Shakespeare and his Time

William Shakespeare was the most famous writer in the English language in all time. He wrote lots of plays: comedies, tragedies and history plays. That was about 400 years ago. Shakespeare himself said that life is a bit like a play and he wrote: "All the world's a stage. And all the men and women are merely players: They have their exits and their entrances ..." But he was more than a writer. He was also a successful actor, theatre manager and a poet. Shakespeare was a good entertainer. He wanted people to have fun. He became so popular because he knew what people liked, so he wrote what they wanted. But the people were also interested in the actors. The star actors were like the pop stars of today.

The theatres in Shakespeare's time were large open-air circles with a stage at one side. Just think of an open-air concert in our time and you get an idea of what was going on in the theatres in Shakespeare's time 400 years ago. And of course Shakespeare, as a clever entertainer, used music. His plays were full of songs. Unfortunately, the original pieces of music are lost. The seats in the theatres in Shakespeare's time were only for the rich people. There were even seats for them on the stage. But there were no seats in front of the stage. So the ordinary theatregoers often had a hard time standing for two, three or more hours to see the play. They were called "groundlings". They usually enjoyed the plays but when they got bored they would boo at the actor and shout out loud comments or even throw things and eggs and rotten food unto the stage.

<u>Now show what you know-match the parts of the sentences.</u>

People liked the plays

There were seats for the rich

They plays were full of songs

Shakespeare was a famous writer

The groundlings enjoyed most plays

The theatregoers liked most actors

Not only did they boo at the actors

but

he was also a successful poet and actor.

the original pieces of music are lost.

the ordinary people had to stand all the time.

they were also interested in the actors.

sometimes they booed at them.

they also threw things on the stage.

sometimes they got bored.

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