

The background of the image is a deep red, textured surface resembling a stage curtain with vertical folds and subtle lighting variations.

INTRODUCTION *to* SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

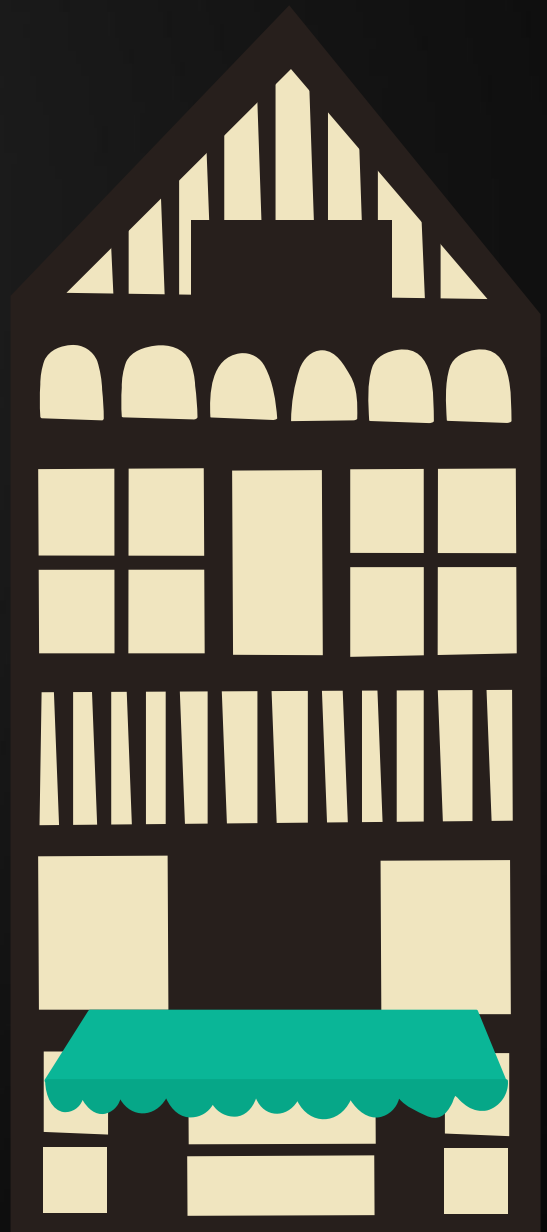
(1564 – 1616) was a playwright, poet and actor. He is highly regarded as one of the best writers who ever lived, and is called the "Bard of Avon" (sometimes just "the Bard"). He wrote at least 39 plays and 154 sonnets. His plays are performed more often than those of any other playwright.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

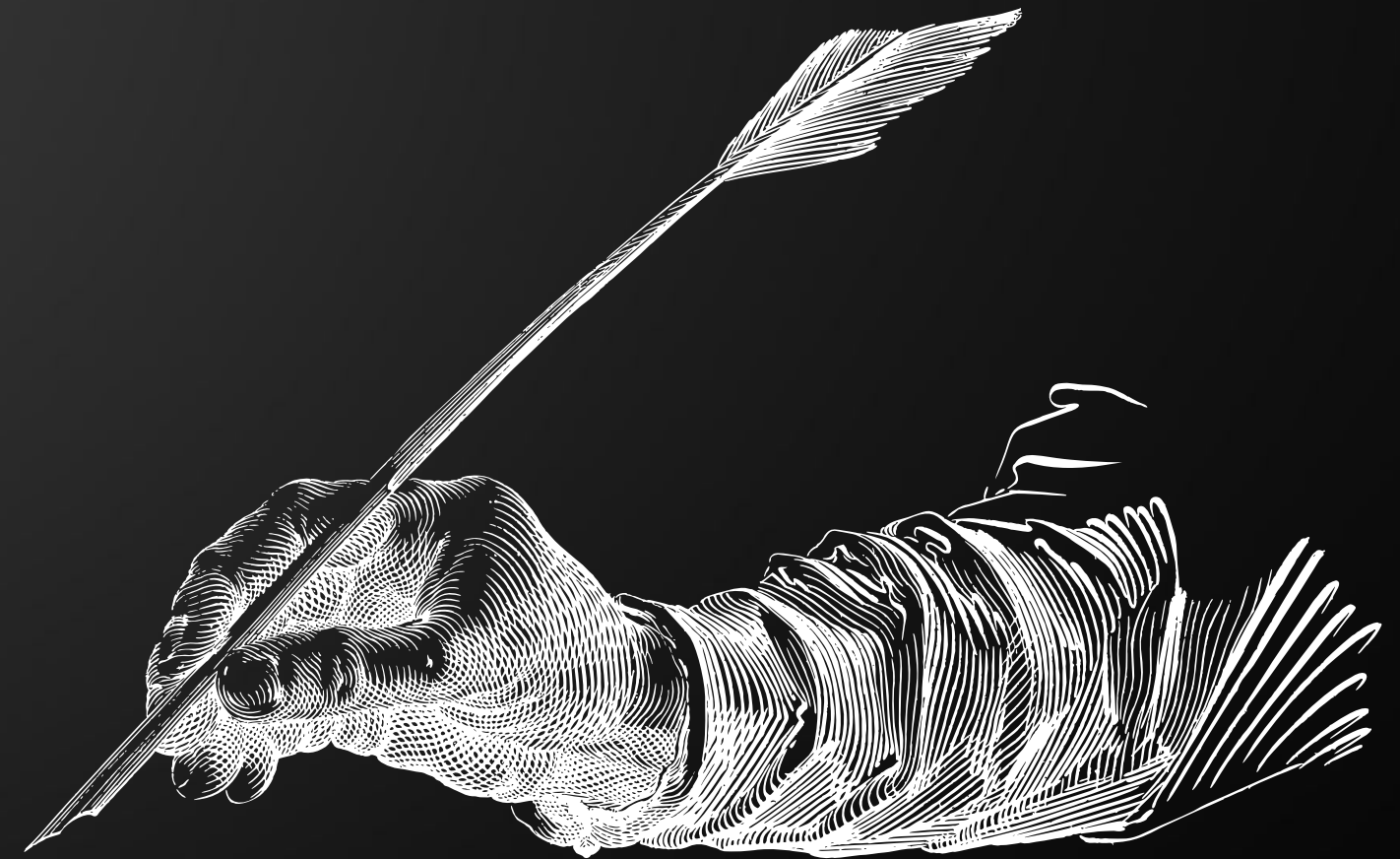
Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway when he was 18 years old. They had three children, Susanna, Judith, and Hamnet. Judith and Hamnet were twins.

For a number of years, Shakespeare lived and worked in London -- which makes sense because he was an actor and playwright -- and Anne and the children lived in Stratford.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

There is a lot of mystery surrounding Shakespeare's personal life. In fact, he basically disappeared from all historical records for about 7 years. We don't really know where he worked or what he did during that time. Some of his writing has also been lost.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's work has endured. His plays have been translated into almost every modern language, and his writing style and inventiveness has been incredibly influential to the English language.

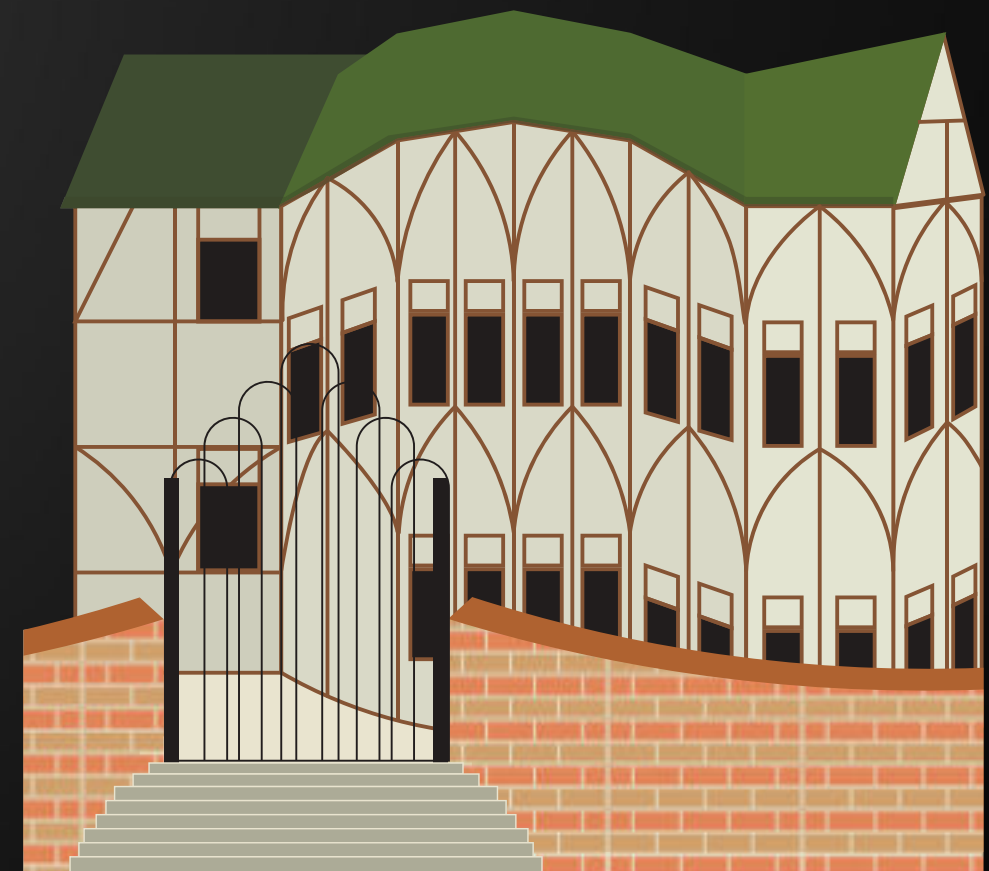
No other writer has shaped our speech the way Shakespeare has.



THE GLOBE THEATRE

Shakespeare's acting company, The Lord Chamberlain's Men, built the Globe Theatre in London in 1599. The theatre could hold 3,000 people, and Shakespeare's plays were performed there.

The theater had 20 sides, giving it a somewhat circular shape. The rectangular stage, 5 feet high, projected halfway into the yard and the circular galleries.



THE THEATER EXPERIENCE

Visiting a theater and watching a play in Elizabethan times was very different from today. Theatergoers were not expected to be quiet. Elizabethan theatre was more like a concert or a festival. It was a shared experience and could be rowdy and boisterous, depending on what was being performed.



THE THEATER EXPERIENCE

The audience would eat, drink, and talk throughout the performance. Theaters were open air and used natural light. Most plays were performed in the afternoon.

In Shakespeare's time, **women were not permitted to be actors.** The female roles were usually played by young boys.

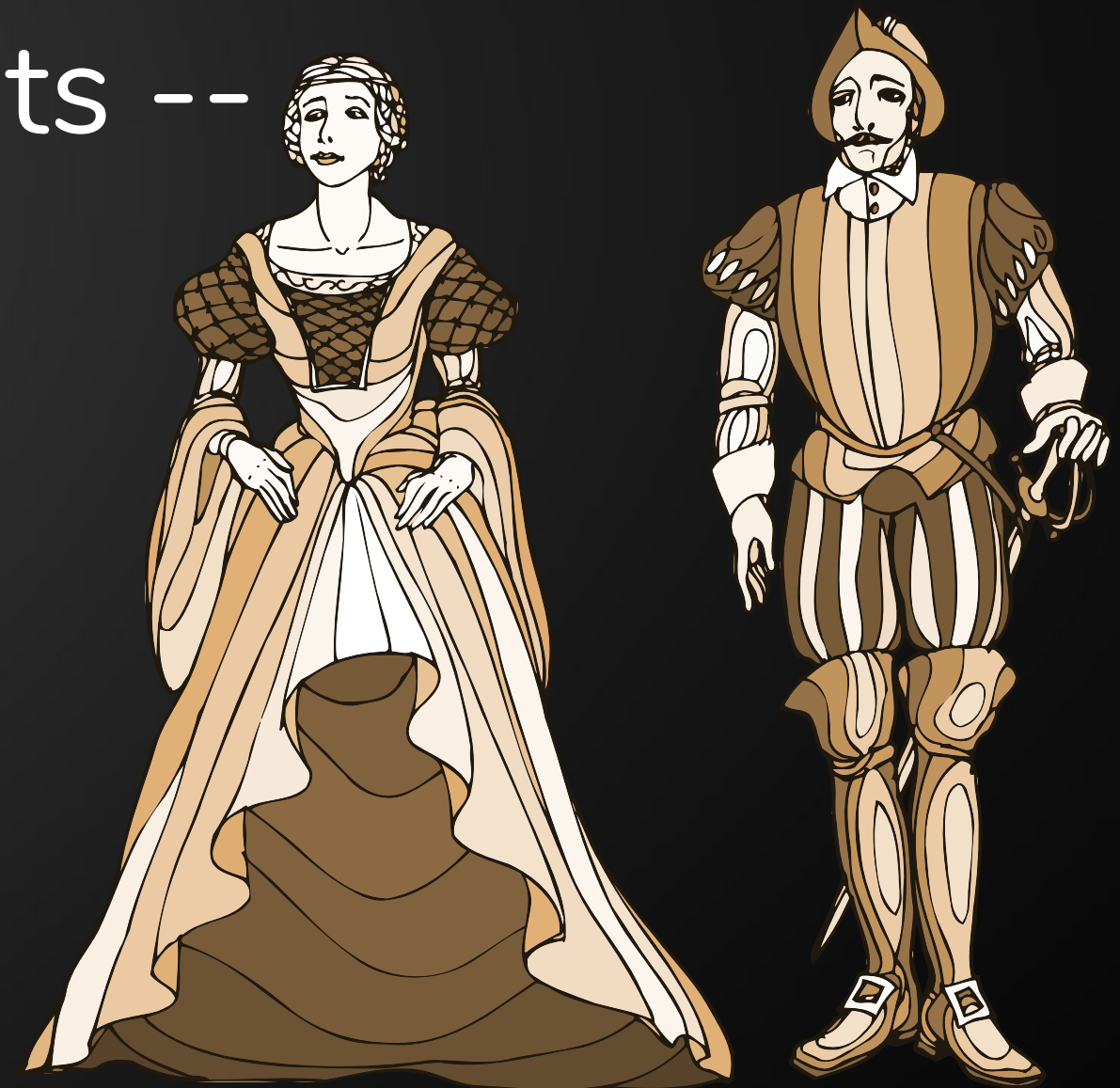


SHAKESPEARE'S AUDIENCES

Who attended the the theatre in Shakespeare's time?

Pretty much anyone who wanted to. Wealthy people sat in the galleries, wearing their finest clothing.

But working class people -- even servants -- also went to see plays.



SHAKESPEARE'S AUDIENCES

The cheapest admission was a penny, which got you standing room only in the yard around the stage. People in that section were called "groundlings." For another penny, you could sit on a bench in the lower galleries which surrounded the yard. For a penny more, you could even sit on a cushion. In Elizabethan times, a loaf of bread only cost about two pennies. The cheap admission contributed to the popularity of the theatre.

SHAKESPEARE'S AUDIENCES

The most expensive seats would have been in the "Lord's Rooms," which were under a roof and called "the heavens." Admission to the indoor theaters started at 6 pence.

In Shakespeare's day, as people entered the theatre or climbed the steps to their seats, they put their admission pennies in a box. This is the origin of the term, "box office," where we buy tickets today.



SHAKESPEARE'S AUDIENCES

The groundlings could buy food and drink and stood on ground that was probably covered with sand or ash.

There were no bathrooms. There was no roof. If it rained, they got wet!

The higher class patrons looked down on the groundlings, but all classes of people attended and enjoyed the theatre.



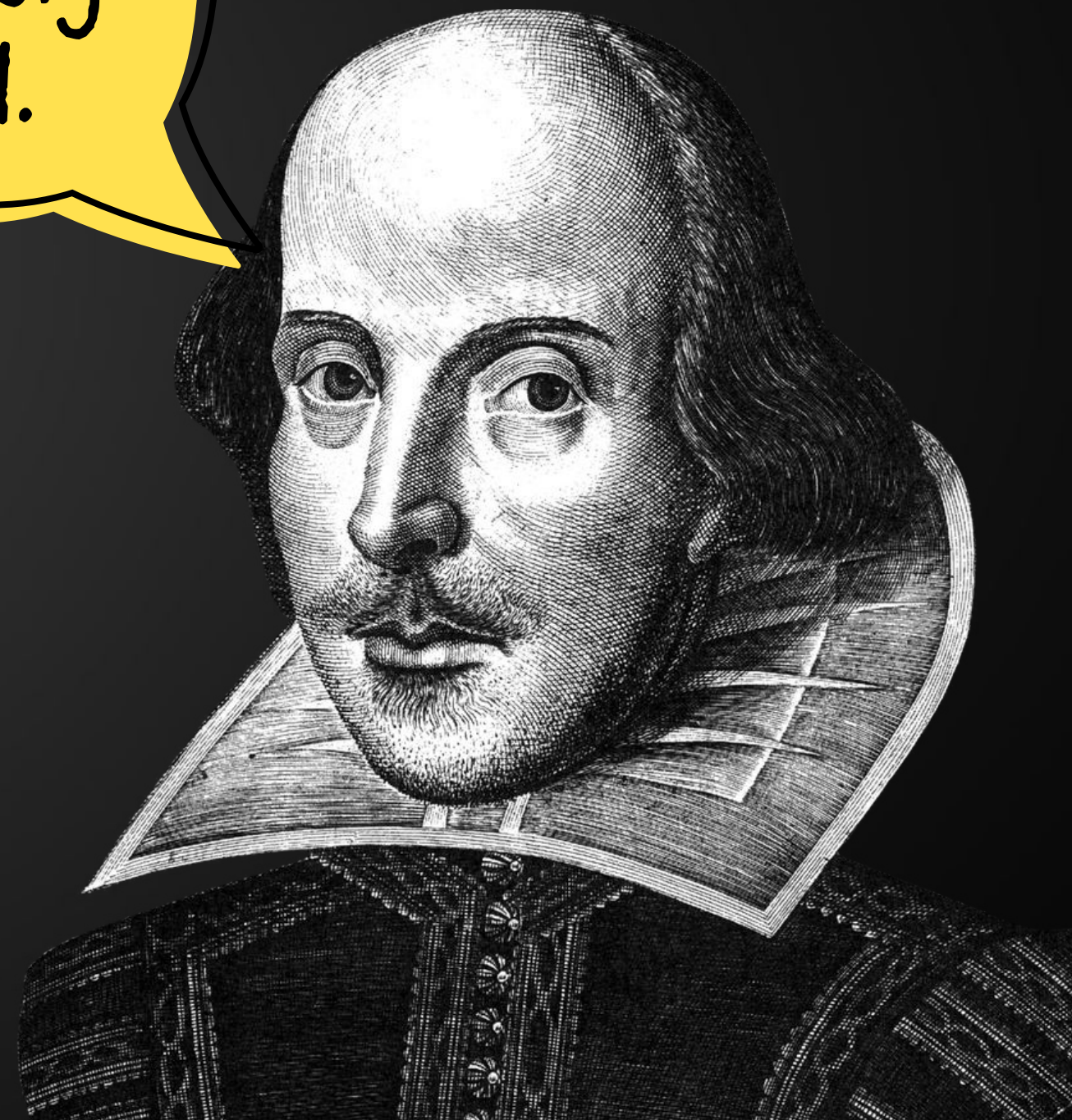
SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

Shakespeare wrote in

Elizabethan English, which is considered a modern language. While it can take a little while to get used to, Shakespeare's writing influenced our language so much that you'll recognize many phrases that we still use today!

I'm kind
of a big
deal.



SHAKESPEARE INVENTED ...

All that glitters isn't gold. (Macbeth)

Break the ice (The Taming of the Shrew)

A brave new world (The Tempest)

In my heart of hearts (Hamlet)

Jealousy is a green-eyed monster. (Othello)

The world is my oyster. (The Merry Wives of Windsor)



SHAKESPEARE INVENTED ...

Eaten me out of house and home (Henry IV)

In a pickle (The Tempest)

Fair play (The Tempest)

It's Greek to me (Julius Caesar)

Wild goose chase (Romeo and Juliet)

A laughing stock (The Merry Wives of Windsor)



WORDS SHAKESPEARE INVENTED ...

Admirable

Hostile

Auspicious

Lackluster

Bandit

Long-legged

Baseless

Lonely

Barefaced

Swagger

Belongings

Watchdog

Dawn

Dwindle



VERSE VS PROSE

Shakespeare wrote much of his plays in **verse**, often using **iambic pentameter** (we'll get to that!). But he also used **prose**. Verse is rhythmic, but prose is not.

Upper class characters generally spoke in verse, while lower class characters spoke in prose.

(This wasn't a hard and fast rule, though.)



SHAKESPEAREAN PRONOUNS

"Thou" for "you" ("Thou hast risen.")

"Thee" for "you" ("I give this to thee.")

"Thy" for "your" ("Thy dagger floats before thee.")

"Thine" for "yours" ("What's mine is thine.")

"Ye" for "you" when addressing a group ("Hear ye.")



A SHAKESPEAREAN GLOSSARY

Art = Are (Thou art a fiend.)

Wast = Were (Thou wast fiendish.)

Second person

Have = Hast (Thou hast beauty.)

Third person

Have = Hath (He hath a foul temper.)

Had = Hadst (He hadst a poor existence.)



A SHAKESPEAREAN GLOSSARY

Dost = Do (Why dost thou smile?)

Doth = Does (He doth smile.)

Didst = Did (She didst smile.)

Canst = Can (Canst thee see it?)

Shalt = Shall (Thou shalt go now.)

Shouldst = Should (Thou shouldst not be late.)

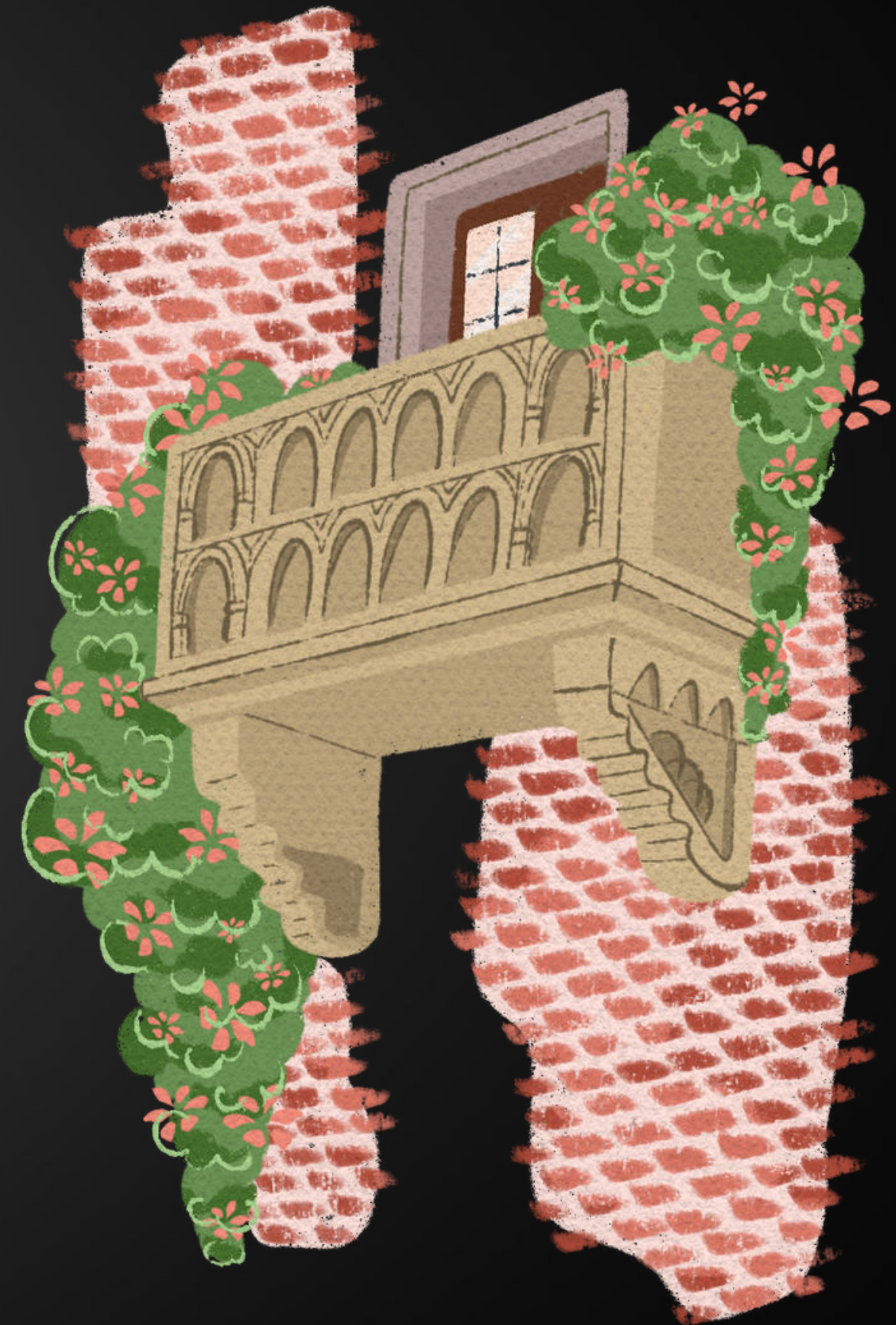


A SHAKESPEAREAN GLOSSARY

Wilt = Will (Why wilt thou not come?)

Wherefore = Why
("Wherefore art thou?" means
WHY do you have to be a Montague,
Romeo? -- not WHERE are you?)

Whence = From where
(Whence didst thou come?)



A SHAKESPEAREAN GLOSSARY

Adieu = Farewell

Aye = Yes

Anon = Soon

Aught = Anything

Counsel = Advice

Ere = Before

Fain = Gladly

Fair = Beautiful

Fancy = Desire

Hark = Listen

Hence = From now on

Hie = Go

Hither = Here

Mark = Pay attention!

Nought = Nothing

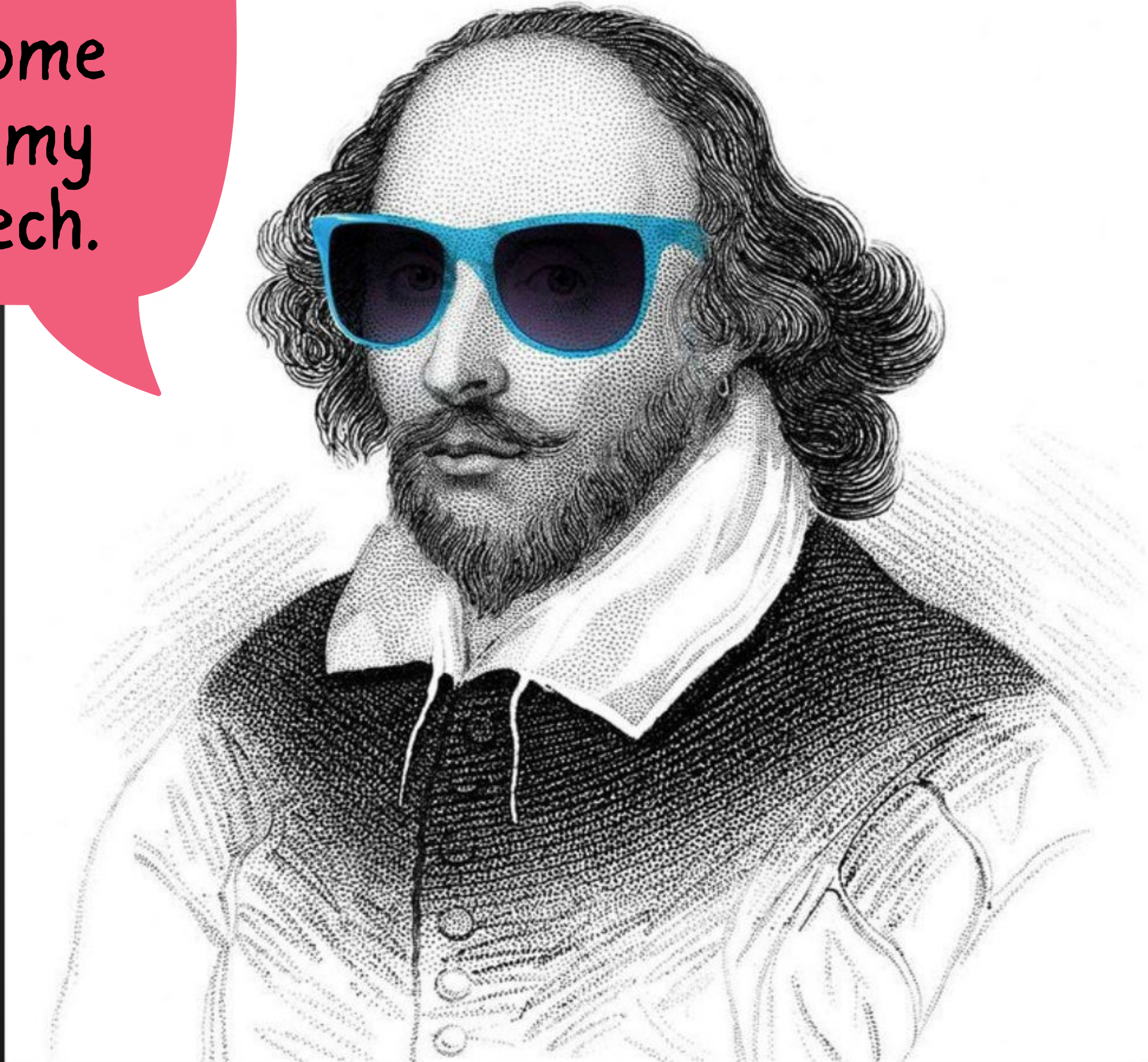
Oft = Often

Perchance = Maybe

Prithee = Please



Prithee, have patience,
thou wilt become
accustomed to my
manner of speech.



The background of the image is a deep red, textured surface resembling a stage curtain. It has vertical folds and subtle variations in color, with some areas appearing slightly brighter than others, creating a sense of depth and movement.

IAMBIC PENTAMETER

VERSE

Shakespeare wrote much of his plays in verse, using **iambic pentameter**. This means that there was a carefully crafted rhythm to the lines.



Shakespeare wrote in both **rhymed** and **blank verse**. In rhymed verse, the words at the end of each line rhyme. Blank verse has a rhythmic pattern but does not rhyme.

PROSE

But Shakespeare also wrote in prose, which is ordinary speech with no rhythm or pattern.

In Shakespeare's plays, when you see long passages appear without irregular line breaks that look like poetry, that is prose.



IAMBIC PENTAMETER

What Shakespeare is really famous for is his use of **iambic pentameter**. An iamb is a "foot," or a beat. (Think of one syllable.) "Penta" means five (like pentagon), so in iambic pentameter, there is a pattern -- **five sets of stressed and unstressed syllables**.



IAMBIC PENTAMETER

Shakespeare wrote not only plays but sonnets. In his sonnets, he used **iambic pentameter**. Sonnet 18 begins:

| | | | | |
|---------|----------|---------|-------|----------|
| Shall I | com PARE | thee TO | a SUM | mers DAY |
| U / | U / | U / | U / | U / |

Each **unstressed syllable** is followed by a **stressed syllable**.

It sounds like **daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM daDUM**.

IAMBIC PENTAMETER

Iambic pentameter has a pleasing rhythm. If you think about it, iambic pentameter is similar to a human heartbeat. Poets and playwrights often use iambic pentameter precisely because of that natural rhythm. It seems familiar, so it appeals to listeners.

