Pericles
by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
directed by JOSEPH HAJ

PLAY GUIDE
JANUARY 16 – FEBRUARY 21, 2016
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This play guide will be periodically updated with additional information. Play Guide last updated December 16, 2015.
Pericles was wildly popular during Shakespeare’s lifetime and in the decades following; indeed, it was among his most popular works. It was the play that reopened the London Globe Theatre in 1631 after it was shuttered because of the plague. And it was the first Shakespeare play performed when the theatres reopened at the beginning of the Restoration after years of Puritan closure. With its theme of survival, loss, maturation and reconciliation, it is little accident that Pericles offered an opportunity for audiences to come together and understand themselves and their place just a little bit better in an arbitrary and unjust universe.

The play then fell into disregard, as the piece baffled (and continues to baffle) scholars and critics by its refusal to fit into traditional orthodoxies of what constitutes a well-made play. The play is only troublesome if one insists on it behaving like other plays. Seen on its own terms, Pericles is a playful, funny, moving, powerful meditation on what is to be human.

T.S. Eliot called it “that very great play, Pericles,” and I am in agreement. The play is both underknown and undervalued. It is a powerful story that belongs to a folk tradition, a tale that is told in both spoken text and song and passed on from generation to generation. And its message, finally, is one of healing. Our narrator, Gower, tells us that “Lords and Ladies in their lives / Have read it for restoratives.” I certainly have read it in exactly that way, and it has been a pleasure crafting this piece with such extraordinary collaborators.

“To sing a song that old was sung” is the first line of the play; and so begins our journey.

Joseph Haj
Director of Pericles
SYNOPSIS

Pericles of Tyre visits Antioch, where King Antiochus has decreed that anyone seeking to marry his beautiful daughter must first solve a riddle. Failure means execution. Pericles easily solves the riddle, which reveals an incestuous relationship between the king and his daughter. But he’s trapped: he will lose his life if he uncovers the truth or if he gives a wrong answer. Granted a delay by the king, Pericles hurries back to Tyre. Concerned that Antiochus might send assassins after him or wage war against innocent Tyre, Pericles appoints Helicanus to rule in his place and sails off again. He reaches Tarsus, a city beset by famine, where he offers grain from his ship to help the rulers of the city, Cleon and Dionyza, save their people.

When he resumes his journey, Pericles is shipwrecked by a storm and as the sole survivor is rescued by some fishermen of Pentapolis. A tournament is about to take place, and Pericles learns that the winner receives the hand of King Simonides’ daughter, Thaisa. He recovers his ancestral armor, which miraculously has washed ashore, and he decides to compete in the tournament. He wins both the tournament and Thaisa’s heart, and they marry.

Back in Tyre, Helicanus puts off calls for him to ascend the throne. Out of loyalty to his prince he wants to wait until the search for Pericles yields a result. A letter from home reaches Pericles in Pentapolis with the news that Antiochus and his daughter are dead. With Thaisa now expecting a child, the couple sets sail for Tyre. At sea they are caught in another storm as Thaisa gives birth to a daughter, Marina, but Thaisa apparently dies during delivery. Succumbing to the sailors’ superstitions, Pericles agrees to let them toss Thaisa’s body overboard. Concerned for his newborn daughter’s survival, Pericles stops at Tarsus to entrust her into the care of the royal couple, before heading on for Tyre. Thaisa’s casket lands in Ephesus, where a healer/magician, Cerimon, revives her. Convinced that her family perished at sea, Thaisa becomes a chaste priestess in Diana’s temple in Ephesus.

The story leaps ahead 18 years. Marina has become a bright and beautiful young woman. However, her life is in jeopardy. Marina surpasses Cleon and Dionyza’s daughter in every respect, and out of jealousy Dionyza seeks to have Marina killed. Before the murder can take place, Marina is kidnapped by pirates who sell her to a brothel in Mytilene. Much to the annoyance of the brothel’s owners, the virtuous Marina proves to be such a persuasive speaker that prospective clients leave the brothel swearing off their licentious behavior. In fact, the governor of Mytilene, Lysimachus, falls in love with Marina during a visit to the brothel.

When Pericles comes for Marina in Tarsus, Dionyza tells him that she has died and shows the devastated Pericles the monument constructed in her memory. Pericles stays aboard his ship and speaks to no one until by chance his ship arrives in Mytilene. Lysimachus falls in love with Marina. Pericles recognizes something of Thaisa in the girl, and eventually the father and daughter are reconciled. In a dream, the goddess Diana tells Pericles to sail to Ephesus, where he and Marina are reunited with Thaisa.

CHARACTERS

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<td>Gower, a poet</td>
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<td>Antiochus, king of Antioch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daughter of Antiochus</td>
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<td>Thaliard, a lord of Antioch</td>
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<td>Pericles, prince of Tyre</td>
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<td>Helicanus, a lord of Tyre</td>
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<td>Cleon, governor of Tarsus</td>
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<td>Dionyza, his wife</td>
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<td>Leonine, servant to Dionyza</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simonides, king of Pentapolis</td>
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<td>Thaisa, his daughter</td>
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<td>Marina, daughter to Thaisa and Pericles</td>
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<td>Lychorida, nurse to Marina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cerimon, a healer of Ephesus</td>
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<td>Bawd, a brothelkeeper</td>
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<td>Pandar, a brothelkeeper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boult, his servant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lysimachus, governor of Mytilene</td>
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<td>Diana, a goddess appearing to Pericles</td>
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<td>Lords, Gentlemen, Fishermen, Knights, Sailors, Pirates, Servants and Messengers</td>
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SETTING

On and around the Mediterranean Sea

| Act One: | Antioch, Tyre and Tarsus |
| Act Two: | Pentapolis and Tyre |
| Act Three: | At sea, in Ephesus and Tarsus |
| 18 Years Pass |
| Act Four: | Tarsus and Mytilene |
| Act Five: | Mytilene |
Authorship and Sources of Pericles

Chalkers mostly agree that there is a sharp difference between the first two acts and the final three acts of the text of Pericles. Acts one and two are sometimes clumsier, less poetic and generally serviceable whereas the final three acts achieve moments of pure poetry in line with some of Shakespeare's finest work. The theories as to why there is this break are numerous; the most popular theory is that Shakespeare is the author of only part of the play – perhaps he had a collaborator who was primarily responsible for the first two acts or perhaps Shakespeare revised another author's play, concentrating his revisions mostly in the final three acts. Another theory suggests that the whole play is by Shakespeare, but that the first two acts were imperfectly remembered by those who had it set to print for the Quarto edition in 1609 and those text corruptions remained through later printings.

However one approaches the authorship issue, the play itself is a fascinating piece of work. Elements of the play are reminiscent of others of Shakespeare's works: the lost daughter Marina finds parallels in Perdita in The Winter's Tale; the reconciled father and daughter reflect Lear and Cordelia; the chorus played by Gower is a version of the Chorus in Henry V. But the dramaturgy of Pericles, with its episodic plot and scarcely fleshed-out characters, is unlike much of Shakespeare's work.

Pericles is generally dated around 1607 or 1608, making it one of Shakespeare's late plays. Toward the end of his playwriting years, Shakespeare experimented with a new genre, the “romance,” which became fashionable during the rule of James I. These kinds of plays were extensive narratives driven by plots with many interlinked episodes, some imbued with a fairy-tale flavor. They suited the popular taste and captured the public's imagination at the time, and their appeal continues to be strong today. Pericles counts as one of Shakespeare's earlier works of this period, followed by Cymbeline (ca. 1608-10), The Winter's Tale and The Tempest (both dated around 1610-11). Compared to the poetry and depth of character in the great tragedies, the Romances can appear to be messier plays with lesser dramaturgy. Some scholars speculate that Shakespeare may have felt he had achieved what he wanted in the tragic and comic forms, and the romance offered him the opportunity to explore other theatrical elements.

The plot of Pericles is a very old Greek tale. It was known to Shakespeare through a number of versions, most notably the story of Apollonius of Tyre in Book Eight of Confessio Amantis (Lover's Confessions) by the medieval poet John Gower, a contemporary of Geoffrey Chaucer. Gower and his work would have been familiar to a Renaissance audience and Shakespeare's inclusion of Gower as a character provides a nod of acknowledgment that Gower was a source for Shakespeare's play. A second, more contemporary to Shakespeare, source of Apollonius' story was Laurence Twyne's Pattern of Painfull Adventures, a novel published in 1576.

The title character's name changed from Apollonius to Pericles with Shakespeare's play. A three-syllable name may have proved easier to work with, but what inspired the name Pericles is open to speculation. Perhaps Shakespeare named him after Pericles of Athens, whose description he may have encountered in Plutarch's Parallel Lives, on which he drew to write Coriolanus around the same time as Pericles. Or the name may come from the character of Pyrocles in Sir Philip Sidney's verse idyll Arcadia or Pyrochles in Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queen, both of which would have been familiar to Shakespeare.

In 1608 George Wilkins published a prose narrative titled The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre. The proximity of Wilkins' publication date to the appearance of Shakespeare's play has led some scholars to believe that George Wilkins was the (inferior) collaborator on the play Pericles while others speculate that Wilkins merely drew heavily upon Shakespeare's play, which had been quite popular, to tell his own version of the story in novel form.

The extent to which authorship issues affect or influence a stage production may very well be negligible. Ultimately, the same investment in the text needs to be made by actor, director and designer regardless of whether the text is thought to be written by Shakespeare, by another author or in collaboration.
Editor's Note: *Pericles* has been met with divided opinion almost from its very beginning. The Romances as a group provide dramaturgical and theatrical challenges that can leave individuals decidedly enthused or not about the works, and *Pericles* in particular is often a play, when it is known at all, that inspires both love and loathing. Some of this is due to storytelling inconsistencies deriving from the authorship issues discussed elsewhere, and some of it is due to individual taste and expectations. What follows below is a selection of responses to the play from the 17th century on. The first is a poem written by Shakespeare’s contemporary, playwright Ben Jonson, decrying the popularity of plays like *Pericles*, while his own, in his estimation, finer work goes unnoticed.

Come, leave the loathed stage,  
And the more loathsome age;  
Where pride and impudence, in faction knit,  
Usurp the chair of wit!  
Indicting and arraigning every day  
Something they call a play.  
Let their fastidious, vain  
Commission of the brain  
Run on and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn;  
They were not made for thee, less thou for them.  
Say that thou pour'st them wheat,  
And they will acorns eat;  
'Twere simple fury still thyself to waste  
On such as have no taste!  
To offer them a surfeit of pure bread  
Whose appetites are dead!  
No, give them grains their fill,  
Husks, draf to drink and swill:  
If they love lees, and leave the lusty wine,  
Envy them not, their palate's with the swine.  
No doubt some mouldy tale,  
Like *Pericles*, and stale  
As the shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish–  
Scraps out of every dish  
Thrown forth, and rak'd into the common tub,  
May keep up the Play-club:  
There, sweepings do as well  
As the best-order'd meal;  
For who the relish of these guests will fit,  
Needs set them but the alms-basket of wit.

And much good don’t you then:  
Brave plush-and-velvet-men  
Can feed on orts; and, safe in your stage-clothes,  
Dare quit, upon your oaths,  
The stagers, and the stage-wrights too (your peers)  
Of larding your large ears  
With their foul comic socks,  
Wrought upon twenty blocks;  
Which if they are torn, and turn'd, and patch'd enough,  
The gamesters share your gilt, and you their stuff.

Leave things so prostitute,  
And take the Alcaic lute;  
Or thine own Horace, or Anacreon's lyre;  
Warm thee by Pindar's fire;  
And though thy nerves be shrunk, and blood be cold,  
Ere years have made thee old,  
Strike that disdainful heat  
Throughout, to their defeat,  
As curious fools, and envious of thy strain,  
May blushing swear, no palsy's in thy brain.

But when they hear thee sing  
The glories of thy king,  
His zeal to God, and his just awe o'er men:  
They may, blood-shaken then,  
Feel such a flesh-quake to possess their powers,  
As they shall cry: "Like ours  
In sound of peace or wars,  
No harp e'er hit the stars,  
In tuning forth the acts of his sweet reign,  
And raising Charles his chariot 'bove his Wain."

Ben Jonson, “Ode to Himself,” upon the critical failure of his comedy *The New Inn*, 1631

Because large parts of the play, particularly its first two acts, seem to critical readers so obviously defective and crude, both in style and in dramaturgy, we may be surprised by the evidence that in Shakespeare's own time and for a generation after, the play was highly popular. The First Quarto of 1609 speaks of it as “The late, And much admired Play ... diuers and sundry times acted by his Maiesties seruants, at the Globe on the Banck-side.” Other references from the time tell us of large crowds flocking to see it, and of both the Venetian and French ambassadors watching an early performance. Between 1610 and 1631 it was revived several times, not only at the Globe, but on one occasion at Whitehall before distinguished guests; it was also performed by a traveling company in the country. Moreover, the Quarto text was reprinted no less than five times, thus confirming the unusual interest in the play. By 1635, the date of the Sixth Quarto, very few other plays had appeared as often in print. We know of...
course, that in Shakespeare’s time other plays of little dramatic subtlety and of far less literary merit than the best scenes in Pericles could produce a great stir. Yet it does seem strange, especially in view of the play’s fate on the stage from Dryden’s time to the 1920s and even later, that a work which appears so dismally written and undramatic in its first two acts could experience such a success on stage, and that there was so much demand for it by readers.

But what should surprise us most is that after producers hardly ever risked staging the play for centuries, and then only in major adaptations, several impressive revivals of it during the past thirty years have demonstrated that Pericles can hold modern audiences throughout – and more, that watching it can be an enchanting experience.


Pericles, in short, is little more than a string of adventures so numerous, so inartificially crowded together and so far removed from probability, that, in my private judgment, I must acquire even the irregular and lawless Shakespeare of having constructed the fabric of the drama, though he has certainly bestowed some decoration on its parts. Yet even this decoration, like embroidery on a blanket only serves by contrast to expose the meanness of the original materials. That the plays of Shakespeare have their inequalities likewise, is sufficiently understood; but they are still the inequalities of Shakespeare. He may occasionally be absurd but is seldom foolish; he may be censured, but can rarely be despised.


Throughout the whole of Pericles we meet with language of great beauty, and of an eminently Shakespearean character; language possessing not only the manner of our bard, but endued with his deep-seeing wisdom and humanity, ...

The fifth act of this drama displays great power, and throughout reveals the hand of Shakespeare. ... Let those who doubt the authorship of Pericles attentively read [the recognition scene between Pericles and Marina] and scepticism will dissolve into belief. The poet stands confessed in every line of it; not only in the language, which is always beautiful, and sometimes grand; witness that striking simile where Marina is described as looking “like Patience, gazing on kings’ graves and smiling Extremity out of act,” but also in the conduct and arrangement. ... Scarcely inferior is the final scene in the Temple of Diana, where in the high-priestess Pericles discovers his lost wife Thaisa, whom he supposed dead and confined beneath the salt ooze of ocean. Husband, wife, and child, after fourteen years of absence, are restored to each other’s embraces. This scene greatly resembles the conclusion of the exquisite play, The Winter’s Tale, and the similarity is of such a nature as to give additional confirmation to the belief that Shakespeare was the author of them both.


There are many questions in the study of Shakespeare that can never be answered and yet may be asked not unprofitably. One of these is why, so soon after his noblest achievements, he chose or accepted as the basis of a play what Ben Jonson called the ‘mouldy tale’ of Pericles. The play has been much discussed in connexion with the problem of its authorship and its relation to the new fashion of romantic play brought in by Beaumont and Fletcher. It has also been treated as a member of the last group of Shakespeare’s plays, the Romances. But no approach on these lines quite faces the question. Whatever solution to the problem of authorship commends itself – whether Shakespeare took up again an early play of his own, or agreed to finish and furbish one by George Wilkins or some other dramatist, or had been reading Gower’s Confessio Amantis and was moved to experiment in a remote, legendary tone – the challenging oddity of the choice remains.

When we talk about *Pericles* as it was acted by Shakespeare's company in its heyday, we are talking about a hidden play, a play concealed from us by a text full of confusion and with a clumsiness and poverty of language unrivaled in the Shakespeare canon. Yet, encrusted and deformed though it is, this hidden play reveals itself in glimpses as work of remarkable beauty and power.


It is certainly a weird play. Severed heads, more storms and shipwrecks than most readers can confidently count, the miraculous preservation of persons alive under water or dead and unburied on land, a denouement which mixes, if not hornpipes and funerals, at least brothels and betrothals, and a remarkably accident-prone protagonist. ...

What the play *Pericles* wonderfully captures, obsessively reiterates, is, indeed, the rhythm of vicissitude in human life, the rhythm of maturation: separation, dispossession, return, under the cross of guilt, where three roads meet. The original loss or lack, or absence, psychoanalytic theory tells us, is always the same; but its individual manifestations are always different, for it is through an endlessly varied chain of displaced signifiers that we strive, in language, to reconstitute the ever-receding, forever lost state of undifferentiated wholeness that was the bliss, and the fate, of the speechless infant.


The first two acts use disguise and the attendant illusion/reality devices primarily to make the distinction between worth and birth. Pericles proves his worth by being princely when his princehood is hidden. Simonides and Thaisa have the nobility of true princes, in contrast to Antiochus and his daughter, whose princehood itself is a disguise, a handsome outward show which conceals the corruption within. Both good and evil characters have used disguise and dissimulation to their own ends: Simonides’ benevolent pretense of opposition has its counterpart in Antiochus’ malevolent pretense of friendship. The theme of birth and worth is, however, only one facet of the motif of illusion and reality in the play, and the news which comes to Pentapolis that “Our heir-apparent is a king!” (III. Prol. 1.37) is not an end but merely a turning-point in Pericles’ career. From this point onward, the concern is with seeming and reality not so much in opposition as in events. Pericles has learned to distinguish the true from the feigned in human behavior; for the rest of the play he undergoes a series of transformations based on a mistaken reading of circumstances – particularly the mistaken assumption that those who are said to be dead, who *seem* dead, really are dead.


Unlike Hamlet, Pericles does not struggle to fight back after the initial traumatic experience. Instead, he takes refuge in flight on the sea. The whole succeeding fable, shaped and reshaped over centuries of retelling by projective, unrationaledized imagination, can be summarized as painful adventures which end with the hero’s achieving on a sublime level what he fled from at the degraded level.


For it is true that Pericles as he confronts the deadly riddle of Antiochus resembles Oedipus confronting the riddle of the sphinx; and it is true, to invoke Fluellen’s famous argument, that there is incest in both. But the incest theme is actually the prime point of difference. Oedipus by answering the sphinx’s idle in a single word, opens the door to discovering what it is to be a man – what guilt one becomes liable to, what depths are revealed, by a desire to know the truth about oneself. Pericles learns nothing about himself; having fled from Antioch, he never again (so far as we are told) thinks spontaneously of the cruel king and his nameless daughter. Yet in one another basic aspect he does resemble Oedipus: for both of them, to answer the riddle is just as dangerous as to fail of answering it. They are victims of powers above, who made the circumstances around them, and made them unalterable. But there resemblance ceases. Under the bludgeonings of fate, Pericles is more pathetic than iron-souled Oedipus. He complains, acts erratically; except for the play-combats of the tournament, there is no single opponent to whom he stands up directly, including Fate or Destiny. His prevailing passivity is one reason why his sufferings seem, not only unmerited, but non-significant.


What is perhaps most important to note is that these early scenes set forth the raw material for what Shakespeare will make of this fable: a tale of rebirth, transformation, and reconciliation. The relationships between the two fathers and daughters (Antiochus and his daughter; Simonides and Thaisa) are used as foils for the central recognition scene between Pericles and Marina in scene 21. And the trials and sufferings of the romance quest hero Pericles, reborn from the sea, forced to leave his own country, appearing nameless and unknown in Pentapolis to win the love of the chief lady of the land by the strength of his inner qualities – all of these will be repeated, in a language incomparably pure, beautiful, and evocative, in the adventures of Marina, which occupy the last three sections of the play. Marina undergoes the same process as her father: reborn, unknown, making a great marriage by means of her inner qualities. The quest hero becomes a quest heroine, born in a tempest and at sea, and given over to the care of a false parent, a stepmother (Dionyza) who seeks her death.

Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2004
W illiam Shakespeare was born in 1564 and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon, in England’s West Country. As the son of an up-and-coming town merchant, Shakespeare would have attended the village grammar school where he would have learned to read and write not only English, but also Latin and Greek. In 1582, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, and the couple would have three children. Shakespeare moved to London by 1592 and quickly began to make a name for himself as a prolific playwright. He stayed in London for about 20 years, becoming more and more successful in his work as an actor, writer, and shareholder in his acting company. His retirement took him back to Stratford to lead the life of a country gentleman. Shakespeare died there - on what is thought to be his birthday, April 23, in 1616. He is buried in the parish church, where his grave can be seen to this day. His known body of work includes 37 plays, 100 long poems, and 154 sonnets.

A nd Shakespeare thou, whose honey-flowing vein,
Pleasing the world, thy praises doth obtain,
Whose Venus and whose Lucrece (sweet and chaste)
Thy name in fame's immortal book have placed,
Live ever you, at least in fame live ever.
Well may the body die, but fame dies never.

Richard Barnfield, A Remembrance of Some English Poets, 1598

H e has a magic power over words; they come winged at his bidding; and seem to know their places. They are struck out in a heat, on the spur of the occasion, and have all the truth and vividness which arise from an actual impression of the objects. His epithets and single phrases are like sparkles, thrown off from an imagination, fired by the whirling rapidity of its own motion. His language is hieroglyphical. It translates thoughts into visible images. It abounds in sudden transitions and elliptical expressions.

William Hazlitt, Lecture on the English Poets, 1818

W e do not understand Shakespeare from a single reading, and certainly not from a single play. There is a relation between the various plays of Shakespeare, taken in order; and it is work of years to venture even one individual interpretation of the pattern in Shakespeare’s carpet.

T. S. Eliot, Dante, Faber & Faber, 1929

S hakespeare’s mind is the type of the androgynous, of the man-woman mind. … It is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or a woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly.

Virginia Woolf, A Room of One’s Own, 1929

H e is like some saint whose history is to be rendered into all languages, into verse and prose, into songs and pictures and cut up into proverbs; so that the occasion which gave the saint’s meaning the form of conversation, or of a prayer, or of a code of laws, is immaterial compared with the universality of its application. … He wrote the airs for all our modern music: he wrote the text of modern life.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, Representative Men, 1841

S hakespeare himself, indeed Shakespeare especially, does not describe from outside; his characters are intimately bound up with the audience. That is why his plays are the greatest example there is of people’s theater; in this theater the public found and still finds its own problems and re-experiences them.

Jean Paul Sartre, Sartre on Theater, 1959

S hakespeare imagines with copiousness and excess; he spreads metaphors profusely over all he writes; every instant abstract ideas are changed into images; it is a series of paintings which is unfolded in his mind. He does not seek them, they come of themselves; they crowd within him, covering his arguments; they dim with their brightness the pure light of logic. He does not labor to explain or prove; picture on picture, image on image, he is forever copying strange and splendid visions which are engendered one within another, and are heaped up within him.

Hippolyte Taine, History of English Literature, 1863
No other poet has given so many-sided an expression to human nature, or rendered so many passions and moods with such an appropriate variety of style, sentiment and accent. If, therefore, we were asked to select one monument of human civilization that should survive to some future age, or be transported to another planet to bear witness to the inhabitants there of what we have been upon earth, we should probably choose the works of Shakespeare.

George Santayana, *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 1900

There is very little information about Shakespeare as a person. Only the sonnets are directly personal. It is a temptation to everybody to invent their own Shakespeare. That’s all right, provided that whatever they invent they base on the text. The drama from *Gorboduc* in 1561 to the closing of the theaters in 1642 is an incredibly odd phenomenon. The period of distinctly Elizabethan drama is much shorter, extending from *The Spanish Tragedy* in 1587 to *Titus Pullo* in 1633. The Elizabethan dramatists were all born within twenty years of each other: Peele in 1557, Greene in 1560, Chapman in 1569, Jonson in 1573, Webster in 1580, Ford in 1586, Middleton in 1570, and Shakespeare and Marlowe in 1564. Outside of Shakespeare, and of Jonson, whose works were anti-Elizabethan, I think the works of Elizabethan drama are terribly bad. … How completely Shakespeare dominates! And his only rival’s whole approach is a direct protest against the Elizabethan era.

Why was the period of drama so short-lived, and why was one person so immeasurably better? Because of the provincial character of England: England was then a province, a hick country, compared with Italy, Spain, and France. Elizabethan drama did not develop out of the miracle plays, but the chronicle plays, and dramatists therefore had to start from scratch. That’s not always a good thing. They had to build up their own conventions. …

That kind of freedom is to the advantage of a genius, but to the disadvantage of the simply talented man – and the distinction applies to every branch of life. Moral freedom, for example, is to the advantage of the strong, not the average, man. If the conventions of Elizabethan drama had been fixed, as in French classical drama, Shakespeare would not have done what he did, but others wouldn’t have been so bad, and the period of drama wouldn’t have died so quickly.


Shakespeare has two sides to him: one is the historical side, where he’s one of a group of dramatists working in Elizabethan London and writing for an audience living in that London at that time; the other is the poet who speaks to us today with so powerfully contemporary a voice. If we study only the historical, or 1564 – 1616 Shakespeare, we take away all his relevance to our own time and shirk trying to look into the greatest mystery of literature, the mystery of how someone can communicate with times and spaces and cultures so far removed from his own.


If you cannot understand my argument, and declare “It’s Greek to me,” you are quoting Shakespeare; if you claim to be more sinned against than sinning, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you recall your salad days, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you act more in sorrow than in anger, if your wish is father to the thought, if your lost property has vanished into thin air, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you have ever refused to budge an inch or suffered from green-eyed jealousy, if you have played fast and loose, if you have been tongue-tied, a tower of strength, hoodwinked or in a pickle, if you have knitted your brows, made a virtue of necessity, insisted on fair play, slept not one wink, stood on ceremony, danced attendance (on your lord and master), laughed yourself into stitches, had short shrift, cold comfort or too much of a good thing, if you have seen better days or lived in a fool’s paradise – why, be that as it may, the more fool you, for it is a foregone conclusion that you are (as good luck would have it) quoting Shakespeare; if you think it is early days and clear out bag and baggage, if you think it is high time and that that is the long and short of it, if you believe that the game is up and that truth will come out even if it involves your own flesh and blood, if you lie low till the crack of doom because you suspect foul play, if you have your teeth set on edge (at one fell swoop) without rhyme or reason, then – to give the devil his due – if the truth were known (for surely you have a tongue in your head) you are quoting Shakespeare; even if you did me good riddance and send me packing, if you wish I was dead as a doornail, if you think I am an eye-sore, a laughing stock, the devil incarnate, a stonehearted villain, bloody-minded or a blinking idiot, then – by Jove! O Lord! Tut, tut! For goodness sake! What the dickens! But me no buts – it is all one to me, for you are quoting Shakespeare.


Shakespeare has two sides to him: one is the historical side, where he’s one of a group of dramatists working in Elizabethan London and writing for an audience living in that London at that time; the other is the poet who speaks to us today with so powerfully contemporary a voice. If we study only the historical, or 1564 – 1616 Shakespeare, we take away all his relevance to our own time and shirk trying to look into the greatest mystery of literature, the mystery of how someone can communicate with times and spaces and cultures so far removed from his own.


Every age creates its own Shakespeare. ...

Like a portrait whose eyes seem to follow you around the room, engaging your glance from every angle, [his] plays and their characters seem always to be “modern,” always to be “us.”

# A Selected Chronology of the Life and Times of William Shakespeare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE</th>
<th>WORLD HISTORY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1564</td>
<td>William Shakespeare is born to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden of Stratford–upon–Avon, their third child and first son. (Traditionally, Shakespeare’s Day is celebrated on April 23.)</td>
<td>Galileo Galilei is born. Playwright Christopher Marlowe is born. Voyages of exploration, trade and colonization are undertaken throughout the “New World,” primarily by England, Spain, Portugal, France and the Netherlands.</td>
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<td>1565</td>
<td>Giambattista Giraldi Cinthio writes Ecatommiti, 112 stories that includes “The Moor of Venice.”</td>
<td>St. Augustine, Florida, the oldest city in the U.S. is established.</td>
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<td>1576</td>
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<td>James Burbage opens The Theatre, London’s first playhouse used by professional actors.</td>
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<td>1577</td>
<td></td>
<td>Holinshed publishes the Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, a primary source for Shakespeare’s history plays.</td>
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<td>1578</td>
<td>Shakespeare's family finds itself in serious debt and mortgages Mary’s house in Wilmcote to raise cash.</td>
<td>Interest in Roman and Greek antiquities leads to the discovery of the catacombs in Rome.</td>
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<td>1580</td>
<td>John Shakespeare is involved in lawsuits regarding several mortgaged family properties.</td>
<td>The English folksong “Greensleeves” is popular.</td>
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<td>1582</td>
<td>A marriage license is issued to William Shakespeare and Agnes (Anne) Hathaway in November. She is eight years his senior and pregnant at the time of their marriage. The following May their first daughter, Susanna, is born.</td>
<td>The Gregorian calendar is adopted in Spain, Portugal, France, the Netherlands and Scandinavia. (England does not adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1752.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1585</td>
<td>Twins, Hamnet and Judith, are born in February to William and Anne Shakespeare.</td>
<td>Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes writes the pastoral novel Galatea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1585–91</td>
<td>No records document Shakespeare’s life during these “lost years.” At some point, he made his way to London without his family, perhaps joining a troupe of traveling actors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1586</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mary, Queen of Scots, is accused of plotting the murder of Elizabeth I. A number of other conspirators are put on trial and executed. Mary is executed the following year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1588</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Spanish Armada attempts to invade England but fails due to bad weather at sea and the ability of smaller English ships to out–maneuver the attackers in the English Channel. The event establishes England as a major naval power.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1592</td>
<td>Shakespeare is listed as an actor with the Lord Chamberlain’s Men in London. Writer and dramatist Robert Greene scathingly lashes out at “an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers” at the time when Shakespeare’s first known play, King Henry VI, Part One, is successfully performed.</td>
<td>15,000 people die of the plague in London. Theaters close temporarily to prevent the spread of the epidemic.</td>
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<td>1593–94</td>
<td>During the course of the plague, it appears that Shakespeare has written several plays (their dates of composition have not been established with certainty in all cases): King Henry VI, Parts Two and Three, Titus Andronicus, Richard III, and the comedies Love’s Labour’s Lost, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew, as well as the poems “Venus and Adonis” and “The Rape of Lucrece.”</td>
<td>Christopher Marlowe is killed in a tavern brawl (1593). His tragedy Edward II is published the following year. London’s theaters reopen in 1594 when the threat of the plague has abated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1595</td>
<td>Approximate year of composition for A Midsummer Night’s Dream, King John, Romeo and Juliet, Richard II, and The Merchant of Venice.</td>
<td>Sir Philip Sidney’s An Apology for Poetry is published posthumously.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1596</td>
<td>John Shakespeare, the dramatist's father, is granted a coat of arms. Shakespeare's only son, Hamnet, dies at the age of eleven.</td>
<td>The Blackfriars Playhouse, later to become the winter theater for Shakespeare's company, opens in London.</td>
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<td>1597–98</td>
<td>Shakespeare's sonnets circulate unpublished. The two parts of King Henry IV, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and probably Much Ado About Nothing are written. He purchases the New Place, one of the largest estates in Stratford. He is listed as a player in a production of Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor.</td>
<td>A second armada of Spanish ships en route to attack England is dispersed by storms. Sir Francis Bacon's Essays, Civil and Moral, is published. The English Parliament passes an Act prescribing that convicted criminals be sentenced to deportation to distant colonies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1599</td>
<td>The Globe Playhouse opens. Shakespeare is part owner by virtue of the shares divided between the Burbage family of actors (half) and five others, including the dramatist. Approximate year of composition for King Henry V, Julius Caesar, and As You Like It.</td>
<td>The Earl of Essex is sent to command English forces in Ireland. He fails to secure peace and returns to England against the orders of Elizabeth I.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>Shakespeare's poem, &quot;The Phoenix and the Turtle&quot; and his plays, Twelfth Night, All's Well That Ends Well, Hamlet and Troilus and Cressida date approximately from this period (1600–02).</td>
<td>The international trading corporation, the English East India Company, is founded. (The Dutch East India Company is founded in 1602.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1601</td>
<td>Shakespeare's father dies.</td>
<td>Ben Jonson, offended by a satirical portrayal of himself in a play, returns the insult, sparking a series of plays known as the War of the Theaters in which playwrights ridicule each other from the stage.</td>
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<td>1603</td>
<td>Approximate year of composition for Othello and Measure for Measure. James I is crowned King of England, and the acting company known as Lord Chamberlain's Men, with which Shakespeare is affiliated, becomes The King's Men. They will perform 12 plays per year for the court of James I.</td>
<td>Elizabeth I dies. She is succeeded by her cousin, James I. (The era of his reign is called the Jacobean period.) Sir Walter Raleigh is arrested as a suspect in a plot to dethrone James I. He is tried for treason and imprisoned. A new outbreak of the plague in London.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Shakespeare's name is included among England's greatest writers in Remaines of a Greater Worke Concerning Britaine, published by the antiquarian William Camden. King Lear appears.</td>
<td>The Gunpowder Plot – a plan to blow up the House of Lords during an address by James I – is foiled in November. Guy Fawkes and other conspirators are arrested and eventually executed the following year.</td>
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<td>1606</td>
<td>Macbeth appears.</td>
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<td>1607</td>
<td>Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna, marries Dr. John Hill; they make their home in Stratford. Anthony and Cleopatra, Pericles and Timon of Athens are written.</td>
<td>English colonists in America, led by John Smith, establish the city of Jamestown, Virginia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1608</td>
<td>Shakespeare's acting company signs a lease for the use of the Blackfriars Playhouse. Coriolanus appears. Shakespeare's mother dies.</td>
<td>Galileo Galilei uses a design by Dutch scientist Johan Lippershey to construct his own telescope.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1609–10</td>
<td>Shakespeare's Sonnets are published. His late plays The Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, and The Tempest belong to this period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1612</td>
<td>Records show that, by this time, Shakespeare &quot;of Stratford–upon–Avon, gentleman&quot; has returned to live in his birthplace.</td>
<td>John Webster's tragedy The White Devil is staged and published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1613</td>
<td>Two plays, King Henry VIII and The Two Noble Kinsmen, are attributed to both Shakespeare and John Fletcher.</td>
<td>The Globe Playhouse burns down during the first performance of King Henry VIII.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1616</td>
<td>Shakespeare's daughter Judith is married. Shakespeare dies on April 23 and is buried in Stratford's Holy Trinity Church.</td>
<td>The Catholic Church prohibits Galileo from further scientific work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1623</td>
<td>Heminge and Condell of The King's Men compile Shakespeare's complete dramatic works in the First Folio. Anne, William Shakespeare's widow, dies.</td>
<td>John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi is published. Dutch colonists settle in New Amsterdam (in 1664, seized by the English, it will be renamed New York).</td>
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Though in Shakespeare’s day the word ‘romance’ had been in the language for two centuries, it occurs in none of his writings. The Elizabethans generally found little use for it, and so far as I know it was never used to describe a play. To the editors of the First Folio, *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest* were comedies, *Cymbeline* was a tragedy, and *Pericles* was – for reasons that we can only surmise – beyond the pale. Modern critics, discerning common characteristics in these plays, have grouped them together, sometimes noncommittally as ‘last plays,’ sometimes as ‘romances’ – and the term is genuinely descriptive. But it has been increasingly recognized that the final romances are in many ways directly descended from Shakespeare’s earlier comedies. These are often called ‘romantic’ comedies; are they not, then, also romances? It depends, of course, what you mean by a romance. The very word is shadowy, having association with literature of various kinds, forms, and periods; with modes of sensibility; with languages; and with love. It can be spoken with an auspicious or a dropping eye; with a sob, a sigh, or a sneer; with the aspiration to define or with a defiance of definition. It means so much that often it means nothing at all.

If the literary genre of romance can be defined – or described – it is not by formal characteristics. Rather perhaps it is a matter of certain recurrent motifs, and also of a recognizable attitude toward the subject matter. Romancers delight in the marvelous; quite often this involves the supernatural; generally the characters are larger than life size. All is unrealistic; the logic of cause and effect is ignored, and chance and fortune governs all. Characteristic features vary somewhat from one sort of romance to another; and attempts at definition are bound to be circular – we can only decide what makes a romance by looking at works to which the label has been attached and seeing what they have in common. But it is fair to say that Shakespearean romance frequently includes the separation and disruption of families, followed by their eventual reunion and reconciliation; scenes of apparent resurrection; the love of a virtuous young hero and heroine; and the recovery of lost royal children.

Shakespeare’s last plays, written with a view to Blackfriars and the court as well as to the Globe, are usually called “romances” or “tragicomedies” or sometimes both. The term romance suggests a return to the kind of story Robert Greene had derived from Greek romance: tales of adventure, long separation, and tearful reunion,
The plays were first termed romances just over a century ago by the Irish critic Edward Dowden, when he celebrated what he took to be their achieved serenity in relation to the preceding tragedies: “The dissonances are resolved into harmony; the spirit of the plays is one of large benignity; they tell of the blessedness of the forgiveness of injuries; they show how the broken bonds between heart and heart may be repaired and reunited; each play closes with a victory of love.” While such idealizing, which constructed a comforting biographical narrative for Shakespeare, is little to our taste now, the term itself has stuck because all four plays do indeed employ such romance motifs involving shipwreck, capture by pirates, riddling prophecies, children set adrift in boats or abandoned on foreign shores, the illusion of death and subsequent restoration to life, the revelation of the identity of long-lost children by birthmarks, and the like. The term tragicomedy suggests a play in which the protagonist commits a seemingly fatal error or crime, or (as in Pericles) suffers an extraordinarily adverse fortune to test his patience; in either event he must experience agonies of contrition and bereavement until he is providentially delivered from his tribulations. The tone is deeply melancholic and resigned, although suffused also with a sense of gratitude for the harmonies that are mysteriously restored.

The appropriateness of such plays to the elegant atmosphere of Blackfriars and the court is subtle but real. … At their best, such plays powerfully compel belief in the artistic world thus artificially created. The very improbability of the story becomes, paradoxically, part of the means by which an audience must “awake its faith” in a mysterious truth.

Shakespeare did not merely ape the new fashion in tragicomedy and romance. In fact, he may have done much to establish it. His Pericles, written seemingly in about 1606-1608 for the public stage before Shakespeare’s company acquired Blackfriars, anticipates many important features not only of Shakespeare’s own later romances but of Beaumont and Fletcher’s.


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In 1608 … Shakespeare’s mother died. He was probably called back to Stratford by the news of his mother’s illness, and there he came to know his daughter Judith intimately. She was already twenty-two years of age. He could not have seen much of her on his previous visits; or perhaps he did not then need so much the tenderness she had to give. For now she not only became dear to him; but was a solace and source of strength. From this time on she lives for us in his art. To find her portrait in Marina of Pericles, in Perdita of The Winter’s Tale, and in Miranda of The Tempest will surprise some readers, but the evidence is really quite sufficient. It should strike everyone that all these plays are warmed, so to speak, with the joy of reunited kinsfolk. All these maiden-heroines, too, have abstract names and are all manifestly portraits of the same girl, who was lost to her father (Perdita [and Marina]) and is now admired by him (Miranda). She is dutiful and sweet-tempered, but above all modest in mind and body. As we have seen, all Shakespeare’s pictures of girls before his breakdown were tainted with coarseness which often reached the impossible of uncharacteristic lewdness; but Marina, Perdita, and Miranda proclaim themselves virtuous at all costs. Instead of Juliet’s and Portia’s delighted suggestion allusions.


Shakespeare, we are confidently told, passed in a moment to tranquility and joy, to blue skies, to young ladies, and to general forgiveness. … This is a pretty picture, but is it true? … Modern critics, in their eagerness to appraise everything that is beautiful and good at its proper value, seem to have entirely forgotten that there is another side to the medal; and they have omitted to point out that these plays contain a series of portraits of peculiar infamy, whose wickedness finds expression in language of extraordinary force. … To omit these figures of discord and evil from our consideration, to banish them comfortably to the background of the stage, while Autolycus and Miranda dance before the footlights, is surely a fallacy in proportion; for the presentment of the one group of persons is every whit as distinct and vigorous as that of the other. Nowhere, indeed, is Shakespeare’s violence of expression more constantly displayed than in the “gentle utterances” of his last period.


Richard S. Iglewski as Prospero in the Guthrie’s 1981 production of The Tempest, directed by Jennifer Tipton. Photo: Michal Daniel
The First Folio says it contains Shakespeare’s comedies, histories, and tragedies, and that suggests a division of the main genres of Shakespeare’s plays that has pretty well held the field ever since. The main change has been that we now tend to think of four very late plays, Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter’s Tale and The Tempest, as “romances,” to distinguish them from the earlier comedies. These plays reflect a new vogue in playwriting, which Shakespeare probably established and in which he was followed by young writers. …

The romances are popular plays, not popular in the sense of giving the public what it wants, which is a pretty silly phrase anyway, but popular in the sense of coming down to the audience response at its most fundamental level. … There’s a close affinity between the romances and the most primitive (and therefore most enduring) forms of drama, like the puppet show. To mention some of their characteristics: first, there’s a noticeable scaling down of characters; that is, the titanic figures like Hamlet, Cleopatra, Falstaff and Lear have gone. Leontes and Posthumus are jealous, and very articulate about it, but their jealousy doesn’t have the size that Othello’s jealousy has: we’re looking at people more on our level, saying and feeling the things we can imagine ourselves saying and feeling. Second, the stories are incredible; we’re moving in worlds of magic and fairy tale, where anything can happen. Emotionally, they’re as powerfully convincing as ever, but the convincing quality doesn’t extend to the incidents. Third, there’s a strong tendency to go back to some of the conventions of earlier plays, the kind that were produced in the 1580s. Fourth, the scaling down of characters brings these plays closer to the puppet shows I just mentioned. If you watch a good puppet show for very long you almost get to feeling that the puppets are convinced that they’re producing all the sounds and movements themselves, even though you can see that they’re not. In the romances, where the incidents aren’t very believable anyway, the sense of puppet behavior extends so widely that it seems natural to include a god or goddess as the string puller. Diana has something of this role in Pericles, and Jupiter has it in Cymbeline. The Tempest has a human puppeteer in Prospero.


The characteristics of such late works include, first, a certain indifference to their effect either on the general reading public or on critics. There must be no sign of a wish either for popularity or for an artistic perfection that is designed to reap critical acclaim. … The writer of late works is sometimes shocking out of his indifference as to whether he shocks or not, … The work’s strangeness must be intentional or because the author doesn’t care. Nor is there a wish in late works for big, spectacular, purple effects. There is an enormous interest in particular kinds of artistic problems lovingly worked out for themselves, regardless so the interest of the whole work. …

In the late works of Shakespeare, there is no real resemblance to the
The recognition scenes are fantastic. There are repeated shipwrecks in *Pericles* and repeated disguises in *Cymbeline*. Shakespeare is taking up an entirely primitive form – with choruses, dumb shows, and masques. One might think of a modern writer who, after mastering complex forms, takes up the Wild West. The plays show a conscious exploitation of tricks: asides, etc. Late works appeal to lowbrows and very sophisticated highbrows, but not to middle brows, even to the aristocrat of middle brows, Dr. Johnson. Critics do not appreciate the pleasure a writer has in consciously writing a simple form. 

In Shakespeare’s earlier plays, the individual is dominated and destroyed by passion, and the plot is designed to reveal his individual nature. The natures of the characters determine their relations and hence the plot, and at the end each character stands out from the others more completely than at the beginning. In the last plays, individuals are defined entirely in terms of relations. One can’t talk about good and bad people, but only about good and bad relationships, and the plot creates a pattern out of these relationships. People, far from being more distinctive, are just one chord that completes the play. …

The characters are not separate individuals in their own right, you are not fond of them as you of Beatrice and Rosalind, and they are not terrifying as they are in the tragedies, where they are isolated in their own self-love. But like a fairy-tale story, this is the world as you want it to be, and nothing makes one more inclined to cry.


Shakespeare’s *Pericles* inaugurates a new phase in that it, *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest* not only dramatize the relations between generations, between parents and their children, but also dramatize the effect of parents’ memories on those relations; and this differentiates the plays of the final period from *Lear* or even from *Henry IV*. By ‘parents’ memories’ we mean their experience (Leontes’, Polixenes’, Prospero’s) and experience is something which can only be acquired in the past. By making the past or background of the parents active in the present or foreground of their children, in the plot machinery of these plays, Shakespeare had to utilize, in terms of stagecraft and language, novel spatial and temporal perspectives.

English poet John Gower (c.1330-1408) was a friend and contemporary of Geoffrey Chaucer, author of *The Canterbury Tales*. Writing in the tradition of courtly love and moral allegory, Gower's work influenced other poets of his period. Considered during his own lifetime to be an equal to Chaucer, his fame has dimmed in the ensuing centuries.

Of the few details known about the historical Gower, we know he was a wealthy man, he was well acquainted with London (although he may not have been from the city originally), and he was perhaps a court official. He married Agnes Groundolf in 1397 – it may not have been his only marriage – and she survived him. At age 70 he described himself as “old and blind.”

He left behind three major works. *Speculum meditantis* or *Mirour de l’homme* (written before 1391), an allegorical manual of vices and virtues, is composed of 12-line stanzas of octosyllabic verse written in French. *Vox Clamantis* (ca. 1391-1399), written in Latin elegiac verse, uses the Peasants' Revolt of 1391 as a starting point to discuss the vices of virtually every class of society and examines the duties of a king.

Gower's masterwork is considered to be *Confessio Amantis* (ca. 1390), a retelling of popular ancient and medieval tales of love that illustrate the Seven Deadly Sins. It has been said that Shakespeare summoned Gower “not only as mouthpiece but also as muse” in *Pericles*, because the eighth book of the *Confessio* – a Greek story about Apollonius of Tyre – was the main source for Shakespeare's play.

He was also the author of a number of love poems in French and a poem in English, *In Praise of Peace*, addressed to King Henry IV, urging him to avoid the horrors of war.

Gower died in 1408 and is buried at the Southwark priory. On his tomb, his effigy lies with its head resting on three volumes inscribed with the titles of his major works.

Gower is the only continuous narrator/presenter in Shakespeare. Like the chorus in *Henry V* or Time in *The Winter's Tale*, but unlike other mediating or parabastic figures he only addresses the audience, never the dramatis personae. This has the effect of distancing or framing the events, and creating a split in the audience between empathetic participation and critical awareness somewhat as in the Brechtian alienation effect. Only here, since Gower is a character accompanying the whole play, and since the historical Gower has already told the story before in the *Confessio Amantis*, the effect is of a *mise-en-abyme*, a telling within a telling. What is shown and what is told seems fairly arbitrary. ... Gower's punctuation of the sequence of direct dramatic enactment by alternating narration and dumbshow foregrounds the question of selection and deletion in narration itself; for that matter the question of the authentic as against the authenticated – the re-told. The Gower figure offers his tale to the audience “for restoratives;” he steps out on stage between the audience and the dramatis personae; he interferes. He constantly requests his audience to conjure up for themselves events anticipated or recapitulated: “In your imagination hold/This stage the ship” (III. Chorus.58-59). I suggest that we can regard him as a kind of threshold figure – indeterminately analyst and censor, a mediator both vehicle and obstacle. ... We are sensitized by Gower's mediation to levels of consciousness, and to functions of the telling. Gower remembers, and recounts the story, Pericles reenacts it, and the reenacting itself, *en abyme*, is a compulsive repetition.


Repeatedly at the end of his prologues Gower reminds us of the inadequacy of telling – just as do the prologues in *Henry V*. By stressing the fictionality of the events he is describing, by emphasizing the degree to which they are products of poetic imagination, he brings his audience into the process of creation. In a sense, the play can be understood as having the structure of a dream or a dream vision, one as improbable as that which Pericles calls his dream: the reappearance of his lost child. Gower points toward the allegorical structure that lies at the heart of fairy tales, the basic pattern of human life expressed in mythic terms: growing up, leaving one's parents, seeking an identity and a name, temptation and testing in the world, sexual maturity, the begetting of a new generation. Yet even as he conveys the audience to an imaginary land of fairy tale that is also a map of its own desires, Gower insists upon the way telling must be replaced by showing, lyric and narrative replaced by spectacle and drama.

Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All*, New York: Pantheon Books, 2004

With the help of the audience's imagination, and what they can confirm with their eyes and ears, Gower can surmount time as well as create dimensions of it. 'Ancient' Gower transcends the past by his appearance in present time while evoking a tale which recedes even further into a distant past. His storytelling choruses and the scenes which enact them thus present two alternating dimensions of time, attested to and shared by the audience simultaneously. The tale itself contains a history which works by its own clock, as the stages of the story process chronologically in terms of past, present, and future throughout the many years in the events of the characters' lives.


The full text of John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* can be downloaded at the Project Gutenberg website. www.gutenberg.org/etext/266
The only deity whose name reappears with any frequency in Shakespeare’s *Pericles* is the Roman deity Diana, virginal goddess of the forest, the hunt, the moon and childbirth, and patroness of wild animals and of the young. Her appellations and aspects are varied and many; as goddess of childbirth she is frequently known as “Lucina”; as goddess of the moon, “Luna” or “Cynthia” (from her birthplace on Mount Cynthus on the Greek isle of Delos); and, in her guise as goddess of the dark moon and all the deeds of black magic committed under its protection, “Hecate.” Jupiter and Latona were her parents, and Apollo was her twin brother. She required chastity of her companions and her followers, and she was usually depicted as wearing a sliver-moon crown and a quiver with arrows. She was said to cause quick, painless death to women in childbirth.

Because the Romans appropriated the gods and myths of the Greeks, many of the important stories which feature Diana relate to Greece and the Greek people rather than to Rome and Romans, and these myths naturally refer to the goddess as Artemis, her Greek name. One myth tells of Artemis’ complicity in the death of the well-known hunter Orion. In certain versions of the story, her brother Apollo became jealous of the time she spent hunting with Orion. He therefore dared her to shoot at a certain far-distant mark, which she too late discovered was Orion’s head. Alternatively, Orion raped one of her followers and she punished him by sending a scorpion to kill him.

As a virgin goddess, Artemis guarded her body and her privacy fiercely. It was in retaliation for a perceived affront to these that she killed another famed hunter, the young Actaeon, who accidentally came upon her bathing in the woods. Enraged, she turned him into a stag, and she set his own dogs upon him to tear him to shreds.

Much documented, too, is the story of Artemis’ offense at King Agamemnon’s killing of a sacred deer or wild hare and her subsequent refusal to let the Greek fleet set sail from Aulis to conquer Troy. As reparation she demanded that the Greeks make a sacrifice to her of Iphigenia, the eldest daughter of Agamemnon, thereby setting into motion the great catastrophes detailed in, among others, *The Oresteia*. However, some accounts state that moments before the sacrifice, Artemis replaced Iphigenia with a deer on the altar and whisked her off to serve at her temple in Tauris.
CULTURAL CONTEXT

Editor's Note: In addition to its fairy tale aspects, *Pericles* has parallels in other forms of literature. *Pericles* as a character has been commented on for his evident patience in the face of suffering, his adventurous spirit and his lifetime quest for family, for peace and for understanding. Many of his character traits are shared by other figures from literature, some of whom are described below.

**Odysseus**
king of Ithaca, Greek hero of *The Odyssey* composed by Homer (ca. 8th century B.C.)
A clever, resourceful and courageous man, Odysseus angered Poseidon during the Trojan War so the god made Odysseus' return home last 10 years. His crew becomes enchanted by both the Lotus-Eaters and the witch Circe, they battle the Cyclops, Odysseus goes to Hades to consult the seer Tiresias, encounters the Sirens, and the Scylla and Charybdis, among other adventures. With frequent help from Athena, Odysseus alone survives the 10-year trip. He returns to Ithaca where his faithful wife Penelope and his now-grown son Telemachus have struggled to maintain authority in the country during his 20-year absence. Odysseus slays the suitors of Penelope and reasserts his position as king.

**Job**
character from a book of Hebrew scripture (ca. 6th - 4th century B.C.)
A prosperous man of outstanding piety, Job becomes the target of Satan, who tests whether or not Job's piety is rooted merely in his prosperity. But faced with the loss of his wealth, children and his own health, Job refuses to curse God. When three friends arrive to comfort him, the book's tone changes from plot to a poetic dialogue that probes the meaning of Job's suffering and how he should respond. Job argues with his friends and converses with God. While Job's friends suggest he is being punished for his sins, Job insists he's innocent and the suffering is undeserved. The book doesn't completely resolve the issue of undeserved suffering; rather Job retains his faith in the rightness of God's actions in the world, even though God's ways remain mysterious and inscrutable.

**Percival**
character from Arthurian legend and romance; appears in, among others, Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval* (ca. 12th century AD) and Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (ca. 1200-1210 AD)
Percival, a naive, guileless country knight, witnesses the Grail procession in the home of the wounded Fisher King but, having been warned earlier about the impropriety of asking too many questions, asks neither about the procession nor about the cause of the Fisher King's trouble. In restraining himself, Percival misses the chance to heal the Fisher King with his honest inquiry and to understand the significance of the procession. After this youthful error, Percival goes on to seek the Grail and, in the course of his adventures, he becomes a responsible, faithful and wise adult. He is eventually rewarded with the position of Grail Keeper.

**Dante Alighieri**
author and protagonist of allegorical poem *The Divine Comedy* (ca. 1308-1321)
In his three-part *The Divine Comedy*, Dante writes of his spiritual journey through hell and purgatory to reach paradise; his guide at first is the Roman poet Virgil, then later his beloved Beatrice. Along the way he witnesses the terrifying punishments for different varieties of sinners and is able to converse with some of the damned. At the end of his journey he is permitted a glimpse of God and comes to understand the nature of divine goodness and grace.

**Sir Gawain**
from Arthurian legend and romance; a test of courage and honor, 14th-century alliterative poet, author unknown
Sir Gawain accepts the challenge of a mysterious green knight: Gawain can cut off the knight's head if he agrees to let the green knight return the blow in a year. After Gawain's blow, the green knight picks up his head and tells Gawain to meet him at the Green Chapel in a year. As the time approaches, Gawain dutifully rides off to the chapel. Before he meets the knight he undergoes a test of determination of sorts – he stays with a man who asks only that Gawain exchange with him each night of his stay whatever each of them has gained that day. The host's wife makes approaches toward Gawain but he resists her except for a few kisses; on the third day she also gives him a belt said to make the wearer invincible, but he doesn't tell the host. At the Green Chapel, the green knight swings his axe three times, stopping the first two blows and only nicking Gawain on the third. The green knight reveals himself as the host, telling Gawain the first two blows were stopped because Gawain had repaid the woman's kisses. The nick was for concealing the belt. The shamed Gawain wears the belt to remind him of his fault.

**Hiawatha**
a legendary chief (ca. 1450) of the Onondaga tribe of North American Indians
Based on Schoolcraft's books on the Indian tribes of North America, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow composed "The Song of Hiawatha"
(1855) in the meter of the Finnish epic *Kalevala*. Hiawatha taught agriculture, navigation, medicine and the arts, conquering by his magic all the powers of nature that war against man. After various mythic feats, Hiawatha became his people’s leader and married Minnehaha before departing for the Isles of the Blessed.

**Don Quixote**

**hero of the novel Don Quixote (1605 and 1615) by Miguel de Cervantes**

Originally conceived as a satire of the chivalric romances then in vogue, the novel describes the adventures of elderly Don Quixote, a bemused knight driven by the vision of his beloved Dulcinea to go on chivalric quests. He is accompanied by his trusty squire Sancho Panza and his old steed Rosinante. He visits Seville, where he helps young lovers run away together, and a gypsy camp, where he attacks a windmill, mistaking it for a giant endangering Dulcinea. He has an enchanted dream. In a tavern, the young lovers are separated; the young man commits suicide and then miraculously comes back to life after the young woman marries his corpse. Don Quixote continues on his adventures after the young couple’s wedding.

**Gulliver**

**hero of Gulliver’s Travels (1726) by satirist Jonathan Swift**

During several voyages, ship’s doctor Lemuel Gulliver encounters unusual people when he lands in unknown ports and islands including Lilliput, where the inhabitants are six inches tall; a land of giants; a Flying Island, whose inhabitants are fascinated with music and math; and the land of the Yahoos, humans who are kept in pens by horses (Houyhnhms). Upon his final return to England he finds himself unable to live with “civilized” Yahoos and retires to the country with a couple of horses. *Gulliver’s Travel* is both a delightful children’s story and a satire on Swift’s contemporary society.

**Candide**

**protagonist of Voltaire’s satirical novel Candide (1759)**

Thanks to his ever-optimistic tutor Pangloss, young Candide believes that he lives in “the best of all possible worlds.” Forced from his uncle’s home for falling in love with his cousin Cunegonde, Candide begins a series of globe-trotting misadventures from which he barely escapes alive and which repeatedly undermine his early lessons. In pursuit of his beloved Cunegonde, he witnesses, suffers and perpetrates terrible acts of brutality, but he is eventually able to retire with Cunegonde to a simple, hard-working farm life which leaves no time for philosophical worries.

**Peer Gynt**

**the dreamer, storyteller and sometime troublemaker in Henrik Ibsen’s poetic drama of the same name (1867)**

A young man accused by his mother of being lazy, Peer disrupts a wedding and runs away with the bride, which gets him banished from the village, but he wins the loyalty of young farmer’s daughter Solveig. Peer faces tests by the king of the mountain and the Great Boyg, pretends he’s a prince, hides out in the forest, tells stories to his dying mother and eventually takes off for the sea. In Morocco, an older successful Peer still tells stories and exaggerations. Even as Solveig waits for him, Peer continues to wander and as an old man leaves Africa for his native Norway. He finally must account for his life and understand his selfish ways as he’s reunited with Solveig.

**Huck Finn**

**protagonist of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884) by Mark Twain**

To escape beatings from his father, Huck Finn fakes his own murder and heads down the Mississippi River, where he is joined shortly by Jim, a runaway slave from Huck’s hometown. Huck struggles with his conscience, breaking society’s rules yet continuing with Jim as he seeks his freedom. The two run into a band of robbers, a couple of feuding families and scam artists the duke and the king, who eventually sell Jim back into slavery. Despite an elaborate escape orchestrated by Huck’s friend Tom Sawyer, Jim is recaptured. In the end, it is revealed Jim’s owner Miss Watson has died and freed Jim in her will, of which Tom had been aware the whole time.

**Siddhartha**

**protagonist of Hermann Hesse’s novel Siddharta (1922)**

The young Siddhartha, expected to continue in his father’s footsteps as a Brahmin, sets off from his comfortable life in ancient India to discover true enlightenment. He joins at first a group of ascetics, then becomes a follower of the Buddha, but he soon grows disillusioned with both paths because they make no allowance for the importance of the body. He decides for this reason to educate himself in the ways of the world and becomes a wealthy merchant and the lover of a beautiful courtesan. After some years, he realizes that his empty, worldly life is killing his spirit, and so he abandons his lover and business and lives with a contented ferrykeeper, from whom he learns to “listen to the river.” He thereby discovers the interconnectedness of all things and attains enlightenment.

**Frodo Baggins**

**protagonist of J.R.R. Tolkien’s epic novel cycle Lord of the Rings (1954)**

Because of his Hobbit purity, young Frodo is entrusted with the grave task of journeying to destroy the evil ring of Sauron. He is protected along the way by a brotherhood of men, elves, dwarves and hobbits but faces relentless pursuit by various terrifying agents of Sauron, who, if he once again possesses the ring, will have ultimate destructive power. At the same time Frodo must fight against his own growing weakness and possessiveness towards the ring, which slowly saps the goodness from every owner. Frodo succeeds in his task, but the injuries he sustains over the course of the quest eventually take his life.
CULTURAL CONTEXT

THE FAIRY TALE WORLD OF PERICLES

Editor's Note: Many features of *Pericles* lend themselves to comparison to fairy tales: fantastic adventures, love at first sight, gaps in time, multiple locations and sometimes inexplicable plot points. Among other similarities, Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales* and the tales of *The Arabian Nights* are stories in which abandonment and death often live side-by-side noble characters and happy endings.

Compelling in their simplicity and poignant in their emotional appeal, fairy tales have the power to stir long-dormant childhood feelings and to quicken our sympathies for the downtrodden. They also offer wit and wisdom in the trenchant formulations of the folk. There is something in them for every age and generation. ...

Folklorists are quick to point out that fairy tales were never really meant for children's ears alone. Originally told at fireside gatherings or in spinning circles by adults to adult audiences, fairy tales joined the canon of children's literature (which is itself of recent vintage) only in the last two or three centuries. Yet the hold these stories have on the imagination of children is so compelling that it becomes difficult to conceive of a childhood without them. Growing up without fairy tales implies spiritual impoverishment, as one writer after another has warned. ...

[F]airy tales, for all their naturalistic details, concern themselves with inner realities. In our time, Bruno Bettelheim has emerged as the most eloquent spokesman for psychological readings of fairy tales. "In a fairy tale," he writes, "internal processes are externalized and become comprehensible as represented by the figures of the story and its events." By meditating on the conflicts acted out in fairy tales, he emphasizes, children can find solutions to their own specific problems and thus stand to gain powerful therapeutic benefits from the stories. ...

"It was like a fairy tale." Our everyday language reflects the conventional wisdom that fairy tales signify wishes fulfilled and dreams come true. But no one can read through Grimms’ *Nursery and Household Tales* without pausing to reflect on the contrast between the happy endings of fairy tales and the hard facts of fairy-tale life. The melodramatic plot begins with an account of helplessness and victimization, rehearse the conflicts between hero and villain, and concludes with detailed descriptions of reprisals taken against the villain and a report on the hero’s marriage or accession to power.”

Typically, the hero of the fairy tale achieves a domestic, microcosmic triumph, and the hero of myth a world-historical, macrocosmic triumph. Whereas the former – the youngest or despised child who becomes the master of extraordinary powers – prevails over his personal oppressors, the latter brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of his society as a whole.


Put simply, the dominant feeling a myth conveys is: this is absolutely unique; it could not have happened to any other person, or in any other setting; such events are grandiose, awe-inspiring, and could not possibly happen to an ordinary mortal like you or me. The reason is not so much that what takes place is miraculous, but that it is described as such. By contrast, although the events which occur in fairy tales are often unusual and most improbable, they are always presented as ordinary, something that could happen to you or me or the person next door when out on a walk in the woods. Even the most remarkable encounters are related in casual, everyday ways in fairy tales. ...

Fairy tales are loved by the child not because the imagery he finds in them conforms to what goes on within him, but because – despite all the angry, anxious thoughts in his mind to which the fairy tale gives body and specific content – these stories always result in a happy outcome, which the child cannot imagine on his own.

Bruno Bettelheim, “Fairy Tale Versus Myth” and “Fears of Fantasy,” *The Uses of Enchantment*, 1975

Editor's Note: Director Joseph Haj has said that the story Shakespeare tells of Pericles’ travelogue is not necessarily meant to be taken literally but reflects a spiritual journey the character takes in his search for home. Pericles can then be seen as an allegory, in which literal events are also understood on a second level to represent more abstract ideas.

Narrative or description in which the literal events contain sustained reference to a simultaneous structure of other ideas or events. The subject of the secondary level(s) may be philosophical, historical, theological or moral. Allegory does not consist in the simple substitution of one object or action for another, but relies upon a correspondence between the literal and metaphorical levels to help elucidate the meaning. The importance and appropriateness of the juxtaposition of literal and allegorical events, and the degree to which the relationship between the two levels of action is sustained distinguish skillful from unskilful uses of allegory, …

Allegory has its origins in myths, fictional narratives which attempt to explain and contain universal facts of human nature and the material world. All religions therefore have a large allegorical content. …

Allegory may be religious or secular; it can be presented in verse, prose or drama, and may have political, humorous or didactic intentions. Although it is predominantly associated with the Middle Ages, many later writers have used it in both conventional and original ways (e.g. *The Faerie Queene*, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, *Moby-Dick*, *Animal Farm*).


If we are to take the old romance in the proper spirit, we must not demand probability, or any sort of realistic documentation, any more than one does when watching a ballet; and we must identify ourselves with Pericles as uncritically as a child might with the hero of a fairy tale. We must last out his trials as he does, never trusting completely to what life offers at the moment, but sustained by some sort of faith in what fate, or the gods, ultimately have in store: for old Gower, presiding over the evening’s entertainment, has assured us that the story has “restorative” properties for its hearers, as Pericles’ painful adventures ultimately prove to have for him. …

This long, improbable old romance may dismay one at first because it is so different from the stories Shakespeare used for his more familiar plays. But he must have known exactly what he was doing when he chose the story and dramatized it in the style he did: no one has ever understood better than he the properties and the meanings of narrative. He was the heir of the long tradition of allegorical interpretation of narratives, both Biblical and classical, and he assumed all his life that the stories he used had moral or religious meanings that might be revealed through the arts of the dramatist and his actors. … The story of *Pericles* … lasts twenty or thirty years, and has half a dozen climaxes and turning points, none of which are therefore crucial. Pericles can survive them because of his faith that “life’s but breath, to trust it error,” and Shakespeare evidently chose his story because his interest in the “moral” had waned, while his interest in the religious meaning, or “allegory” as it was called, had grown. The dramatis personae of the old tale have hardly more individual character or more significance than the good guys and bad guys of our popular adventure stories, and Shakespeare leaves them as he found them. The episodic narrative has none of the psychological and ethical profundity that we associate with the tightly build histories and tragedies, and Shakespeare does not ask us to take the literal story seriously. But he makes it give off religious (or “allegorical”) meanings, classical or Christian or both.


The mischance most common in the four romances is family separation – husband from wife, brother from brother, parent from child. There may seem to be nothing new in this, since Shakespeare has handled such business before and since it is business which always has been fundamental to story. But it is precisely the fundamental nature of family ties, and in consequence their symbolic value, that interests Shakespeare now. He has, for instance, been interested in fathers and daughters before: in Capulet and Juliet, in Polonius and Ophelia, in Lear and Cordelia. But never has he used them to say more than in themselves they mean. The relation tends now to become abstract, and, because it is abstract, to be realized with a special intensity in the persons who embody it. … [T]hey are sorely beset – they, together with other members here of separated families – by misfortunes not of their own making. Misunderstanding, jealousy, cruelty, and fraud are calamities out of the sky; they come whole and naked, without motivation or excuse, as lightning or pestilence might come, or storms at sea that wreck the best-intentioned ships. Literal shipwrecks are frequent in the four plays; so frequent, in fact, as to seem at last not literal at all. The shipwreck is Shakespeare’s final symbol.

Artistic Director Joseph Haj makes his Guthrie directorial debut this winter with his lauded Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) production of Shakespeare’s *Pericles*. Controversial in its authorship and often devalued as a literary achievement, Haj shares how the Bard’s late romance transcends analysis to become something altogether beautiful.

By Justin Quinn Pelegano

Q: Why *Pericles*? You’ve said it’s your favorite Shakespeare play.

JH: [laughs] Well, the one I’m working on is always my favorite. But *Pericles* is absolutely one of my favorite Shakespeare plays. And I’m nearly alone amongst people in the world who believe it was written by one hand. Scholars will tell you differently of course; many think that the first couple of acts were somebody else’s and that it really isn’t until the third act that you see Shakespeare’s mastery.

Not only do I think it’s one hand, but I think it’s Shakespeare writing at the very height of his gift. I think of it as the work of an extraordinarily mature playwright. And I think the first two acts are deliberately two-dimensional because Pericles is young and coltish. His ego is so forward in everything that he does, and it puts him in some trouble. And it’s not until the third act where Pericles suffers and is forced to deal with loss that he matures. The play dimensionalizes as Pericles himself dimensionalizes.

And I will also say that I think it’s the work of an extraordinarily sophisticated and mature playwright in that *Pericles* doesn’t do anything particularly wrong to lose everything, and he doesn’t do anything particularly right to get it all back. And I think any of us who have lived for any time recognize that that’s the way of the world. There’s great beauty and grace coming to all of us, and there’s great tragedy coming to all of us, and a life lived is about all of that.

Q: Do people think *Pericles* is accessible because of that relatability?

JH: It’s a play that’s far better in performance than it is on the page. This isn’t true of all of Shakespeare’s plays. Some of them are spectacular on the page. *Pericles* comes to life in the making of it and in front of an audience. In fact, it was one of the most popular of Shakespeare’s plays during his own lifetime. It was a wildly successful play before it fell into such disregard. And it fell into disregard because it doesn’t follow the rules of playmaking. And I think that challenges critics and audiences – to the extent that they’re challenged – because it doesn’t behave like normal plays.

But I think on the human being side, we understand it entirely. It’s extremely accessible, and it feels very true. It’s a wise, and spiritual, and powerful, and funny, beautiful play.

Q: And it lends itself to a beautiful production design. What is your relationship to the story of *Pericles* and the design? Having seen photos from your OSF production, the design is striking in its simplicity.

JH: It is really quite simple, and we went for that deliberately. The play’s a kind of travelogue; it moves to a lot of spaces, and I didn’t want to go, “Okay, the brothel, let’s make that like Amsterdam. And Ephesus, let’s make that like Lebanon.” I didn’t want to get into an overly particularized world.

*Pericles* operates on the level of allegory. We have a group of storytellers, and we put them very much in the troubadour tradition – there’s a lot of music in this production. Jack Herrick, who is our music director and part of the legendary Red Clay Ramblers, composed the music for it. The first lines of the play belong to Gower, who’s our narrator, and they are: “to sing a song that old was sung.”

So this idea of the troubadour, of an oft sung tale, is very much in the folkloric tradition. It’s this idea of stories told out loud that help us understand our world and how to move through it.

And seeing the storyteller within the story was really important to us. There’s actually not a lot of moving parts on stage. It’s actors in space. The play belongs to the company that’s charged to tell it. It’s on that level that *Pericles* functions most beautifully, and we’ve tried to build a production that leans into that.

Q: What do you hope that Guthrie audiences take away from this production?

JH: Stories are so powerful. We organize our lives around them. Garland Wright used to say that the audience only has one responsibility when they come to a play – only one – and that’s the willingness to have an experience.

And I think any audience member coming to *Pericles* who’s willing to have an experience is going to have one. It’s a play that I love very much. It’s an innocently placed thing; it’s a transparent thing, a bit of a fragile thing. You know, there are plays that kind of punch you in the mouth, plays that come at you in different ways. And this one plays so close to the heart. And I’m excited to share it with our Guthrie community because it’s so meaningful to me and a production that I’m quite proud of.
PLACES

• Antioch
da city in Asia Minor in what is now Turkey. It was the capital of the Greek-speaking monarchy of Seleucid, one of several monarchies founded after the death of Alexander the Great in 322 B.C.E. It was situated about 15 miles from the Mediterranean Sea.

• Tyre
an ancient and important Phoenician port city on the Mediterranean Sea, about 220 miles south of Antioch, in what is now Lebanon. Founded at least as early as the 14th century B.C.E., Tyre was first under the rule of Egypt but gained independence as Egypt’s influence weakened. Alexander the Great conquered Tyre after an impressive seven-month siege, and the city became part of the Seleucid kingdom following his death.

• Tarsus
a city on the river Cydnus (also called the Tarsus or Berdan River) in Cilicia, now southeastern Turkey. It was situated about 12 miles from the Mediterranean Sea and about 170 miles northwest of Antioch. Tarsus was particularly prosperous beginning in the 5th century B.C.E. due to its rich fertile soil, and its position as a gateway between Asia Minor and the Levant. Tarsus was where Antony and Cleopatra met and the birthplace of Paul (originally known as Saul), the first evangelist of Christianity.

• Pentapolis
meaning “five cities,” a region in north Africa along the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea about 950 miles southwest of Antioch in what is present-day Libya. The chief and oldest of the five cities was Cyrene, which was founded as a Greek colony in the 7th century B.C.E. (Another of the five cities was Hesperides, renamed Berenice by the Egyptians and known today as Benghazi.)

• Ephesus
an ancient Greek city founded in Asia Minor in what is now Turkey, near where the Aegean and Mediterranean seas meet. It’s the site of the Temple of Artemis (or Diana, as the Romans called her), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and was first built by Croesus around 550 B.C.E.

• Mytilene
an ancient city founded in the 11th century B.C.E. on the island of Lesbos, located on the eastern coast of the Aegean Sea, in what is now Greece. It’s about 100 miles north of Ephesus.

PROLOGUE

Assuming man’s infirm disguise
Taking on mortal form and the associated human weakness.

“assuming man’s infirm disguise / To glad your ear, and please your eye.” (Gower)

ember-eves
The evenings before Ember days, four three-day periods of fasting and prayer, one in each season of the year. The term is a corruption of Latin quatuor tempora, “four times.”

restoratives
medicines; the restoration imagined is physical, psychological and spiritual.

“It hath been sung at festivals, / On ember-eves and holy-ales; / And lords and ladies in their lives / Have read it for restoratives” (Gower)

purchase
profit

“The purchase is to make men glorious” (Gower)

Antiochus the Great
One of several Seleucid kings, inheritors of Alexander the Great, who took the name Antiochus. Antiochus the Great was Antiochus III (190-187 BC), but he may be confused in the play with the Antiochus who “built up this city,” the earlier Antiochus I Soter (292-261 BC).

“This Antioch, then. Antiochus the Great / Built up this city, for his chiefest seat: / The fairest in all Syria.” (Gower)

frame
direct their course

“The beauty of this sinful dame / Made many princes thither frame, / To seek her as a bed-fellow” (Gower)

1.1 ANTIOCH

Hesperides
The Hesperides were the three daughters of Hesperus, in whose garden hung golden apples. One of the labors of Hercules was to pass the guardian dragon and pick the fruit.

“Before thee stands this fair Hesperides / With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touch’d / For death-like dragons here affright thee hard.” (Antiochus)

whole heap
total person

“because thine eye / Presumes to reach, all thy whole heap must die.” (Antiochus)

I am no viper … me breed.
Vipers were traditionally believed to eat their way out of their mother’s body.

“I am no viper, yet I feed / On mother’s flesh which did me breed.” (Pericles)

touch the gate
a coarse sexual metaphor: gate = vagina

“For he’s no man on whom perfections wait / That knowing sin within will touch the gate.” (Pericles)

gloze
use fair or specious words; dissemble

“he has found the meaning, / But I will gloze with him” (Antiochus)

cancel off
terminate

“Your exposition misinterpreting, / We might proceed to cancel off your days” (Antiochus)
**1.2 TYRE**

**the ostent of war**

Display, ostentation

"With hostile forces he'll overspread the land, / and with the ostent of war will look so huge / Amazement shall drive courage from the state" (Pericles)

**unlaid ope**

Concealed

"How many worthy princes' bloods were shed / To keep his bed of blackness unlaid ope" (Pericles)

**1.3 TYRE**

I perceive he was a wise fellow... none of secrets

Reference to a familiar story, perhaps originated in Plutarch's *Life of Demetrius*, in which the poet Philippides, when asked by the king Lysimachus, “What wilt thou have me give thee of my things Philippides?” replies, “Even what it shall please thee, O king, so it be none of thy secrets.”

"Well, I perceive he was a wise fellow, and had good discretion, that, being bid to ask what he would of the king, desired he might know now of his secrets." (Thaliard)

**2.0 GOWER**

**full bent with**

Fully intent upon; comes from the length to which a bow can be bent, full capacity

"How Thaliard came full bent with sin / And had intent to murder him" (Gower)

**perishen**

Perish; an archaism introduced to distance ancient Gower and his language

"All perishen of man, of pelf / Ne aught escapen but himself" (Gower)

**2.1 PENTAPOLIS**

**Pilch**

Wordplay on pilcher (to steal) and on the fish pilchard or sardine; a pilch is also a leather outergarment

"What, ho, Pilch!" (First Fisherman)

**Patch-breech**

A reference to patched clothes

"What, Patch-breech, I say!" (First Fisherman)

**with a wanian**

With a vengeance

"Come away, or I'll fetch thee with a wanian." (First Fisherman)

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**supercilious riots**

Unnecessary indulgences

"O, let those cities that of plenty's cup / And her prosperities so largely taste / With their superfluous riots bear these tears!" (Cleon)

**gods of Greece**

In the Hellenistic cities of Asia Minor, the Greek gods were worshipped along with local gods.

"The gods of Greece protect you! / And we'll pray for you." (Cleon)

**well-a-day**

Alas

"When, well-a-day, we could scarce help ourselves." (First Fisherman)

**porpoise**

Proverbially regarded as a predictor of storms

"Nay, master, said not I as much when I saw the porpoise." (Third Fisherman)

**fry**

Small fish

"He plays and tumbles, driving the poor fry before him" (First Fisherman)

**sexton**

Person in charge of the care and upkeep of a church, and of ringing the bells from the belfry

"But, master, if I had been the sexton, I would have been that day in the belfry." (Third Fisherman)

**finny subject**

Fishy citizenry

"How from the finny subject of the sea" (Pericles)

**All that ... men detect**

Everything which is commendable or blameworthy about mankind

**detect**

Exposé or reveal wrongdoing

"And from their watery empire recollect / All that may men approve or men detect" (Pericles)

**crave**

Ask earnestly, but has a similar meaning to beg; it differs on a technicality, as the Third Fisherman points out beggars are whipped.

"But crave! Then I'll turn craver too, and so I shall 'scape whipping." (Third Fisherman)

**joust and tourney**

Originally jousts were single combats in which knights and squires rode at each other, one to one, with lances; tourneys (from French *tournoyer*, to wheel round) were combats with several knights on each side, but the difference became obscured. At Tudor and Jacobean tournaments, the tourney came to consist of single combats, using swords as weapons.

"And there are princes and knights come from all parts of the world to joust and tourney for her love" (First Fisherman)
bots on’t
a mild oath or curse, like “a plague on it” or “pox on it”; bots is a disease of horses caused by worms or maggots.

“Ha! bots on’t, ’tis come at last, and ’tis turned to a rusty armour.” (Second Fisherman)

bounties
generosity

“And if that ever my low fortune’s better, / I’ll pay your bounties;” (Pericles)

condolements
A malapropism which seems to be a humorous combination of “emoluments” (profit or gain arising from a station, office or employment; reward) with “condolence,” the latter from the root “dole,” meaning “a share.”

vails
means both “tips” and the remnants of cloth left over after a garment was made up, often given to the tailor as gratuities. The Second Fisherman is continuing his sewing theme from earlier in the line: garment, seams.

“There are certain condolements, certain vails. I hope, sir, if you thrive you’ll remember from whence you had them.” (Second Fisherman)

bases
an embroidered skirt-like mantle that hung down from the waist to the knees, worn by knights on horseback.

“Only, my friend, I yet am unprovided / Of a pair of bases.” (Pericles)

2.2 PENTAPOLIS

triumph
an obsolete word for a tournament

“Aren’t the knights ready to begin the triumph?” (Simonides)

device
emblem, impresa

“Tis now your honour, daughter, to explain / The labour of each knight in his device.” (Simonides)

Sparta
an ancient Greek city-state, and one of Athens’ chief rivals, located further south and east on the Peloponnese. Where Athens was known for its art and culture, Sparta was known for its military strength and austerity.

“A knight of Sparta, my renowned father;” (Thaisa)

black Ethiope
Ethiope is used literally and metaphorically in Shakespeare’s works to mean a person of dark complexion.

“And the device he bears upon his shield / Is a black Ethiop reaching at the sun” (Thaisa)

Macedon
a kingdom on the northwestern shore of the Aegean Sea, north of Greece. It shared Greek culture and language but wasn’t a real rival to either Athens or Sparta during the height of classical Greek culture. But following the end of the golden age of Greece, because of the strength and military prowess of Philip II and his son, Alexander the Great, Macedon’s influence spread Greek culture throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Asia Minor.

“A prince of Macedon, my royal father;” (Thaisa)

More by gentleness than by force
a traditional statement of the way women retain power within powerlessness.

“Piu por dulzura que por fuerza.” (Thaisa)

stranger
an unfamiliar person but also a foreigner (and has no markings on his arm to indicate what his country is).

“He seems to be a stranger” (Thaisa)

whipstock
the handle of a cart driver’s whip.

“For by his rusty outside he appears / To have practised more the whipstock than the lance.” (Lord)

2.3 PENTAPOLIS

her labour’d scholar
The scholar (artist) in the creation of whom Art made a special effort.

“In framing an artist, art hath thus decreed, / To make some good but others to exceed, / And you are her labour’d scholar.” (Simonides)

Jove
king of the gods in Roman mythology (modeled on Zeus from Greek mythology)

cates
delicacies, dainties

resist me
repel me, as in lost appetite

“By Jove, I wonder, that is king of thoughts, / “These cates resist me, be but thought upon.” (Simonides)

Juno
queen of the gods in Roman mythology (modeled on Hera from Greek mythology); she was particularly known as the patron goddess for the married life of women.

“By Juno, that is queen of marriage, / All viands that I eat do seem unsavoury” (Thaisa)

viands
food

“All viands that I eat do seem unsavory” (Thaisa)

broken a staff
Shattering the lance became the aim in 16th-century tilting matches.

“Has done no more than other knights have done, / Has broken a staff or so” (Simonides)

countervail
equal, counterbalance

“Had not a show might countervail his worth.” (Simonides)

Wishing it so much blood unto your life
It was popularly believed that wine replenished the supply of the blood.

“The King my father, sir, has drunk to you. / . . . Wishing it so much blood unto your life.” (Thaisa)
trip
dance; also, fall down for sexual intercourse

measures
stately dances; also, stratagems in wooing

"And I have heard you knights of Tyre / Are excellent in making ladies trip / And that their measures are as excellent" (Simonides)

speeding
success

"Tomorrow all for speeding do their best." (Simonides)

2.4 TYRE

forbear your suffrages
refrain from offering your votes

"For honour's sake, forbear your suffrages" (Helicanus)

agéd patience
The long-practiced patience of the old

"I shall with agéd patience bear your yoke." (Helicanus)

2.5 PENTAPOLIS

wear Diana's livery
Remain a maid (the Roman goddess Diana was chaste, as were her followers.)

"One twelve moons more she'll wear Diana's livery." (Simonides)

Cynthia
Diana in her capacity as the moon goddess

"This by the eye of Cynthia hath she vowed" (Cynthia)

subtlety
cunning, craftiness

"Tis the king's subtly to have my life." (Pericles)

bent all offices
devoted all my efforts

"That never aimed so high to love your daughter, / But bent all offices to honour her." (Pericles)

levy
impose, plan or undertake; or perhaps misused for “level” = aim.

"Never did thought of mine levy offence" (Pericles)

Even in his throat ... I return the lie
From the proverbial “To lie in one’s throat”: ‘to anyone except the king who calls me traitor, I say he lies in his throat’

"Even in his throat – unless it be the king – / That calls me traitor, I return the lie." (Pericles)

her state
honor’s majesty

"I came unto your court for honour’s cause / And not to be a rebel to her state” (Pericles)

peremptory
determined, resolved

"Yea, princess, are you so peremptory?” (Simonides)

3.0 GOWER

y-slacked
reduced to quiet; the “y” prefix, from Old and Middle English, is a conscious archaism.

"Now sleep y-slacked hath the rout; / No din but snores the house about" (Gower)

rout
disorderly crowd; uproar

"rebuke these surges / Which wash both heaven and hell" (Pericles)

o’erfed breast
overstuffed stomach

"Made louder by the o’erfed breast / Of this most pompous marriage feast.” (Gower)

Lucina
Roman goddess of childbirth

"Lucina, O / Divinest patroness, and midwife gentle” (Pericles)

conceit
understanding

"Here is a thing too young for such a place, / Who if it had conceit would die” (Lychorida)

assist the storm
by ranting (like thunder) or weeping (like rain)

"Patience, good sir, do not assist the storm” (Pericles)

rudeliest
most roughly or harshly

"Thou art the rudeliest welcome to this world” (Pericles)

chiding
noisy, with a sense that the elements scolding each other

"Thou hast as chiding a nativity / As fire, air, water, earth and heaven can make” (Pericles)

fell
cruel

"And what ensues in this fell storm / Shall for itself itself perform.” (Gower)

3.1 AT SEA

god of this great vast
Neptune, Roman god of the sea

rebuke
check, repress; with biblical connotations mixed with classical mythology (Jesus “rebuked the wind and the raging of the water” Luke 8:24)

"rebuke these surges / Which wash both heaven and hell” (Pericles)

Thou that ... winds command
Aeolus, god of the winds, whose island was surrounded by brass walls

"and thou, that hast / Upon the winds command, bind them in brass” (Pericles)

Hymen
the Greek god of marriage and the wedding feast

"Hymen hath brought the bride to bed” (Gower)

quaintly eche
skillfully eke out or supplement

"Be attent, / And time that is so briefly spent / With your fine fancies quaintly eche.” (Gower)

tenor
significance, content

"To the court of King Simonides / Are letters brought, the tenor these” (Gower)

dooms
judgements

"He, obedient to their dooms, / Will take the crown.” (Gower)

well-a-near
Alas, alack-a-day; obsolete and dialectical

"The lady shrieks and, well-a-near, / Does fall in labor with her fear.” (Gower)
thy portage quit

cargo, portion of the freight that is hers:
Marina has lost more in the death of her
mother than she could hope to gain if she
possessed everything around her.

“Even at the first thy loss is more than can
/ Thy portage quit” (Pericles)

flaw

a burst which is suddenly violent but which
ends quickly.

“I do not fear the flaw; / It hath done to me
the worst.” (Pericles)

sea-room

room to maneuver a ship clear of danger

“But sea-room, an the brine and cloudy
billow kiss the moon, I care not.” (Second
Sailor)

e’er-remaining lamps

Ever-burning lights: stars

“And e’er-remaining lamps, the belching
whale / And humming water must
o’erwhelm thy corpse” (Pericles)

bitumed

sealed with bitumen or pitch

“Sir, we have a chest beneath the hatches,
caulked and bitumed ready.” (Second
Sailor)

3.2 EPHESUS

bleak upon

directly beside, exposed to

“Sir, our lodgings standing bleak upon the
sea / Shook as the earth did quake” (Man)

Apollo

Greek God of medicine and learning

“Apollo, perfect me / In the characters!”
(Cerimon)

mundane cost

worldly treasure

“I, King Pericles, have lost / This queen,
worth all our mundane cost.” (Cerimon)

Well said

well done

“Well said, well said; the fire and cloths.”
(Cerimon)

3.3 TARSUS

litigious

questionable

“Tyre stands in a litigious peace.” (Pericles)

manner’d

moral character; that she may be raised with
the morals and values as fit her rank by birth

“that she may be / Manner’d as she is
born.” (Pericles)

corn

grain, wheat

“Your grace that fed my country with your
corn” (Cleon)

common body

the common people, general populace

“If neglection / Should therein make me
vile, the common body / By you relieved,
would force me to my duty.” (Cleon)

3.4 EPHESUS

whether there delivered

whether I gave birth there

“That I was shipped at sea / I well
remember, even on my bearing time, / But
whether there delivered, by the holy Gods /
I cannot rightly say.” (Thaisa)

a vestal livery

the clothes and life of a vestal virgin,
dedicated to tending the fire in the temple of
Vesta, Roman goddess of the hearth. As Thaisa
will serve at Diana’s temple, not Vesta’s, the
term most likely refers more generally here to
chaste service to a virgin goddess.

“A vestal livery will I take me to” (Thaisa)

Diana’s temple

The Temple of Diana at Ephesus was one
of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
This temple was constructed in 550 B.C.E.
and was one of the largest and most complex
buildings of ancient times. Its foundation
measured approximately 350 feet by 180
feet and it featured a marble sanctuary, a tile
roof and 127 columns, each 40 to 60 high.
Bronze statuary, created by some of the most
renowned artists of the time, decorated the
sanctuary, which was dominated by a large
gold, ebony, silver and black stone statue
of Diana herself. The Temple of Diana at
Ephesus burned to the ground in 356 B.C.E.,
was rebuilt, and burned again in 262 C.E.,
after which time the increasing popularity of
Christianity caused Ephesians to lose interest
in yet again rebuilding the structure. Though
little is left of the building or its ornaments,
some fragments of statuary and columns from
the second temple are on display in the British
Museum.

“Diana’s temple is not distant far”
(Cerimon)

4.0 GOWER

votaress

woman upholding a vow

“His woeful queen we leave at Ephesus, /
Unto Diana there a votaress.” (Gower)

heart and place

center and focus

“Which makes her both the heart and place
/ Of general wonder.” (Gower)

wrack

ruin, destruction

“But, alack, / That monster envy, oft the
wrack / Of earnéd praise” (Gower)

absolute

Perfect, accomplished

“Philoten contends in skill / With absolute
Marina.” (Gower)

stead

aid, assist

“The sooner her vile thoughts to stead”
(Gower)

4.1 TARSUS

favour

appearance

“Lord, how your favour’s / Changed with
this unprofitable woe!” (Dionyza)

O’er the sea margent

along the edge of the sea

quick

refreshing, piercing

stomach

appetite

“On the sea margent / Walk with Leonine;
the air is quick there, / And it pierces and
sharpens the stomach” (Dionyza)
bereave
deprive

“No, I pray you. / I’ll not bereave you of your servant.” (Marina)

4.2 MYTILENE
gallants
fashionable young men-about-town.

“Mytilene is full of gallants” (Pandar)
sodden
over-boiled; a reference to the sweating-tub treatment for venereal disease

“The stuff we have, a strong wind will blow it to pieces, they are so pitifully sodden.” (Bawd)

baggage
worthless woman, strumpet

“The poor Transylvanian is dead, that lay with the little baggage.” (Pandar)

earnest
deposit

“If you like her, so; if not, I have lost my earnest.” (Boult)

bated
abated, reduced
doit
a Dutch coin worth half a farthing, which itself was only worth a quarter of a penny; generically a small coin of little value.

“I cannot be bated one doit of a thousand pieces.” (Boult)

4.3 TARSUS
blurted at
scorned, treated derisively

harpy
a legendary monster with the face and torso of a woman and the wings and talons of a bird of prey.

“You are like one that superstitiously / Doth swear to the gods that winter kills the flies” (Dionyza)

Doth swear … kills the flies
Dionyza accuses Cleon of being so tenderhearted that he swears to heaven that winter is cruel because it kills flies.

“Thou art like the harpy,/Which to betray dost use thine angel’s face/ To seize with thine eagle’s talons.” (Cleon)

4.4 GOWER
stand i’ the gaps
fills in the time gaps between scenes

“Now the gods to-bless your honour.” (Bawd)

his pilot thought
Pericles moves as quickly as if his pilot were merely thought.

“Well-sailing ships and bounteous winds have brought / This king to Tarsus – think his pilot thought;” (Gower)

first is gone
has already left

“To fetch his daughter home, who first is gone.” (Gower)

sackcloth
wearing sackcloth, a coarse textile used chiefly for making bags, is a biblical sign of mourning

“He swears / Never to wash his face, nor cut his hairs: / He puts on sackcloth, and to sea.” (Gower)

4.5 MYTILENE
the god Priapus
the Greek and Roman god of procreation, usually represented as having a disproportionately large erection.

“She’s able to freeze the god Priapus and undo a whole generation.” (Bawd)

quirks
verbal subtleties, quibbles

“she has me her quirks, her reasons, her master reasons, her prayers, her knees…” (Bawd)

swores
those who swear by us

“Faith, I must ravish her, or she’ll disfurnish us of all our cavaliers and make our swores priests.” (Bawd)

to-bless
an intensive: bless entirely

“Now the gods to-bless your honour.” (Bawd)

not paced … manage
Terms from horse training: paced = broken in, taught her paces; manage = training of a horse in action and steps

“My lord, she’s not paced yet. You must take some pains to work her to your manage.” (Bawd)

laved
cleansed

“I hither came with thoughts intertemperate, / Foul and deformed, the which thy pains so well hath laved that they are now white.” (Lysimachus)

be you thoughten
assure yourself

“For me, be you thoughten / That I came with no ill intent” (Lysimachus)

Avaunt!
begone

“Avaunt, thou damned doorkeeper!” (Lysimachus)
cope
the canopy or vault of heaven, i.e. sky
gelden
castrated

“If your peevish chastity, which is not worth a breakfast in the cheapest country under the cope, shall undo a whole household, let me be gelded like a spaniel.” (Boult)

what thou professest
do as a job, profession

“For what thou professest, a baboon, could he speak, / Would own a name too dear.” (Marina)

cope
the canopy or vault of heaven, i.e. sky
gelden
castrated

“If your peevish chastity, which is not worth a breakfast in the cheapest country under the cope, shall undo a whole household, let me be gelded like a spaniel.” (Boult)

what thou professest
do as a job, profession

“For what thou professest, a baboon, could he speak, / Would own a name too dear.” (Marina)

graft
in plant husbandry, a shoot inserted in another plant for the purpose of cross-breeding.

“O, sir, a courtesy / Which if we should deny, the most just gods / For every graft would send a caterpillar, / And so afflict our province.” (Euprimachus)

awkward casualties
adverse misfortunes

“But time hath rooted out my parentage, / And to the world and awkward casualties / Bound me in servitude.” (Marina)

in pace another Juno
Juno, queen of the Roman gods, was recognized by her way of walking.

“As silver-voiced, her eyes as jewel-like / And cased as richly, in pace another Juno” (Pericles)

night-oblations
prayers offered at night

“Pure Dian, bless thee for thy vision! / I / Will offer night-oblations to thee.” (Pericles)

5.0 GOWER
deep clerks she dumbs
makes speechless even the most scholarly through her learning

“Deep clerks she dumbs; and with her neele composes / Nature’s own shape” (Gower)

heavy
sorrowful

bark
small ship

“In your supposing once more put your sight / Of heavy Pericles; think this his bark” (Gower)

5.1 MYTILENE
bootless
unavailing, useless

“You may; / But bootless is your sight: he will not speak to any.” (Hylicanus)

weary for the staleness
tired of the sameness, monotony of the food on board ship

“Wherein we are not destitute for want, / But weary for the staleness.” (Hylicanus)

5.3 EPHESUS
Reverend appearer
One who appears worthy of respect

“Reverend appearer, no; / I threw her overboard with these very arms.” (Pericles)

night-oblations
prayers offered at night

“Pure Dian, bless thee for thy vision! / I / Will offer night-oblations to thee.” (Pericles)
STUDENT QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

EXERCISES FOR PERICLES

Note to Teachers: Depending on your particular group and the way the exercise is structured, you could use any of the exercises across different grade levels; however, the exercises are presented in ascending order, with number 1 best for the youngest students and number 10 most appropriate for the oldest.

1. For discussion and writing: The places Pericles lives or visits during the play include Tyre, Antioch, Tarsus, Pentapolis, Mytilene, and Ephesus. Today Tyre is a city in Lebanon; Antioch, Tarsus, and Ephesus are cities in Turkey; Pentapolis is a region in Libya; and Mytilene is a city on the Greek island of Lesbos. Locate these places on a map and find reports that mention them in current events. Consider the similarities and differences between today’s real-life events and the story of Pericles.

2. For writing or discussion: Pericles is a prince; yet he leaves his home to go to Tarsus. What is missing in his life that impels him to go on this journey?

3. For writing or discussion: How does Pericles’ life change when, in the course of a subsequent journey, he lands on the shore of Pentapolis?

4. For discussion or writing: Who tries to harm Pericles or members of his family, and who offers help? What are the motivations of those who try to harm and those who try to help?

5. For writing or discussion: Pericles has a special shield that he loses when he is shipwrecked, but then finds again on the shore. What might this shield symbolize?

6. For writing or discussion: The story of Pericles’ life is told by Gower and acted out by Pericles. What are the advantages of having both a central character acting out the story and a narrator telling us the story? Can you think of other plays or movies that use a similar combination of central character and narrator?

7. For writing or discussion: In this play the sea both divides and connects the people living in the various cities. Describe the ways in which it connects and the ways in which it divides them.

8. For writing or discussion: How do the lighting, sound, and scene designers create the storms that we see in the course of the play? If there are differences between the first storm and the second, what do these differences signify?

9. Write the story of Thaisa’s life, told from her point of view.

10. For discussion or writing: Many of the actors in this production play multiple roles. What are the challenges involved in playing more than one role in a play, and how well do you think this aspect of the production worked?

11. Group project: In the second half of the play, Marina is kidnapped and forced to live in a brothel. Imagine the location and layout of the brothel and other conditions of Marina’s life there, such as guards and allies. Put together a diagram and descriptions of imagined characters reflecting these conditions. Then create a story in which the courageous and intelligent Marina escapes, using her knowledge of the layout and town, her allies and other resources, and perhaps a stroke of good luck to foil her captors and achieve her freedom.

Questions and activities written for this play guide by Amy Kritzer, who is Emeritus Professor of English and Theater at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.
FOR FURTHER UNDERSTANDING

EDITIONS OF PERICLES


Warren’s edit of the play follows the lead of Gary Taylor and MacDonald P. Jackson, who embrace the possibility of George Wilkins as a collaborator on the play. To that end, they and Warren speculate that Wilkins’ narrative _The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre_ may include buried sections of verse from the original play’s text, verse text that was lost and therefore left out of the Quarto version of the Shakespeare play. Warren _et. al._ interpolate some of this buried verse text into the play script to improve upon the playability of certain scenes, most notably the brothel scene between Marina and Lysimachus.


A reaction against the liberality of the Taylor and Jackson edition, the Cambridge editors believe the text as we have received it from the Quarto, with certain accepted emendations through the years, is not in need of help from the Wilkins text.


A middle-of-the-road edition which does not use additional text from Wilkins yet is more flexible than Cambridge in acknowledging that some corruptions in the Quarto text may not be solved simply through conventional text emendation.

BOOKS


Bloom discusses each play in the order he determines they were composed, with the basic conceit that Shakespeare invented personality. Bloom is not favorable towards _Pericles_.

Garber, Marjorie, _Shakespeare After All_, Pantheon, 2004

Another massive tome that takes each play in turn in the order they were written. Garber is generally favorable towards _Pericles_.


Greenblatt combines socio-historical research about Elizabethan times with insightful readings of selected Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets to create a very readable “cultural biography.”


A casebook study of _Pericles_, the results of the work Jackson and Taylor did on in relation to the Wilkins prose narrative.


Frye looks in depth at 10 of Shakespeare’s plays.


Tracing the origins, production history, reception and scholarship surrounding 400 years’ worth of _Pericles_ criticism.

WEBSITES

Folger Shakespeare Library
www.folger.edu
The wealth of resources found on this site include lesson plans, study guides, and interactive activities, as well as sections of interest for students, teachers, and scholars.

Internet Shakespeare Editions
http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/index.html
Collection of materials on Shakespeare and his plays, an extensive archive of productions and production materials.

Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet
shakespeare.palomar.edu
An annotated guide to Shakespeare-related websites maintained by Terry A Gray.

The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference
www.shakespeare.net
Educational mailing list for all things Shakespeare, edited by Hardy M. Cook.

Shakesphere
www.cummingsstudyguides.net
A comprehensive guide to Shakespeare, his life, his theaters, the meter of his poetry, and a variety of informative essays, maintained by Michael J. Cummings.

Shakespeare Uncovered
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/shakespeare-uncovered/
A series produced by WNET that goes in-depth into one play per episode. A host with a history with that play investigates the text, and its interpretations, visiting companies in rehearsal and in performance. Full episodes can be viewed online.

MIT Shakespeare: The Complete Works Online
http://shakespeare.mit.edu/