

## Shakespeare

Shakespeare, Glove Maker

### Ben Crystal

This is Stratford-upon-Avon, a town that gets millions of visitors every year, thousands per day, and they all come for one reason ...

William Shakespeare.

I'm Ben Crystal, an actor and stage producer of Shakespeare's plays. I'm here to find out why this small town in the centre of England produced one of the country's best-ever playwrights, and why people are still visiting Stratford-upon-Avon 400 years after Shakespeare's death.

#### Actor and actress:

*When shall we three meet again  
In thunder, lightning or in rain?  
When the hurly burly's done,  
When the battle's lost and won.*

**Jana Kukla:** *I just love Shakespeare, always have, as a little kid too.*

**Yichun Chao:** *Romeo and Juliet – it was a love story and it was very romantic.*

**Rose Hackl:** *He has the ability to show into the heart, into the soul of the human beings.*

**Rand and Geraldine:** *They are kind of cross-cultural, you know. Everyone ... and everywhere you go, people put on Shakespearian shows. There is a timelessness to it.*

I'm starting my journey at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon, where in 1564 Shakespeare was baptised, and then, 52 years later, buried.

The words you can see in black and white are actually written on his grave. They're a curse warning us never to move his bones.

This statue was created soon after Shakespeare's death. We think he looked very similar to this when he was alive.

The next part of my journey takes me to Shakespeare's family home.

**Lisa:** *This is the house where Shakespeare was born in April 1564, just upstairs in one of the bedrooms.*

**Ben:** *They seem to be in a big, nice house. They seem to be doing well. What did his father do?*

**Lisa:** *Shakespeare's father was actually a glove maker. And he did not only live in this house, he also worked in here.*

**Ben:** *He worked here?*

**Lisa:** *Yes, so it's not just a family home, it's also his workplace.*

*His father was a craftsman, and William Shakespeare probably helped his father in the glove workshop, so he would have learned the trade of a glove maker himself. And he also managed to get quite a lot of references into his plays about gloves and leather making.*

**Ben:** *Romeo and Juliet – 'Oh that I were a glove upon that hand'.*

We're pretty sure Shakespeare came to school here – at King Edward's, just around the corner from the family home. William was able to attend this school for free because his father was a town councillor.

**Dr Jonathan Milton:** *What do you think of that?*

**Ben:** *Oh my goodness!*

**Ben:** *What type of education would he have received here?*

**JM:** *They would have taught you how to write here, how to read, but as you got later up into the school, then the teaching was all about Latin and Greek, translating Latin and Greek into English, and writing speeches, writing stories.*

**Ben:** *Would you say that the education he received here shows in his plays, in his poetry?*

**JM:** *Absolutely, undoubtedly. The plays are full of all those classical references, and all those great stories from Latin and Greek classical literature.*

Most successful playwrights of the time went to university, but Shakespeare didn't. He left King Edward's at 15, around the same time his father began to have financial difficulties.

**Ben:** *Did it harm Shakespeare's career as a playwright that he didn't go to university?*

**JM:** *Well, we think perhaps the opposite. At university you were taught how to write plays, so his style when he came into writing plays was completely new. The text had that lovely lyrical style; it's beautiful poetry. And all the stories that he'd learnt here at the school were put into his plays. He certainly broke through this whole formal way of making plays, and suddenly a new way of looking at theatre is opened up for everybody to come and see.*