

Bitesize KS3 English Literature – Shakespeare

About Shakespeare – Beliefs and superstitions transcript

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER

Double, double...

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER

...toil and trouble.

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER

Fire burn...

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER

...and cauldron bubble.

FEMALE PRESENTER

I hate witches.

THREE WITCHES PERFORMER

Thanks very much.

FEMALE PRESENTER

They just sort of freak me out a bit. Of course they're only actors, but in Elizabethan times...

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Actors? Are you sure?

FEMALE PRESENTER

Yes Will, they're doing your play mate.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

I knew that.

FEMALE PRESENTER

But in Elizabethan times, most people genuinely believed in witchcraft, making their presence on stage truly terrifying.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Sorry, could we do this somewhere else? Just, it's scary.

FEMALE PRESENTER

You see, back then people didn't know much about science and stuff. Rather than the internet, their belief in magic helped them explain the things they didn't understand.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

So what about the terrible storm Prospero's Sorcerer whips up in The Tempest? How does your modern thinking explain that?

Bitesize

FEMALE PRESENTER

A volatile combination of intense high and low atmospheric pressure?

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

You sound ridiculous.

FEMALE PRESENTER

I sound ridiculous.

MALE MEMBER OF PUBLIC

Nice hat mate.

FEMALE PRESENTER

I blame the parents.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

I blame the fairies.

FEMALE PRESENTER

Shakespeare's plays captivated audiences by reflecting their beliefs and superstitions of the time. From spells in *The Tempest* to fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Anybody would think I knew what I was doing.

FEMALE PRESENTER

Of course there are beliefs from Shakespeare's time that some people still buy into today, like walking under ladders.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Oh, oh don't do that. Huh!

FEMALE PRESENTER

Or spilling salt.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Are you actually insane? She's totally out of control.

FEMALE PRESENTER

And even today people believe in fate; the idea that our future is somehow predetermined. Like Shakespeare's doomed lovers, Romeo and Juliet.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

It was written in the stars.

FEMALE PRESENTER

It was written in your script.

FORTUNE TELLER

You'll meet a strange man from the past.

Bitesize

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

She's good.

FEMALE PRESENTER

Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Macbeth; all featured one thing
Elizabethans really believed in, ghosts. Restless spirits doomed
to walk the earth to atone for their sins or demons out for
revenge? You'd think we'd know better by now, but some people
actually think this theatre is haunted.

[LOUD SCREAMS]

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

It's all in your head mate; along with a bit of help from you guys
obviously. Nice one. Hanging with me witches.