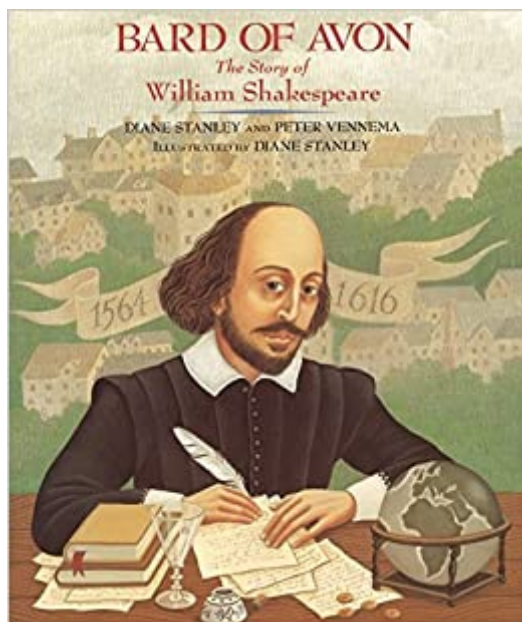


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# Bard Of Avon: The Story Of William Shakespeare



## Synopsis

William Shakespeare was the son of a glovemaker, a small-town boy with a grammar school education. Yet he grew up to become the greatest English-speaking playwright in the world. *Bard of Avon: The Story of William Shakespeare* is both his story and that of a great art rediscovered in the modern world. Drama had been forgotten since the days of ancient Greece, but it reemerged in Elizabethan London with the building of the first modern theater. Its impact can still be imagined today. There were the theaters, open to the weather and featuring neither sets nor curtains, but equipped with dramatic special effects. There were the companies of actors--the leading men, the comedians, the boys who played women's roles--and the playwrights who gave them all lines to say. Best of all, there was William Shakespeare, who rubbed shoulders with noblemen and royalty as well as with the rowdy crowds at the foot of the stage. He was suspected of involvement in a treasonous rebellion, and his last play literally brought down the house when cannon effects set fire to the famous Globe theater and it burned to the ground. Award-winning collaborators Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema have once again created a feast of words and pictures to celebrate the life of a remarkable person from the pages of history: William Shakespeare, a man for all time."

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 1 - 5

## Customer Reviews

In this compact, informative biography, Stanley and Vennema return to the 16th-century England they portrayed so deftly in *Good Queen Bess: The Story of Elizabeth of England*. These seasoned raconteurs have sorted out historical facts, speculation and conjecture to neatly piece together the puzzle of Shakespeare's life. Their conversational narrative, aided by Stanley's typically stunning, intricate period paintings, recount the Bard's early years in Stratford-on-Avon, where he was introduced to drama through the performances of traveling troupes; his years in London, working first as an actor and then as a playwright who wrote quickly and rarely revised his work; the changes in England's political climate--and in Shakespeare's own life--that led him to forsake comedies and pen his magnificent tragedies; and final years in Stratford, living as a country gentleman. A postscript discussing some of the words and phrases Shakespeare created (such as "hurry," "leapfrog," "tongue-tied," "laughingstock") underscores his indelible, ongoing legacy, which Stanley and Vennema perpetuate most gracefully. Ages 7-up. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 3 Up-- This is a wonderful book. A fine companion biography to *Good Queen Bess* (Four Winds, 1990), this life of Shakespeare builds on the methods developed in *Bess and Shaka, King of the Zulus* (Morrow, 1988). Using the few facts known about their subject, Stanley and Vennema manage a full-bodied portrait of a life and time without resorting to fictionalizing or sloppy speculation. In fact, the book starts with an appealing invitation to examine the historical research process. And, without wasting words in pedantic explanation, it keeps readers on a firm footing regarding the scholarly basis of any assertion. In the course of a brief text, the authors manage to touch not only upon the life but also upon important aspects of many of the major plays. There is even a tantalizing postscript with introductory glimpses of the development of the English language. As with their previous works, the authors provide a short but meaty bibliography. Stanley's distinctive full-color gouache paintings are clearly her own, and just as clearly planted firmly in archival research. They reinforce and expand the text with humor and movement. As icing on the cake, the generous open space and attractive page decoration rival the production given *Shaka*. Books like these need only be displayed to attract readers. And once opened, they keep their promise. Lucky kids! --Sally Margolis, Deerfield Public Library, IL Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Nice having the beautiful illustrations, just wish there was more details on each page. I think this

would be better suited for younger kids who are just being introduced to Shakespeare, but not good for a student who wants more specifics about his life.

I read this book to my 9 and 11 year olds as part of our Shakespeare study. It provided a great picture of who Shakespeare was and how the political and popular culture of his day reacted to his plays. Not too heady, yet detailed enough for a 6th grader to find it interesting. It does mention the puritans who opposed theater-going in a rather unflattering light, but I explained to my kids that the Puritans probably didn't like exploring some of the themes in his plays, which may have treated "sinful" behaviors with humor, acceptance or in some cases approval. It gave us an opportunity to understand how our worldview influences and informs all of our pursuits, our choices, and our opinions of popular culture. We enjoyed Lamb's Shakespeare stories so very much, and this book was a wonderful complement to that.

This author was new to us and we will be looking for her from now on. The pictures are sooo wonderful they transport you. The information is well done and clear, yet not watered down. This is someone that REALLY understands writing books for children that adults can enjoy using as teachers or parents. I recently bought alot of books on Shakespeare, for use in the school room this year and we have found 4 authors that made the grade on this subject! This is a keeper!

Great illustrations and info...it's plenty of info but presented in a way that is engaging for my kids and not just going in one ear out the other. Well done and a great resource for our Charlotte Mason-ish homeschool

wonderful book in the life of William Shakespeare. It is well written and my children loved me reading Shakespeare's life story to them. It helped them to put in focus his plays.

While one might believe this is an elementary age book, my entire family including myself, a sophomore, freeman and seventh grader, is enjoying it! This is a great book! So glad we purchased it to read out loud before our trip to London!

Got this for my 2nd grade son who had a school project and he loved the book. Nice illustrations and timeline.

This is a very simple and visually appealing book that we used to introduce William Shakespeare to the children. This proved to be quite effective tool. After reading, the children's interested increased and they began down the path to understand Shakespeare and his work.

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