

A P P E N D I X     I  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

William Shakespeare was born at Stratford upon Avon in 1564. His mother, Mary, came from a family of prosperous farmers and his father, John, variously described as a tanner, glove-maker and dealer in grain and meat, rose in wealth and importance during the earlier years of Shakespeare's life to occupy the most prominent positions in Stratford. As Shakespeare advanced in his fortunes, his father appears to have dropped out of public life.

It is likely that Shakespeare, because he was the eldest son, received a reasonable education in the local school. There are few records available to tell us much about Shakespeare's adult life or how he made his way into the world of the theatre. He married Ann Hathway when he was eighteen and, with a family to support, he must have taken some job to earn his living, but the first reference to Shakespeare's involvement in the theatre occurs in 1592 when a rival dramatist, Robert Greene, attacked the actor Shakespeare for daring to write plays. By this time he had collaborated with other authors in writing some plays and his own narrative poems and plays were establishing him as a new figure in the literary life of London. Almost certainly Shakespeare had entered the theatres as an actor in the mid 1580s and over the next twenty years there are references to him as a competent actor at the same time as his fame as a writer growing. In 1596 the Shakespeare

family, in his father's name, but probably on the strength of Shakespeare's success, was granted a coat of arms, an acknowledgement of a rise in society, and in 1597 Shakespeare felt prosperous enough to buy one of the largest houses in his native Stratford.

We know that from 1594 Shakespeare was a member of the theatrical company called the Chamberlain's Men and we know that when the company moved into the Globe Theatre in 1599 Shakespeare was a part-owner of the project. On the accession of James I to the throne, Shakespeare's company renamed itself the King's Men and the company frequently played before the king. By this time, Shakespeare was widely acclaimed as the leading playwright of his age till his death in 1616.

The exact dating of particular plays is not usually possible but a mixture of external and internal evidence helps us to place his thirty-seven plays in a rough chronological order between about 1589-1613. In the early years Shakespeare naturally experimented with different subjects and different forms. From about 1594-1600 he extended his writing in comedy, history plays and tragedy with particular stress on the first two categories. The period from 1600-1608 is dominated by his famous tragedies and in his last phase Shakespeare concentrated on sweet-sad plays in which he attempted to reconcile disappointment and loss of faith.

The facts about Shakespeare's life offered above are all of public sort; we have virtually no record—apart from his poems and plays—of Shakespeare as a private

individual. Many scholars have tried to construct the private Shakespeare from the evidence offered in his work but this attempt has led to as many Shakespeares as there are readers. It has also been doubted that Shakespeare wrote the plays; surely, says the doubters, the author of such masterpieces could not have been brought up in provincial Stratford, surely he must have been a man of incomparably varied experience, widely travelled, deeply read in the literature of Greece and Rome. We are left, after reading the doubters and the speculators, with the works themselves and we must make of them what we can.

(quoted from : "York Notes on Macbeth"

by Alasdair D.F. Macrae)

A P P E N D I X    I I  
S Y N O P S I S

Being old, King Lear (KL), the great king of Britain, wishes to shake off the responsibilities of kingship. He plans to divide his realm among his three daughters. In order to determine which share each should get, he proposes to divide his dower according to each daughters' testimony of love. Goneril and Regan, vie with each other in fulsome protestations of their love, much to the king's pleasure. To each KL gives a good portion of his kingdom, although still retaining his royal title. He turns to Cordelia, the youngest, expecting from her an even more eloquent declaration. But Cordelia's restrained expression of simple love and duty enrages him. She is cast off completely, and KL declares that he will make his home with Goneril and Regan in turn. When Cordelia is pursued, the king of France gladly takes her as his wife and takes her too to go with him in France.

The conflict happens between KL and Goneril, when KL has been informed his loyal man has put in a stock by Goneril; and when KL knows Goneril tries to undermine his authority by reducing his knights. In his anger, KL leaves Goneril and tries to inform Regan about Goneril's cruelty. Unfortunately, Regan states that she will not offer KL hospitality until he apologizes to Goneril. When Goneril arrives to Regan's palace, KL soon learns that the two jointly conspire to oppose him and try to shake his authority.

This painful fact, make KL's mind becomes unbalanced. He feels betrayed by his own daughters, and regrets that he has pursued his beloved daughter, Cordelia. KL with his followers do not have a place to go. Meanwhile, Gloucester, one of KL best friends gives his sympathy and sends KL to Dover, where he believes that his friends will protect KL. Cordelia who has been informed that KL is in Dover. tries to meet him there.

Meanwhile, there is a rumour in Britain, that France will attacked Britain. Albany - Goneril's husband, Cornwall -Regan's husband, and Edmund -one of the British commanders, join forces to defend Britain. At he war, Cornwall is killed by his servants, and the other two succesfully defeat France. Further, Albany who is aware of what has been happening, find Goneril's cruelty to her father.

In Dover, KL and Cordelia are captured by Edmund who is determined to prevent Albany from helping them. The old king fights to save Cordelia, who is finally hanged, and KL himself died in his efforts to safe her.