

SHAKESPEARE'S LONDON



The World of Shakespeare: A Jigsaw Puzzle by Adam Simpson

1

ELIZABETH I.

Elizabeth I. was Queen of England, Ireland and Wales from 1558 until 1603. She was the first woman to reign the country without a king. She never married or had children that's why she was called the "Virgin Queen". She said that she is married to the country so she can't take another husband. Elizabeth I. had a lot of political success, for example, she established Protestantism in England. Due to her being a successful woman in this time, there are a lot of conspiracy theories because no one could believe that a woman was able to make political progress. A common theory is that she died when she was young and was replaced by a boy, which also explains why she never had a man and why she wore lots of makeup. She was also known for wearing very expensive and extravagant dresses. She once had a lover whom she really loved, but his wife died and so she couldn't marry him because otherwise one would think that Elizabeth had ordered to kill her. (Julius)

2

EXPLORATION IN ELIZABETHAN AGE

The exploration found a new significance in the Elizabethan Age. It was first dominated by the Portuguese and Spanish. However, the Elizabethan Age was the emergence of many explorers such as Sir Francis Drake. Many motives prompted that Age of Exploration like scientific curiosity, the crusading spirit and the opportunity to acquire wealth and fame. Furthermore, trading was the most powerful intention of exploration. Therefore the English people were able to savour the luxury of Eastern spices like cinnamon, ginger and a lot more. Also all kinds of precious stones, drugs and dyes were traded. In that time there were already navigation aids. Explorers used astrolabes, telescopes, charts and maps and compasses to cross the sea. (Mara)

3

WAR IN THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

At the time of Elizabeth I.'s reign, wars were an important part of the governing. It was about prestige and claiming new land. During her reign there have been three major wars: The Desmond Rebellion, the English War against Spain and the Tyrone Rebellion. On the battlefield of the war against Spain, Queen Elizabeth held a speech which has been very important for her acknowledgement as a female leader. Three wars are few for over forty-four years of reign. England has been able to claim new land, establish a powerful navy and there haven't been greater defeats. Overall Queen Elizabeth I brought a long period of peace. (Jan)

4

THE TOWER OF LONDON

In the Elizabethan Age, the Tower of London was used as a palace, a treasury, a weapon store and as a prison. Moreover, it was a royal mint, where almost all the coins of England were made. Kings and queens also locked away their valuables and jewels at the Tower. During the Tudor period, it became the most important state prison in the country. Elizabeth I. was imprisoned at the Tower of London by her half-sister Mary I., who in the early days of her reign feared that Elizabeth was plotting against her. Many people were also executed at the Tower, such as Elizabeth's mother Anne Boleyn, who was accused of treason. Today, the Tower of London is still one of London's most famous landmarks, attracting visitors from all over the world. (Filippa)

5

INDOOR THEATRES

The indoor theatres were a lot smaller than the normal ones. These held about 500 people instead of thousands. Besides, they were a lot more expensive which caused more rich people to visit the indoor theatre. And the audience was more educated. They had a lot more comfortable seats. Besides they were able to buy food there. The light came from candles and through the windows. Until 1609 those theatres were mostly used by so-called boy's companies. They were groups with young actors aged between seven and the early twenties. They played just once a week. There were particularly written plays for indoor theatres because the stage was a lot smaller than in outdoor theatres so there was, for example, no space for big battles. Beyond that indoor theatres were far cosier, the candles had a magical effect on the audience. And another difference was that there were a lot of short breaks because they had to change the candles. (Linus)

6

THE AUDIENCE

Everybody had a chance to buy tickets for a seat in the theatre but generally more men than women went to the plays. There were different categories so the tickets had different prices but almost everyone in London's society could afford them. The cheapest price was only one Penny but then you had to stand in the yard around the stage. The more you paid, the more comfortable the seat was. Also, the sound and view were better if you paid more. The most expensive seat was always in the "Lord's Room". London's theatres had space for around 10.000 guests and they weren't just watching they were always active. Cheering and booing was normal so it usually was pretty loud in the audience. Almost everyone used to enjoy the performance though. (Lukas)

7

CIRCUSES

Circuses went from city to city, maintaining the folks and spreading happiness and joy. Over time they got bigger and bigger and had more resources to built up even bigger tents. They had a big variety of games and shows. As they settled in another city, they built up their tents and offered plays or brought, for example, bows and arrows with them. Kids and families had the possibility to spend a whole day there. In the evenings it changed to a place to drink and listen to music. (Kilian)

8

MACBETH

The three witches fulfil a guiding role in the story of Macbeth, a tragedy theatre play written by Shakespeare. It is one of the most popular, renowned and performed plays of him. Written around 1605, it tells the story of a Scottish Lord, whose name is Macbeth. The witches tell Macbeth prophecies, the first being about him becoming king. Together with the fueling of his wife, who constantly tries to persuade him, Macbeth starts committing murders beginning with the king. He consequently becomes king himself and cannot stop killing out of paranoia, but feels guilty about every murder. Because of those murders, a civil war erupts, causing more deaths. (Dora)

9

ROMEO AND JULIET

The famous balcony scene between Romeo and Juliet in Capulet's orchard is important for the development of the play. In Act 2, Scene 2 Juliet is standing on the balcony speaking of the love for Romeo when he suddenly appears above the window. This is the first time in the play that they are completely alone. Romeo risks being discovered by the Capulets only to see Juliet – a symbol of his love for her. There is excitement in the scene because of the danger that they might be discovered. It solidifies the bond of love for both because Romeo and Juliet's secret marriage was decided then. This creates complications which inflame the conflicts between the Montagues and the Capulets for the rest of the play. (Johannes)

10

HAMLET

On the roof, two scenes from Shakespeare's play "Hamlet" are mixed. The scenes are very important for the play because they are key moments of the play. To understand the scenes we need to take a closer look at the play itself. In Hamlet, King Claudius kills his older brother in order to become the King of Denmark. Because Hamlet doesn't want to confront him personally he sets up a play to provoke Claudius to confess the murder of King Hamlet. You can see King Claudius and his wife Gertrude sitting there and watching the play. The second scene is from the last act of Hamlet. Hamlet lost his beloved Ophelia because she drowned, however, it's unsure whether it was suicide or not. Now we can see Prince Hamlet holding a skull in his hand. A gravedigger gave it to him. You can also see the former King of Denmark in the shape of a ghost. He was Prince Hamlet's father. He was also the one who told Prince Hamlet the truth about his death. (Ruben)

11

JULIUS CAESAR

Shakespeare's history play "Julius Caesar" was first performed in 1599. The main themes of this play are betrayal, honour and greed. An important part of the play, as you can see, is the assassination of the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar by his son Brutus and his lackeys on the 15th of March 44 a.C. Julius Caesar was one of the most important leaders because he transformed the roman republic into an empire and conquered, for example, Gaul. (Lorin)