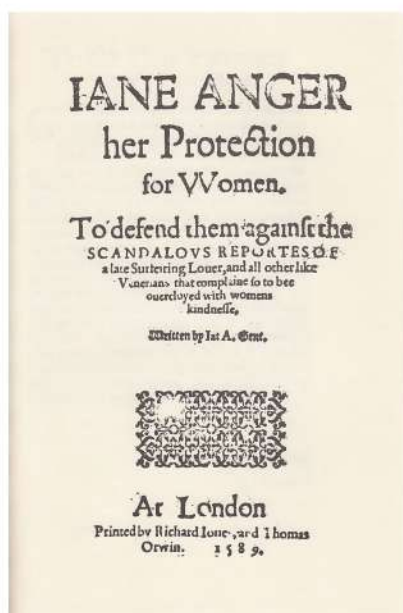


JANE ANGER:

HER PROTECTION FOR WOMEN: TO DEFEND THEM AGAINST THE SCANDALOUS REPORTES OF A LATE SURFEITING LOVER, AND ALL OTHER LIKE VENERIANS THAT COMPLAINE SO TO BEE OVERCLOYED WITH WOMENS KINDESSES

The eponymous pamphlet published in 1589 proclaims the intellectual capacity of women authors and makes the case against negative portrayals of women in 16th-century England. Utilizing a distinct (and boldly angry) voice, Jane Anger's pamphlet directly challenges contemporary ideas of male supremacy, creating space for future female authors to publish their own thought pieces for the public eye.



“FIE on the falshoode of men, whose minds goe oft a madding, & whose tongues can not so soone bee wagging, but straight they fal a railing. Was there ever any so abused, so slaundered, so railed upon, or so wickedly handeled undeservedly, as are we women?” –JANE ANGER

WHO WAS JANE ANGER?

While *Her Protection for Women* has been remembered for being a trailblazing piece of feminist literature, the question remains: *Who was Jane Anger?*

No biographical information exists for the pamphlet's author. Scholars have questioned if "Jane Anger" was a pseudonym or her true name. While there were several Jane Angers who lived in England at the time, none of them have been identified as the author of the pamphlet.

Whoever Jane Anger truly was, her influence was still important. In the 16th-century, it was rare for women to write on secular topics. Jane must also have been very persuasive to get her pamphlet published and distributed (or possibly known someone in the publishing realm whom she should convince to print her pamphlet). No matter who she was, her influence on feminist history is undeniable.



THE PLAGUE IN 1606



The Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history. During its initial spread through Europe, an estimated 30–60% of the entire population perished. The plague has caused additional outbreaks in history, including the 1606 outbreak depicted in *Jane Anger*.

This plague was zoonotic in nature, spreading from infected fleas and rats to humans. Contagion was also spread from contact with bodily fluids or contaminated materials. However, because there was no understanding of infectious disease, the blame went to unscientific sources. By Shakespeare's time, it was believed that the plague was a pestilential fever that stemmed from poisonous miasma (unhealthy or unpleasant vapors). Doctors at the time filled their bird-like masks with flowers and other pleasant scents to ward off becoming infected; the image of the plague doctor is one of the most enduring of the time.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE PLAGUE

Shakespeare's career was greatly impacted by the plague. During outbreaks, the privy council of London banned performances if death counts rose above thirty during the week. It was during the decade between 1603 to 1613 that Shakespeare's prowess as a playwright began to shine, writing some of his most recognizable and celebrated works. It was also during this time that, due to the plague, the Globe and all other London playhouses were shut down for a total of 78 months—more than 60% of the entire decade. While in quarantine, Shakespeare wrote two of his most masterful tragedies: *King Lear* and *Macbeth*.

While the plague was a very personal subject matter to the playwright, the only instance where it has plot relevancy is in *Romeo and Juliet*, where an important letter to Romeo is delayed by a quarantining messenger.



M. VWilliam Shake-speare,
HIS
True Chronicle History of the life
and death of King Lear, and his
three Daughters.

With the unfortunate life of EDGAR,
sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloucester, and
his fallen and assumed humour of TOM
of Bedlam.

As it was plaied before the King: At White-Hall, by
Iohn S. Stephens might, in Christmas Hollidies.

By his Maiesties Seruants, playing vually at the
Globe on the Bank-side.



Printed for Nathaniel Butter,
1608

ANNE HATHAWAY

Like Jane Anger, Anne Hathaway has little historical documentation about her life. In death, she has become merely a footnote of the life of one of history's most acclaimed playwrights.

She was born in 1556 in Shottery, Warwickshire, which is close to Stratford. Her father Richard owned a 90-acre farm that accommodated their large family, of which Anne was the eldest. Her mother died when she was 10 and her father died in 1581. A small inheritance was left for Hathaway, which in her father's will was explicitly set aside so she would marry.

In 1582, she married William Shakespeare. There were several taboos behind their marriage, even for the time. Shakespeare was seven years younger than his bride and needed to ask permission from his father to marry her. At age 26, Hathaway was an average age to marry, but Shakespeare was only 18, a minor in the eyes of the law. Hathaway was also several months pregnant at the time. The couple married outside their home parish to speed the proceedings along.



Drawing of Anne Hathaway in Carzon Family Third Folio by Sir Nathaniel Curzon, c. 1706.

Drawing of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway by Alfred Brewer, after Anonymus, c. 1866-1876.



Together, they had three children: Susanna and the twins, Hamnet and Judith. Around 1585, Shakespeare moved to London to pursue a career as an actor and playwright, leaving his family in Stratford for long stretches of time.

There are no primary sources that reflect on the marriage or affection between Hathaway and Shakespeare. While their lives may have been happy, it is hard to conceive of a healthy relationship between the pair. In his own will, Shakespeare's only bequest to Anne read: "Item I gyve unto my wife: my second best bed with the furniture." While this seems like a hearty slight to modern eyes, scholars have noted that this bed was most likely their marriage bed, as the best bed was reserved for guests.



The cottage in which Hathaway grew up is still able to be visited. The descendants kept the plot of land and house in their family for generations until it was purchased by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in 1892 and subsequently turned into a museum.

Illustration of William Shakespeare reciting his play Hamlet to his family. His wife, Anne Hathaway, is sitting in the chair on the right; his son Hamnet is behind him on the left; his two daughters Susanna and Judith are on the right and left of him. George Edward Penne, c. 1600.
Photo of Anne Hathaway's Cottage, c. 2017.