Monday 23 March 2020

**Shakespeare the playwright**

Did you know that the way of spelling Shakespeare that we use today was not correct when he was actually alive? There are over 30 ways he spelt his surname. That is not the only interesting fact about Shakespeare and some are in this text! For example, he wrote [at least] 38 plays and within them are 600 references to birds, and he indirectly influenced the introduction of Starlings to America. In this text there is also information about his works, his life and some fun facts about him too.

Shakespeare wrote 38 plays that we know of and 154 sonnets [like poems]. His plays contain over 200 references to dogs and 600 to birds. His plays were grouped under three categories - comedies, tragedies and. Plays like Macbeth were a tragedy, while plays such as Henry IV histories and Richard III were histories. Comedy of Errors and the Twelfth Night were comedies.

The famous playwright was born on 23rd April 1564, so he is not exactly recent. He married at the age of 18 to a lady called Anne Hathaway; they had 3 children together, called Susanna and twins Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet died aged 11 and he named his famous play Hamlet after his son. Shakespeare had seven brothers and sisters.

When Shakespeare was celebrating his 52nd birthday party, gasp, he dropped down dead! Another sad fact is he has no direct descendants! He had four grandchildren, but they all died with no heirs. Shakespeare had his own family coat of arms and a curse on his tomb. It says:

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

The well-known scriptwriter had an estimated word vocabulary of over

28,000 words! And in his plays suicide occurs an unlucky 13 times! There has been another play discovered and scientists believe that more plays are yet to be found. Shakespeare was also an actor and property owner. Some of the most well-known sayings, like ‘all the worlds a stage’ and ‘a wild goose chase’ are his creation. The Globe theatre (Shakespeare’s Theatre) was built on the south banks of the River Thames.

Shakespeare was such an interesting character and this text only starts to scratch the surface of his life and works. He wrote with such imagination that his work has shaped literature for over 4 centuries and no doubt he will continue to be one of the most well known and loved writers in history.

By Seb Whatton