Fictional Shakespeares

The frustrating absence of rich details of Shakespeare’s daily life has arguably resulted in some somewhat strained works of biography, but has also doubtless contributed to the development of a literary sub-genre where Shakespeare himself is cast as a character. This selective list of notable examples in the collections of Senate House Library emphasises those that are most likely to be overlooked or forgotten.

Chambrun, Clara Longworth, Comtesse de, My Shakespeare Rise! (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1935)
A fancifully full novel, told from the perspective of one John Lacy, a fellow actor of Shakespeare’s.

Cuthbertson, Evan J. William Shakespeare: The Story of his Life and Times (London, 1897)
A readable blending of historical fact and unexamined tradition.

Dane, Clemence [pseudonym of Winifred Ashton], Will Shakespeare: An Invention, (London, 1921)
The Library holds two copies of this biographical play, one in an attractively illustrated limited edition.

Hollans, Ruth, One Crown with a Sun (London, 1952)
A novel imaginatively recasting Shakespeare’s life from boyhood to death.

Kingsmill, Hugh, The Return of William Shakespeare (London, 1929)

Krieger, Norbert, Prologue to Shakespeare’s Hamlet (Jerusalem, 1942)
An intriguing script for an unmade film, an allegorical presentation of the process of Hamlet’s first performance.

Martin, George Madden, A Warwickshire Lad: The Story of the Boyhood of William Shakespeare (New York, 1906)
An Edwardian account for children of the development of ‘tall sturdy Will Shakespeare’.

Oman, Carola, The Best of his Family (London, 1933)
An extensively researched yet vivid biographical novel.

Payne, Robert, The Royal Players (London: 1956)
A lively novel of Shakespeare’s training as an actor.

——— and Clifford Bax, *Shakespeare: A Play in Five Episodes* (London, 1921)


A breathless novel of Shakespeare’s boyhood for younger readers.

A rousing hymn to Shakespeare that closes with the cast singing ‘Shakspeare! Shakspeare! none beside! / Shakspeare is his nation’s pride!’

Williams, Robert Folkestone, *Youth of Shakespeare* (London, 1839).
Three-volume novel by a popular historian, historical novelist and magazine journalist.

**BIOGRAPHIES**

This list includes works attempting to extend biographical knowledge of Shakespeare, but it intentionally excludes those doing so in order to demonstrate unorthodox theories of authorship. This bibliography intentionally foregrounds those biographies which might easily be overlooked, simply because they are older, or because they tend towards the more unreliable, or fanciful manifestations of a desire to know the playwright. Those looking for scholarly recent lives of Shakespeare should consult this list. Drawn from several continents and from across three centuries, together these works give a vivid and immediate portrait of changing conceptions of who Shakespeare was, or perhaps who we have needed him to be.


———, *Shakespeare, Chapman and Sir Thomas More: Providing a More Definite Basis for Biography and Criticism* (London, 1931)


Bohn, Henry George, *The Biography and Bibliography of Shakespeare* (London, 1863)


Brandl, Alois, *Shakespere* (Berlin, 1894)


———, *How Shakespeare Spent the Day* (London, 1963)

Butler, Pierce, *Materials for the Life of Shakespeare* (Chapel Hill, 1930)

Calmour, Alfred C., *Fact and Fiction about Shakespeare* (Stratford-upon-Avon, [1894])

Carter, Thomas, *Shakespeare, Puritan and Recusant* (Edinburgh, 1897)

———, *A Short Life of Shakespeare*, abridged by C. Williams (London: 1933)


———, *Essential Documents Never Yet Presented in the Shakespeare Case* (1972)

Chapman, William Hall, *Shakespeare: The Personal Phase* (Los Angeles, 1920)

———, *William Shakespeare and Robert Greene: The Evidence* (Oakland, California, 1912)


Corney, Bolton, *An Argument on the Assumed Birthday of Shakspere: Reduced to Shape A.D. 1864* (1864?)


De Quincey, Thomas, *Shakespeare: A Biography* (Edinburgh, 1864)

Dodd, Alfred, *Shakespeare, Creator of Freemasonry: Being a Remarkable Examination of the Plays and Poems, which Proves Incontestably that these Works were Saturated in Masonry, that Shakespeare was a Freemason and the Founder of the Fraternity* (London, [1937])


Field, Arthur, *Recent Discoveries Relating to the Life and Works of William Shakespeare* (Southampton, 1953)

Fraser, Russell A., *Young Shakespeare* (New York, 1988)

———, *Shakespeare: the Later Years* (New York, 1992)


Halliday, Frank Ernest, *Shakespeare in his Age* (London, 1956)


———, *The Life of Shakespeare* (London, 1961)

Halliwell-Phillipps, James Orchard, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (London, various editions, 1882-1889)

Harris, Frank, *The Man Shakespeare and his Tragic Life Story* (London, 1909)

Harrison, George Bagshawe, *Shakespeare at Work, 1592-1603* (London, 1933)

Henty, William, *Shakespeare, with Some Notes on his Early Biography* (London, 1882)

Hessen, Robert, *Leben Shakespeare’s* (Berlin, 1904)

Irving, Washington, and F.W. Fairholt, *Shakespeare’s Home Visited and Described* (New York, 1877)

Isaacs, Jacob, *Shakespeare's Earliest Years in the Theatre* (London, 1953)

Kenny, Thomas, *The Life and Genius of Shakespeare* (London, 1864)

Knight, Charles, *William Shakespeare: A Biography* (1843)

Lee, Sir Sidney, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (Numerous editions from 1898)


Marcham, Frank, *William Shakespeare and his Daughter Susannah* (London, 1931)

May, Robin, *Who was Shakespeare? The Man, the Times, the Works* (Newton Abbott, 1974)


Pohl, Frederick Julius, *Like to the Lark: The Early Years of Shakespeare* (London, 1972)

Quennell, Peter, *Shakespeare: The Poet and his Background* (London, 1963)


———, *Shakespeare the Man* (London, 1973)

———, *Shakespeare the Elizabethan* (New York, 1977)


Shackford, Martha Hale, *Shakespeare in London* (Natick, 1926)


Smeaton, Oliphant, *Shakespeare, his Life and Work* (London, [1911])

Smith, Goldwin, *Shakespeare, the Man: An Attempt to Find Traces of the Dramatist's Personal Character in his Dramas* (Toronto, 1899)


———, *Shakespeare's Family: Being a Record of the Ancestors and Descendants of William Shakespeare, with Some Account of the Ardens* (London, 1901)

Sullivan, Lucy, *Shakespeare’s Shattered Youth: Laming or Elixir?* (Windsor, New South Wales, 2009)

Symon, Josiah Henry, Sir, *Shakespeare at Home* (Adelaide, 1905)


Wagenknecht, Edward, *The Personality of Shakespeare* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1972)

Watson, Edward, *William Shakespeare and William Shaksper: Dual or Singular?* (Westminster, [1922])


White, Richard Grant, *Memoirs of the Life of William Shakespeare* (Boston, USA, 1865)

Wilson, John Dover, *The Essential Shakespeare: A Biographical Adventure* (Cambridge, 1932)

**PORTRAITS**

Corbin, John, *A New Portrait of Shakespeare: The Case of the Ely Palace Painting as against that of the So-Called Droeshout Original* (London, 1903)

Craig, E. T., *The Portraits, Bust and Monument of Shakspeare* ([Stratford-upon-Avon, 1864])


Griffiths, Mark, ‘*Shakespeare: Cracking the Code; Face to Face with Shakespeare*’, in *Country Life*, May 20, 2015


Kingman, Tracy, *An Authenticated Contemporary Portrait of Shakespeare* (New York, 1932)


Page, William, *A Study of Shakespeare’s Portraits* (London, 1876)

Wright, Charles, *The Stratford Portrait of Shakespeare, and the Athenæum; also Ben Jonson; and the Macaulay-Penn Controversy; in Connection with that Periodical - or its Editor [W.H. Dixon].* ([London?, 1861?])

**HANDWRITING AND OTHER MEMEINTOES**


Green, Charles Frederick, *The Legend of Shakespeare's Crab Tree: with a Descriptive Account, Showing its Relation to the Poet's Traditional History* (London, 1857?)

Hall, William, *Shakespeare’s Grave: Notes of Traditions that were Current at Stratford-upon-Avon in the Latter Part of the Seventeenth Century* (Brighton, 1884)

Ingleby, C.M., *Shakespeare’s Bones: The Proposal to Disinter them, Considered in Relation to their Possible Bearing on his Portraiture* (London, 1883)

McLaren, Moray, ‘*By me…’*: A Report upon the Apparent Discovery of some Working Notes of William Shakespeare in a Sixteenth-Century Book* (London, 1949)

*Shakespearean Relics: The History of Shakespeare’s Brooch* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1833?)