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Sommario/riassunto	<p>The life of William Shakespeare, arguably the most significant figure in the Western literary canon, is relatively unknown. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1565, possibly on the 23rd April, St. George's Day, and baptised there on 26th April. Little is known of his education and the first firm facts to his life relate to his marriage, aged 18, to Anne Hathaway, who was 26 and from the nearby village of Shottery. Anne gave birth to their first son six months later.</p> <p>Shakespeare's first play, The Comedy of Errors began a procession of real heavyweights that were to emanate from his pen in a career of just over twenty years in which 37 plays were written and his reputation forever established. This early skill was recognised by many and by 1594 the Lord Chamberlain's Men were performing his works. With the advantage of Shakespeare's progressive writing they rapidly became London's leading company of players, affording him more exposure and, following the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, a royal patent by the new king, James I, at which point they changed their name to the King's Men. By 1598, and despite efforts to pirate his work, Shakespeare's name was well known and had become a selling point in its own right on title pages. No plays are attributed to Shakespeare after 1613, and the last few plays he wrote before this time were in</p>

collaboration with other writers, one of whom is likely to be John Fletcher who succeeded him as the house playwright for the King's Men. William Shakespeare died two months later on April 23rd, 1616, survived by his wife, two daughters and a legacy of writing that none have since yet eclipsed.

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