage ever in a Greek tragedy.
- Euripides – also used three actors after Sophocles.
- Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides each wrote a version of the Oedipus tragedy, but Sophocles' version is the most famous.

Greek Masks – why?



Ancient Greek Drama Mask



From Chorus to Actors

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BD8rmXwG9ZQ>
- Chorus – all MONOLOGUE originally (one person/voice talking to the audience)
- The legend goes that Thespis was the first person to step out of the Chorus and have a DIALOGUE (conversation between 2 or more characters) onstage!
- Thespis is the basis for our word “thespian”, or actor.

Tragedy

- A drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw.
- Tragedies pit human limitations against the larger forces of destiny.





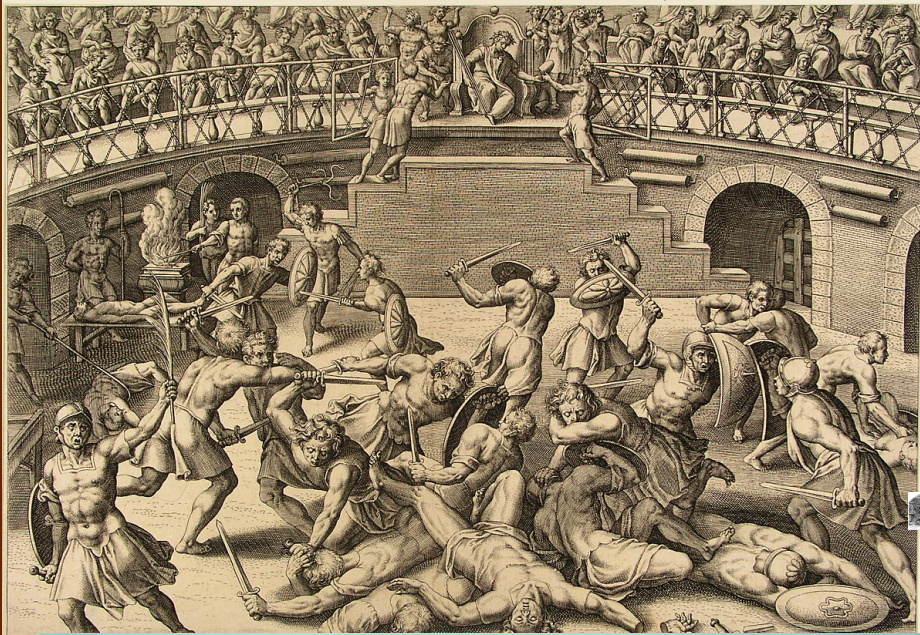
Comedy



- A **comedy** is a play that ends happily. The plot usually centers on a romantic conflict.
- Comic complications always occur before the conflict is resolved.
- In most cases, the play ends with a wedding.



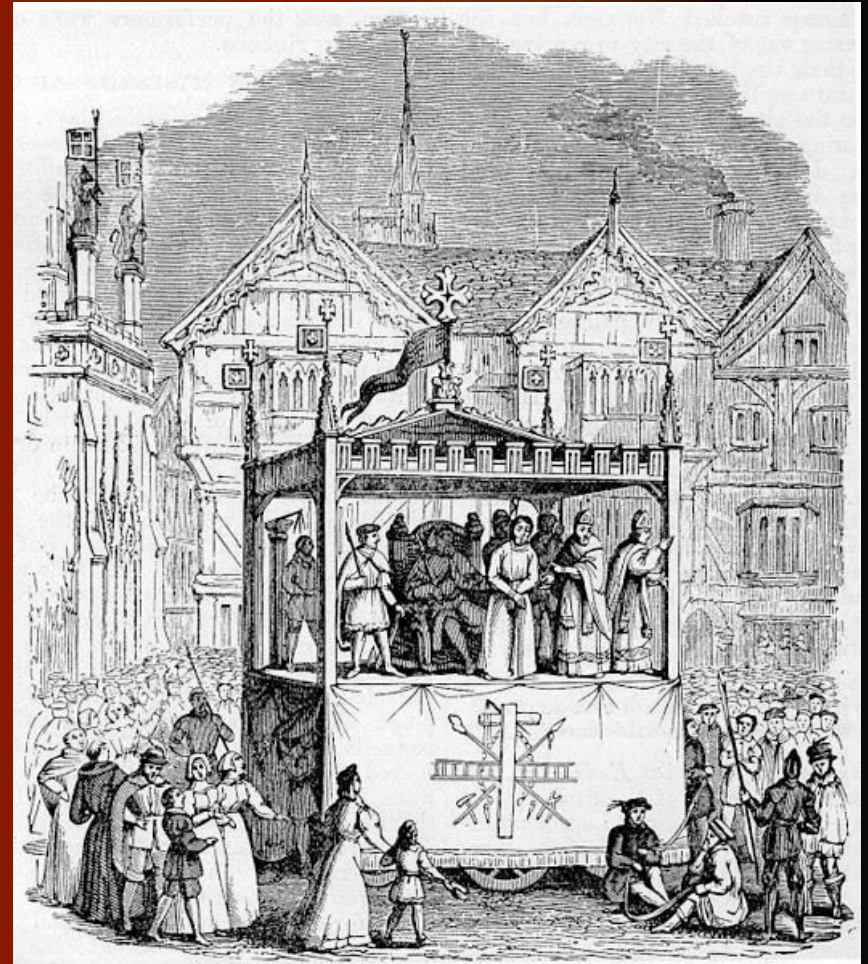
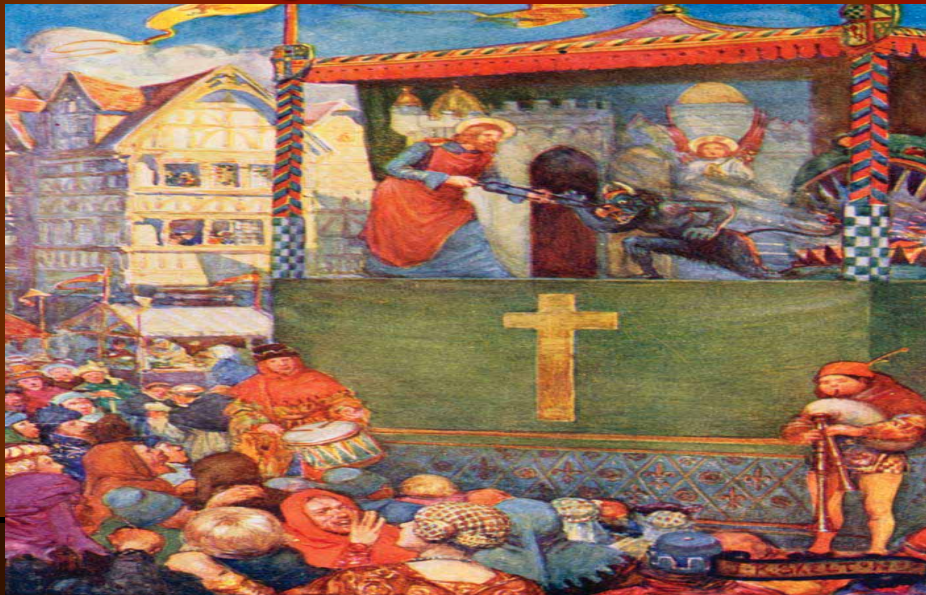
Romans



- Loved “SPECTACLE” – big circus-like performances with gladiators, animals, and lots of violence.
- Basically borrowed ideas from the Greeks- especially low comedy
- Christianity began at this time – and disapproved of the Roman idea of entertainment

Drama in the Middle Ages

- The Roman Empire fell and the Christian Church outlawed theatres
- People protested – so eventually the Church began using drama to act out stories from the Bible
- Since most people couldn't read, this was how they learned about their religion



Mystery plays and miracle plays!

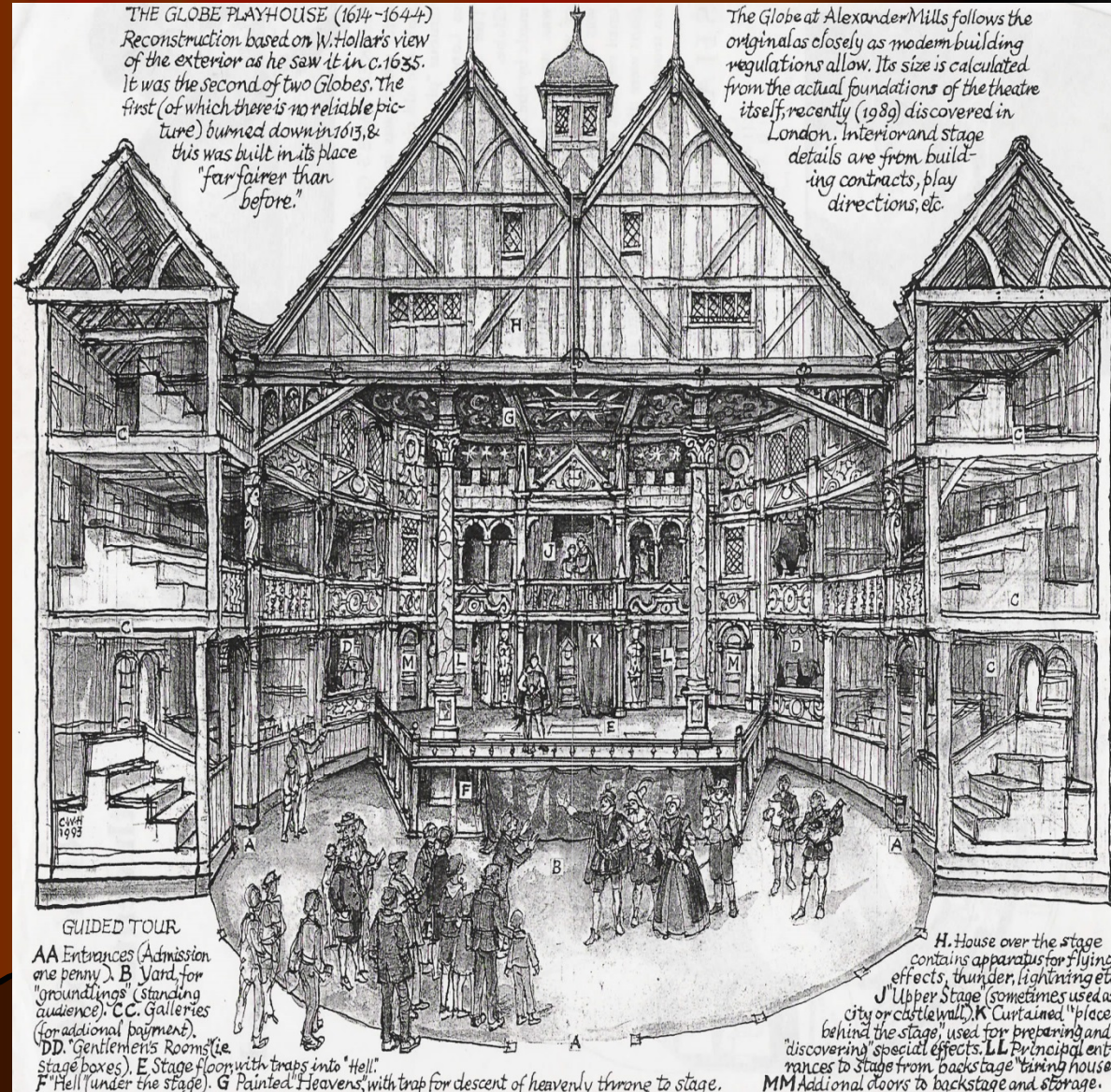
Renaissance Theatre

- Rebirth of the arts in Europe
- Troupes of performers traveled around to entertain people
- Members of the troupe wrote and performed in their own plays, usually with a religious or moral theme (otherwise they could get in trouble!)

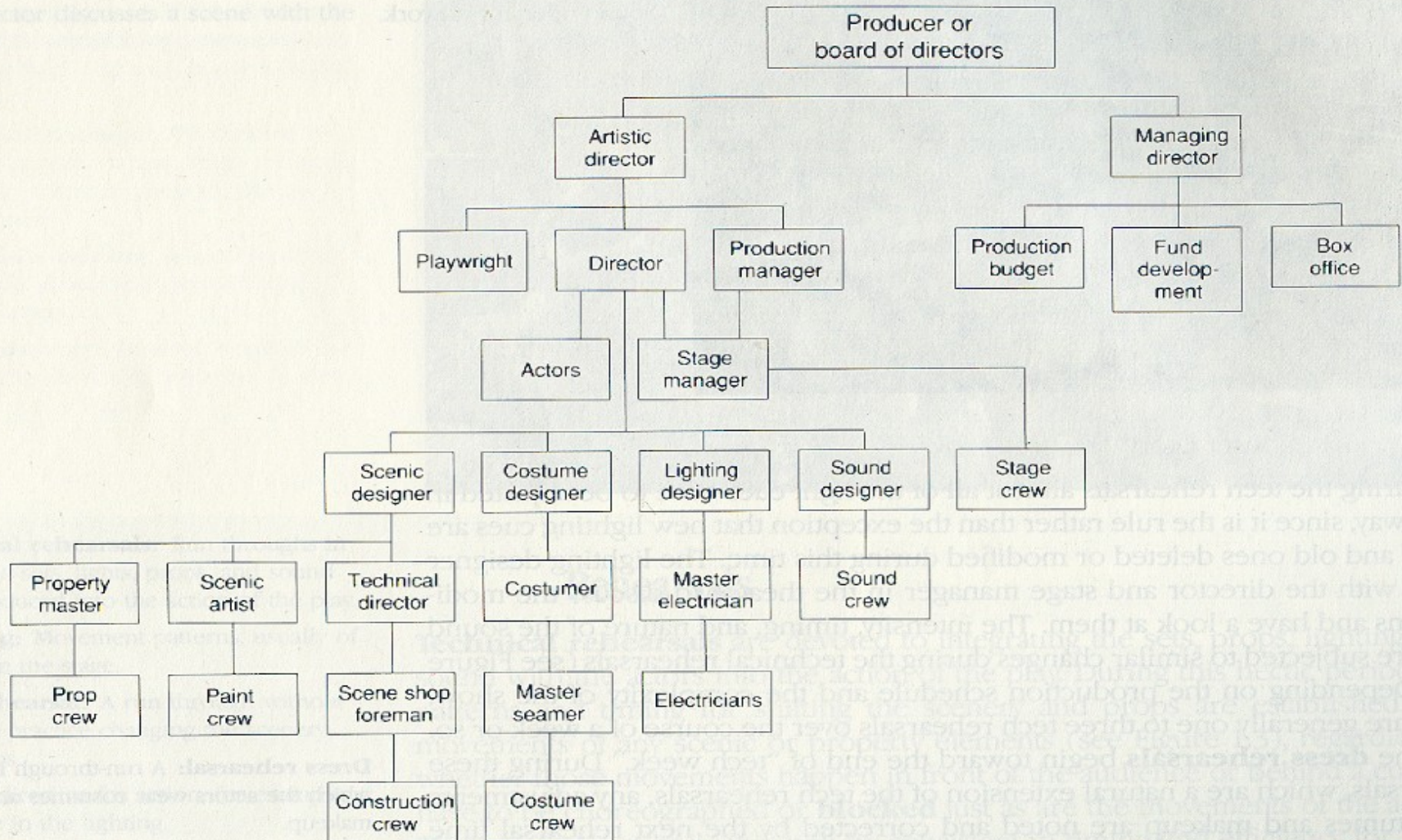


Shakespearean Theatre

- Troupes began to be more settled, and built theatres of their own
- Actors and playwrights still considered "low" but drama is a major form of entertainment
- Theatres and acting troupes under constant threat of being closed down



Who do you need?



Theatrical vocabulary

- **Dialogue:** conversations of characters onstage
- **Monologue:** long speech given by one character to others
- **Motivation** -A character's reason for doing or saying things (the "why")
- **Objective** – what a character wants
- **Blocking**-The planning and working out of the movements of actors on stage.
- **Prompt book**- a copy of the script of a play, containing cues and notes, used by the actor, prompter, stage manager, etc.
- **Stage directions** -Playwright describes setting, as well as characters' actions and manner.
- **Upstage, downstage, stage left, stage right**

Dramatic terms you need to know!

- **Aside** –a character speaking to the audience or another character in dialogue that is 'not heard' by other characters onstage.
- **Soliloquy**-one character who is alone onstage speaking aloud to his/herself (or to the audience).
- **Foil**-a character in a story who contrasts with another character, usually to highlight personality traits
- **Comic relief**- inclusion of a humorous character, scene, or witty dialogue in an otherwise serious work, often to relieve tension.

Ready for some Shakespeare?



Essential Questions

- **Who is William Shakespeare and why is his work still relevant today?**
- **What is the historical context of the Renaissance and why is it important in studying Shakespeare?**
- **What is the importance of honor? How have our definitions of honor changed?**
- **How can incorrect perceptions cloud our judgment?**
- **How can love be difficult? What problems impede love's success?**
- **How have the roles/expectations of women changed from the Middle Ages to today?**

Shakespeare – the man, the myth, the legend!



- *What we know about Shakespeare comes from church documents and legal records.*
 - *Some documents that we have are baptismal registration, marriage license, and records of real estate transactions*

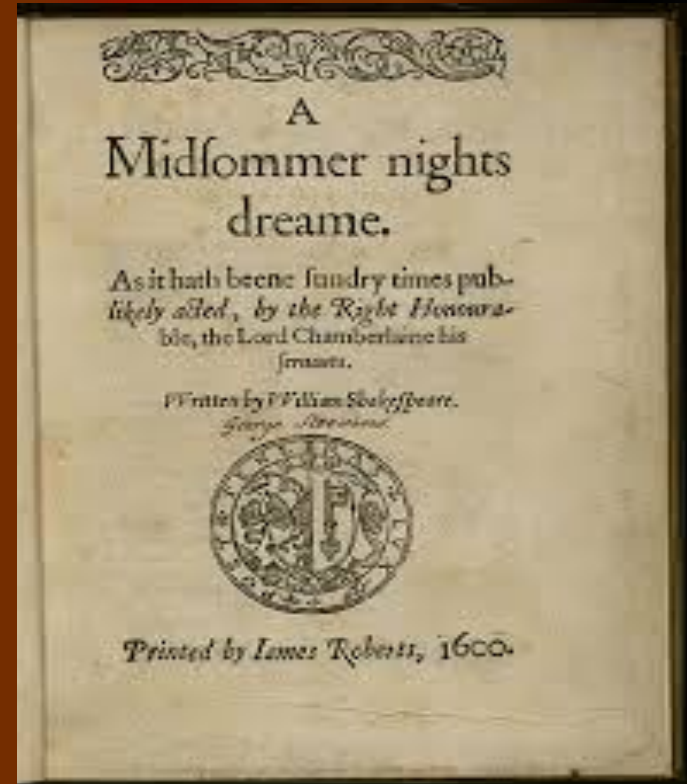
Early life

- Born April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon
- Parents John and Mary Shakespeare
- Seven brothers and sisters
- Grammar School from 7 to 13
- 1582 at age 18 married Anne Hathaway
- 1583-1592 ???
- Had twins in 1585 (Judith and Hamnet)
- 1592 (28 years old) went to London to become an actor and playwright
- 1592-1594 Plague



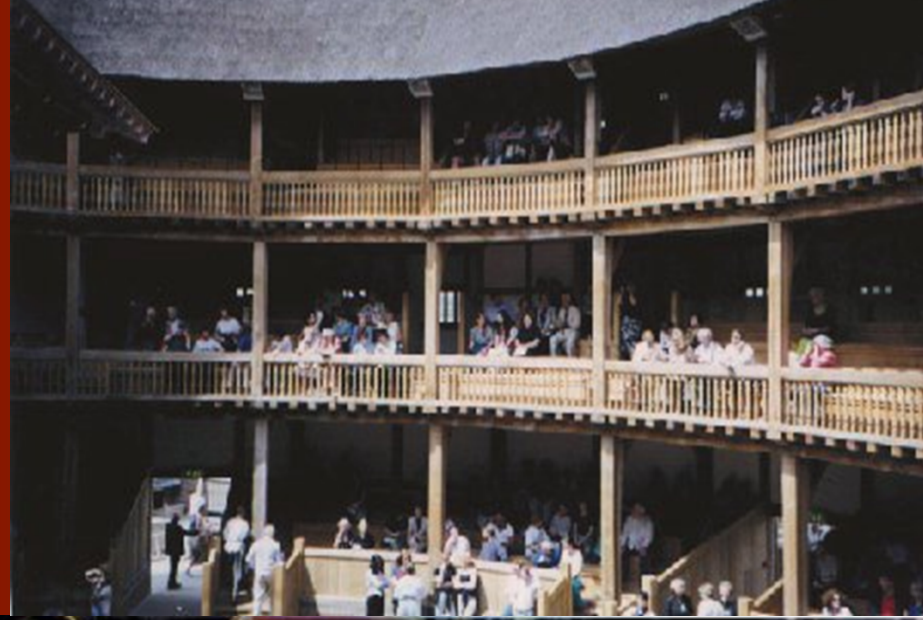
Shakespeare's Works

- 38 plays firmly attributed to Shakespeare
 - 14 comedies
 - 10 histories
 - 10 tragedies
 - 4 romances
- Possibly wrote three others
- Collaborated on several others
- 154 Sonnets
- Numerous other poems



The Globe Theatre

- Member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men theatre troupe (no women allowed onstage)
- 1598 built Globe Theatre and owned shares in it
- Father granted a coat-of-arms; considered "gentlemen"
- Queen Elizabeth dies in 1603 and King James I takes the throne
- Theatre company becomes the King's Men



- **1610 retired from theatre**
 - **1613 Globe theatre burns down**
 - **lost much money but still wealthy**
 - **helps rebuild Globe theatre**
- **Shakespeare died April 23, 1616 (52 years later on his birthday)**
- **He is buried under the old stone floor of Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.**



The following is carved on his tombstone:

***"Good friend, for Jesus sake
forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here.
Blessed be the man that spares
these stones
And cursed be he that moves my
bones"***

THINGS WE SAY TODAY, WHICH WE OWE TO SHAKESPEARE:

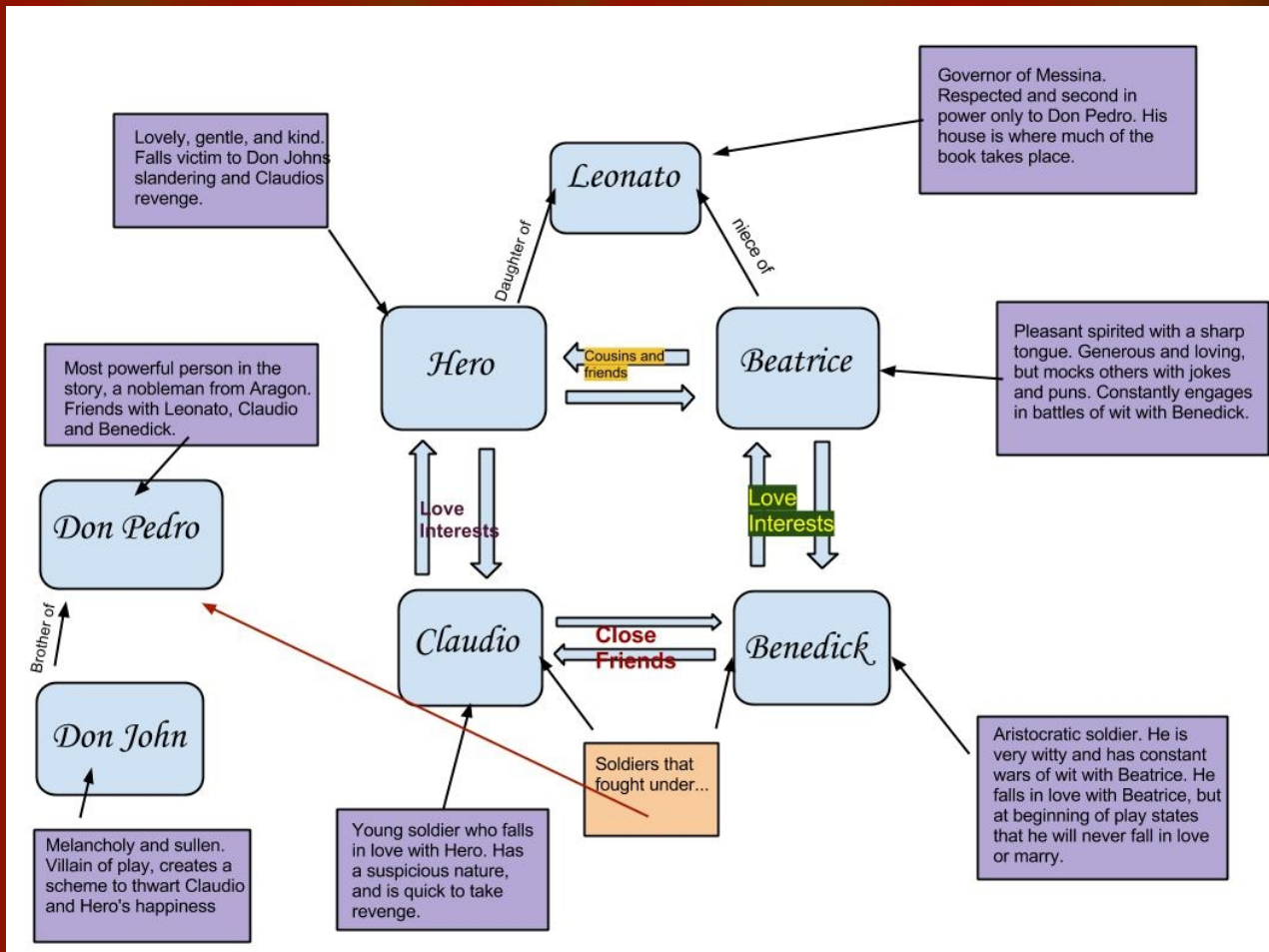
"KNOCK, KNOCK! WHO'S THERE?"
"IN A PICKLE" "SET YOUR TEETH ON EDGE" "HEART OF GOLD"
"FAINT HEARTED" "SO-SO" "GOOD RIDDANCE"
"LIE LOW" "FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE" "BAITED BREATH" "SEND HIM PACKING"
"COME WHAT MAY"
"THE GAME IS UP"
"WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE"
"NOT SLEPT ONE WINK" "FULL CIRCLE" "OUT OF THE JAWS OF DEATH"
"WHAT'S DONE IS DONE" "NAKED TRUTH" "TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING"
"BREAK THE ICE"
"LAUGHING STOCK" "BREATHED HIS LAST" "WILD GOOSE CHASE"
"HEART OF HEARTS" "VANISH INTO THIN AIR"
"SEEN BETTER DAYS" "MAKES YOUR HAIR STAND ON END"
"DEAD AS A DOORNAIL" "FOR GOODNESS' SAKE" "LOVE IS BLIND"
"GREEN EYED MONSTER" "FAIR / FOUL PLAY / PLAY" "OFF WITH HIS HEAD"
"THE WORLD IS MY OYSTER" "BRAVE NEW WORLD"
"BE ALL / END ALL" "A SORRY SIGHT"

Much Ado about Nothing

- Based on the name, what do you think this play is about?
- Anticipation Quiz
- Flocabulary!
- Who are you in "Much Ado?"



Character Activity



What do the names mean?

- **Beatrice** – blessed (English)
- **Benedick** - blessed (Latin)
- **Hero** – reference to tragic heroine in Marlowe's story, "Hero and Leander"
- **Claudio** – lame (Latin)
- **Leonato**- lion (Latin)
- **Borachio**- drunkard (Spanish)
- **Balthazar**- protector of the king (Greek)
- **Don John**- reference to King John, known for treachery
- **Don Pedro** – stone (Spanish)
- **Margaret** – pearl (Latin)

Roles of women

- “The Good and the Badde: Descriptions of the Worthies and Unworthies of the Age, 1616”

Courtship and marriage customs

- “A Very Fruitfull and Pleasant Booke called Instruction of a Christian Woman” – 1523
- Rules of Courtly Love

Much Ado about Vocabulary!

- **Cuckold** – a man who has been betrayed by his wife. If your wife **cuckolds** you, she is cheating on you with a different man.
- **Gull-** (*no, not the bird!*) to take advantage of one who is foolish or unwary; to deceive
- **Malcontent-** someone who is dissatisfied and rebellious; a troublemaker

Nothing vs. noting

- Another motif occurring is the play on the words nothing and noting, which, in Shakespeare's day, were pronounced as homophones.
- Taken literally, the title implies that a great fuss ("much ado") is made of something which is insignificant ("nothing"), such as the unfounded claims of Hero's infidelity.
- However, the title could also be understood as "Much Ado about Noting." Indeed, much of the action of the play revolves around interest in and critique of others, written messages, spying, and eavesdropping.
- Additionally, nothing is a double-entendre, as it was commonly used in Elizabethan times as a bawdy euphemism for females.



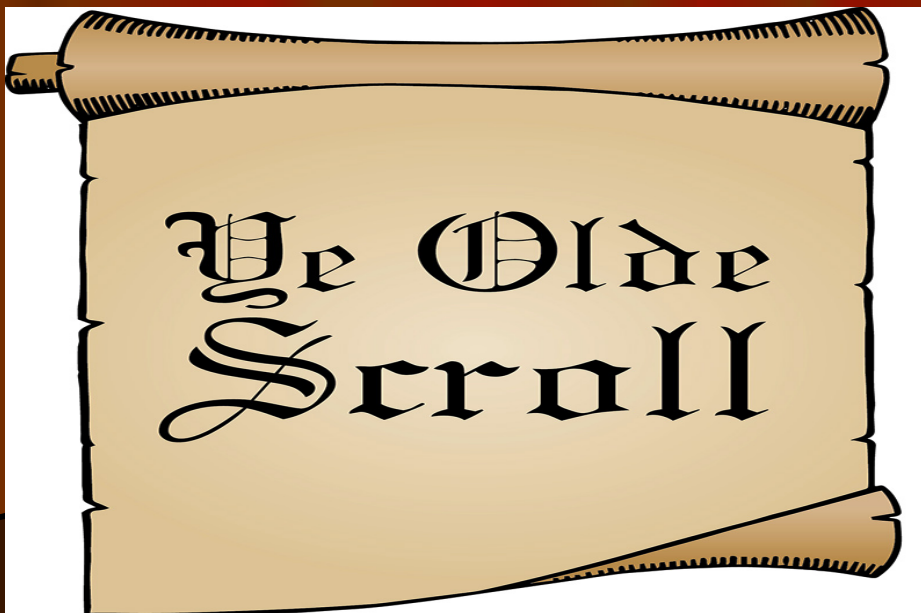
Much Ado about Language!

- Shakespearean Insults
- Malapropism-the misuse of similar sounding words, with comic effect (aka Dogberryisms!)
- “Our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons...”

Modern English?



- Shakespeare did NOT write in “Old English.”
- Old English is the language of *Beowulf*:
Hwaet! We Gardena in geardagum
Ʒeodcyninga Ʒrym gefrunon
Hu ưa æƷelingas ellen fremedon!



• Shakespeare did not write in “Middle English.”

• Middle English is the language of Chaucer, the *Gawain*-poet, and Malory:

*We redeth oft and findeth y-
write—
And this clerkes wele it wite
—
Layes that ben in harping
Ben y-founde of ferli
thing... (Sir Orfeo)*

Shakespeare: Prose vs. Verse

- "My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too
late!
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathed enemy."

-Romeo and Juliet

What did you notice?

- Rhyming
- 10 syllables in each line
- Accented , Unaccented
 - da-DA da-DA da-DA da-DA da-DA
- This means this is....

Verse!

- A verse has...
 - a fixed rhyme scheme
 - each line has an internal rhythm with a regular rhythmic pattern.
 - The pattern most favored by Shakespeare is iambic pentameter: 10 syllables, accented/unaccented.

Prose vs. Poetry

SAMPSON: Let us take the law of our sides;
let them begin.

GREGORY: I will frown as I pass by, and
let them take it as they list.

SAMPSON: Nay, as they dare. I will bite
my thumb at them; which is a disgrace to
them, if they bear it.

- *Romeo and Juliet*

What did you notice?

- It's a normal conversation
- No Rhythm
- No Rhyme
- This mean it's

Prose!

- Prose is a form of common speech that has no rhythm or meter in the line. Often comic, it was used by people in Shakespearean dramas because it was the everyday language of the audience at the time.

What does this say of the prose speaker's status?

- When a character in a play speaks in prose, they are usually a lower class member of society.

Much Ado about Nothing



ACT I

- Why is it important that the men are returning from war?
- What do Benedick and Beatrice think of each other?
- Why do they both say they want nothing to do with love?
- How does Don John see himself? Why is he a malcontent?



ACT II



- Why does Beatrice want nothing to do with men?
- How does Leonato instruct Hero, and what does this tell us about women in this era?
- Do Benedick and Beatrice know each other behind the masks?
- Why is Don Pedro unmasked? What do the masks symbolize?
- What is Don Pedro's plan? Does it work and why or why not?
- How are Don Pedro and Don John's plans opposite? Are they foils for each other?
- How does Benedick rationalize himself into loving Beatrice?

ACT III

- Why does Hero say she will not tell Beatrice about Benedick's love?
- How do the women describe Beatrice's behavior? Is it fair?
- What is Beatrice's reaction to the speech?
- Why do the men make fun of Benedick?
- What is Don John's plan?
- How do Dogberry and the Watch get involved?





ACT IV

- How does Claudio judge Hero's behavior?
- How does each character react?
- What is the friar's plan?
- What happens between Benedick and Beatrice?
- How does the confusion in Dogberry's speech add to the theme of appearances vs. reality?
- Is this act comedy or tragedy? Why?



ACT V

- Why does Leonato reconsider?
Does he think Hero is guilty?
- What is Claudio's attitude? What does this show about his character?
- What physical and emotional masks are removed in this act?
- How can you love according to "reason"? How do Beatrice and Benedick feel?



Final Analysis

- Is this play a tragedy or comedy? Why?
- What character do you identify with?
- Compare and contrast the main characters – are they foils for each other? Why or why not?
- How are honor and faithfulness portrayed in the play? Is it different for men and women?

Essential Questions Revisited!

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