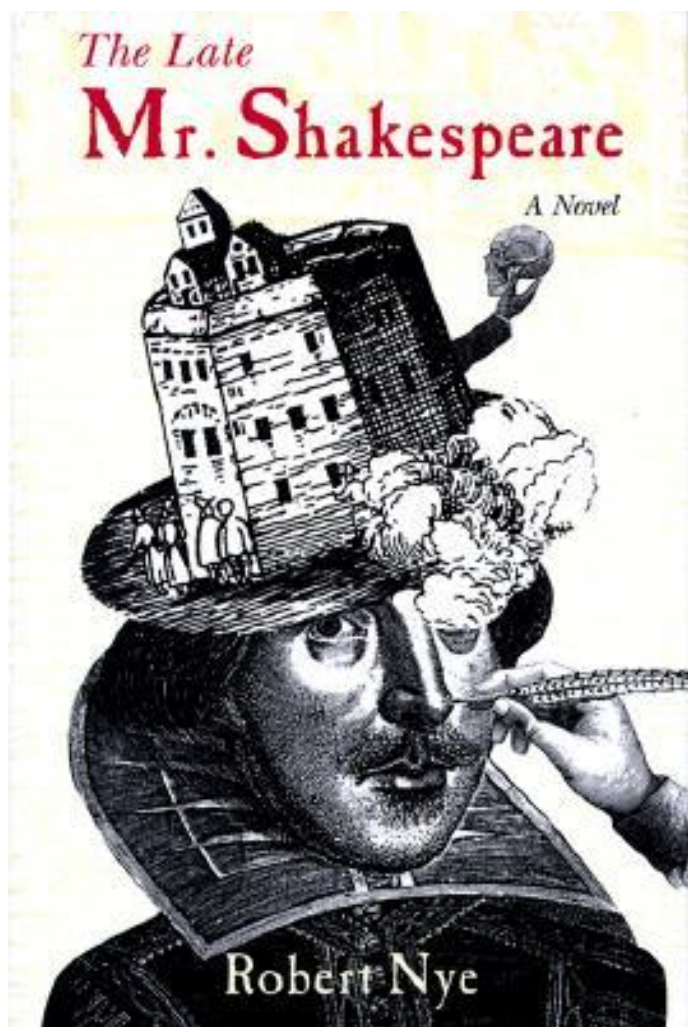

Robert Nye

The Late Mr. Shakespeare



Title: The Late Mr. Shakespeare

Author: Robert Nye

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Description

Not since Anthony Burgess's *Nothing Like the Sun* has a novel about Shakespeare been this rich, strange, and wonderful. Our guide to the life of the Bard in Robert Nye's dazzling new novel is an actor known as Pickleherring, who asserts that he was not only an original member of Shakespeare's acting troupe but the creator of the greatest female roles, from Cleopatra through Portia. In an attic above a brothel in Restoration London, Pickleherring, now ancient, sits down to write the story of Shakespeare's life. Gentle readers will learn much that will cause their eyes to pop open. Using sources both firsthand and far-fetched -- recounting the myths and rumors surrounding Shakespeare with as much glee as he does earthier realities -- Pickleherring gives us an outrageously bawdy, language-loving, and edifying romp through the life and times of the greatest writer in the English language.

Insightful reviews

Nina McNeill: awesome book - a history of William Shakespeare written by an old man who had spent his life as a player with Shakespeare's company from a very early age. A wonderful mixture of erudition and outrageous guesswork, in parts funny and bawdy, affording a real sense (it felt) of the times and of Shakespeare and his works.

Rick: Nye is a poet and novelist who has written a number of works of historical fiction, including two related to William Shakespeare. This bawdy yet erudite tale purports to be a biography of the playwright by one of the actors in his troupe of players, written some decades after the master's passing. Robert Reynolds (aka Pickleherring, apparently stage names weren't what they would become once studios and press agents took charge) is an entertaining storyteller whose notion of biography (and history) includes facts and documents, eyewitness accounts, rumors, legends, slanders, inference, myths, fancy, lies, and truth in its most generous and inclusive sense. Like the Bard, Reynolds is from the country and prefers country history to town history. "Country history is faithful and open-ended. It is a tale told by various idiots on the village green, all busy contradicting themselves in the name of a common truth. It exaggerates and enflames what it talks about. It delights in lies and gossip. It is unwise. Wild and mystical and passionate, it is ruled by the heart. Beginning by the glow of the hearth, at the end of the night your country history tends to pass into balladry and legend—it becomes poetic. Country history is fanciful and maggoty. Easy to mock, it always strains belief. But sometimes it catches the ghostly coat-tails of what is otherwise ungraspable." By contrast, town history is "cynical and exact. It is written by wits and it orders and limits what it talks about. It relies on facts and figures. It is knowing... [it:] rests on the premise that the facts tell the truth." Nye's narrator/biographer insists country history is the only way to capture someone like William Shakespeare and he is pretty convincing, though sometimes digressively wearying, on the point. I liked the book much more in the early going, when it was freshest, than over time as its premise wore a little of its welcome out. But it remained brisk (nice short chapters), witty, unseemly and oddly reliable despite all the tall tales, lies, and gossip, fictional and nonfictional—that is, stuff that was truly gossiped about and stuff Pickleherring introduces on his own. It also motivated me to consider reading *The Complete Plays*, a nice reading project I thank Pickleherring and Nye for prompting me to undertake.

Emily: i think i like novels about shakespeare as much as the plays themselves - which is to say, quite a lot. it's like anglican choral music: i grew up with it, and it's an aesthetic i've come to feel immensely comfortable with. (not that i'd lead you to believe this book bears any resemblance to an anthem by stanford ...)

irreverent, chaotic, just barely hanging together at the seams and full of random, crunchy oddities. certainly not tame, definitely not boring. includes one of my favourite quotes about religion: 'there is no rule on how to talk to god.'

Marge: I gave this up almost immediately after I started, regularly simply because own time table allowed no interpreting time. I occasionally stumbled on the publication entertaining. the story is informed from an previous man's viewpoint, yet like speaking with my grandpa, occasionally his brain wandered mid-topic and that i wanted endurance to stick with the conversation. So it's with The overdue Mr. Shakespeare.

Bettie?: (view spoiler)[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)][
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Erik M: Oh expensive Lord. This publication regarded great, appeared like a ton of fun, yet become a singular by way of a poet - and that is now not a compliment. The scattershot narrative in simple terms stuck hearth a couple of times, even though the occasions of 1666. i feel a greater description of this ebook might stay away from characterizing this as a novel, yet relatively a fictional player's memoir as he attempts to put in writing a biography of Shakespeare. and a part stars. Into the resale pile.

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