



Bard of Avon: The Story of William Shakespeare

By Diane Stanley, Peter Vennema

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Celebrate 400 years of Shakespeare's legacy with this repackaging of award-winning author Diane Stanley's tribute to the world-famous playwright William Shakespeare.

Nobody knows exactly when or why William Shakespeare left his boyhood home of Stratford-on-Avon for the great city of London, but it didn't take long for him to make a name for himself. His plays are now performed almost every day in just about every part of the world; even people who've never seen them use words and phrases he introduced into the English language.

How did a man from an unremarkable family create a legacy that the world, even 400 years after his death, has never forgotten? There will always be unsolved mysteries about Shakespeare, but what we do know of his life, his times, and his theater makes for a very dramatic story.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"These seasoned raconteurs...neatly piece together the puzzle of Shakespeare's life," said PW in a starred review, praising the "stunning, intricate" paintings. Ages 6-up.

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From School Library Journal

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

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From Kirkus Reviews

The authors of several handsomely illustrated historical biographies (*Good Queen Bess*, 1989) take on an unusually demanding subject with intelligence, scrupulous regard for the historical record, and a wise eye to the interests of their audience. Emphasizing how little is known for sure about Shakespeare, they phrase their straightforward text to make admirably clear the boundaries of fact and the bases for plausible conjecture, often commenting on what, interestingly, is not known ("No one knows when he left [Stratford for London] or under what circumstances"). Summarizing the most significant events, they illuminate them with well chosen, often intriguing details and tell as much about the Elizabethan theater as about the playwright. Stanley's elegant illustrations are especially well suited to the topic; she uses details of Tudor architecture and costume to richly decorative effect, while her artfully structured compositions and somewhat stylized figures harmonize well with the theatrical topic. An excellent "Postscript" discusses the evolution of Shakespeare's English, his own inventions (e.g., "majestic," "leapfrog," "gloomy") and the continuing ubiquity of his vivid descriptions. Outstanding. Bibliography. (Biography. 8+) -- Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Linda Enders:

The guide *untitled Bard of Avon: The Story of William Shakespeare* is the publication that recommended to

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