

**Prescribed DRAMA for Junior Cycle  
English.  
For students commencing Junior Cycle  
in September 2018, 2019, 2020**



|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| BREEN, John       | <i>Alone It Stands</i>  |
| ELLAMS, Inua      | <i>The 14th Tale</i>  |
| DICKENS, Charles  | <i>A Christmas Carol</i> (1939 radio play adapted by Orson Welles and Lionel Barrymore) |
| FRIEL, Brian      | <i>Lovers (Winners and Losers)</i>  |
| HILL, Susan       | <i>The Woman in Black</i> (adapted for stage by Stephen Mallatrat)                      |
| JONES, Marie      | <i>Stones in His Pockets</i>  |
| McPHERSON, Conor  | <i>Girl from the North Country</i> (musical)  |
| MORPURGO, Michael | <i>War Horse</i> (adapted for stage by Nick Stafford)                                   |
| O'CASEY, Sean     | <i>The Shadow of a Gunman</i>   |
| ROSE, Reginald    | <i>Twelve Angry Men</i>   |
| RUSSELL, Willy    | <i>Blood Brothers</i> (musical or stage play)   |

**Students intending to take the Final Assessment at Higher Level must study the full text of one of these prescribed Shakespearean dramas during second and/or third year.**

**SHAKESPEARE, William** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*As You Like It*

*Much Ado About Nothing*

*Julius Caesar*

*Romeo and Juliet*

WILDE, Oscar *The Importance of Being Earnest*

# GUIDE TO PRESCRIBED DRAMA

This guide to the prescribed junior cycle drama texts may be of assistance to teachers and students in the selection of drama texts for second and third year. The guide provides an overview of the 16 prescribed drama texts, including recommendations regarding plot summaries, themes and suitability.

## Guidelines for Prescribed Drama

- The 17 prescribed drama texts for second and third year are for students **commencing** Junior Cycle in September 2018, September 2019 and September 2020 only.
- From the list of 16 prescribed drama texts, students must study two drama texts. An extract from a play or extracts from one or more plays may be used as one of the drama texts.
- The extracts may be chosen from outside the list of prescribed texts. The extract or extracts selected by schools should provide students with a broad experience of the dramatic form.
- Students intending to take the Final Assessment at Higher Level should study a prescribed Shakespearean drama during second **and/or** third year.

## ALONE IT STANDS – JOHN BREEN

**Publisher: Samuel French, 1999. Pages: 86.**



John Breen's *Alone It Stands* is a comedy which tells the story of the Munster rugby team's epic and unprecedented 12-nil victory over the All Blacks, the New Zealand national rugby team in Thomond Park in October 1978.

The story is set against the background of this unparalleled win and follows the unique and personal stories of a variety of characters. The broad range of colourful roles (sixty two in all) is diverse, and includes encounters with the players from both teams, the motivational team coaches, supporters looking for tickets for the sell-out game, pessimistic fans, the local Limerick residents and a Munster fanatic's wife about to give birth.

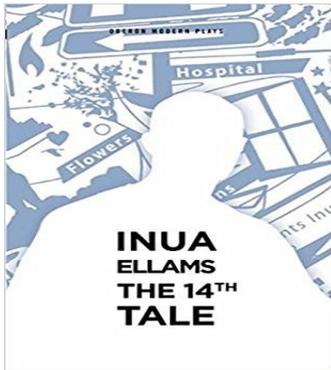
The breadth of characters involved results in a fast-paced and engaging drama that succeeds in capturing the hype associated with this heroic triumph.

**Themes:** Courage, daily life, social class.

***“The bounce of a rugby ball is unpredictable. It can break your heart”***

## THE 14TH TALE - INUA ELLAMS

**Publisher: Flipped Eye Publishing 2009, London, pages: 48.**



*The 14th Tale* is a beautiful mellifluous narrative that tells the hilarious exploits of a natural born mischief, who grew up in the clay streets of Nigeria then lived in Dublin and later moved to London.

As Inua Ellams says of himself; 'I'm from a long line of troublemakers, of ash skinned Africans, born with clenched fists and a natural thirst for battle only quenched by breast milk. They'd suckle as if the white silk sliding between gums were liquid peace treaties from mums'

Winner of a Fringe First award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2009

"Inua Ellams captures our attention as soon as he opens his mouth". The Times

"Delivered with perfect timing in a wonderful style, it's both a playful and intelligent production". Total Theatre Review

"There is something uniquely 21st Century about Ellams' voice which somehow absorbs the whole experience of colonialism without being totally defined by it". The Scotsman

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL - CHARLES DICKENS

**A Christmas Carol (1939 radio play adapted by Orson Welles and Lionel Barrymore)**



This is a 1939 Campbell Playhouse Radio Production by Orson Welles of Charles Dickens's novelette *A Christmas Carol*, where Ebenezer Scrooge (Lionel Barrymore), an elderly miser, learns the error of his ways on Christmas Eve, when he reflects on his past, present and future collectively, whereupon the mean old miser undergoes a radical change of heart and is "awakened" on Christmas morning a changed man.

Dickens had this to say about *A Christmas Carol*:

*I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.*

*Their faithful Friend and Servant,  
December 1843*

**Themes:** past, present & future, family, greed, generosity, relationships

Audio link

<https://archive.org/details/CampbellPlayhouseAChristmasCarol12241939>

***"Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"***

## LOVERS (WINNERS AND LOSERS) – BRIAN FRIEL

**Publisher: Gallery Books, 2013. Pages 77.**

Winners and Losers are two short complimentary plays in the one volume entitled Lovers. They may be regarded as forming one play with complementary themes/issues. Both plays are set in 1960s Ireland.

In Winners we meet two young lovers, Mags and Joe on a hilltop as they meet to study for their upcoming examinations. We find out that Mags is pregnant, and the young couple are to be married in a few weeks for this very reason. Both have been asked to leave their respective schools as a result. It is all a sign of the times they live in. Both are meant to be re-vising, but Mags prefers to distract herself with lots of talk, much to Joe's annoyance. We find out a lot about the characters from their conversations here.

The two narrators ('Man' and 'Woman') give us an insight into what happens to the young couple on this day. Mags and Joe decide to take a boat onto the lake. According to the narrators, Mags and Joe have drowned. The exact circumstances are unclear.

Andy and Hanna, the lovers from Losers are older. Hanna's mother, Mrs. Wilson, is a devout Catholic and she disapproves of the relationship. The couple are frustrated by her presence and demands. When the couple marry, Mrs. Wilson is still a source of annoyance, especially for Andy who mocks her for her devotion to Saint Philomena. This alienates Hanna, and in the end the couple stay together in a loveless marriage.

**Themes** in both plays: Love/marriage, religion, role of men and women in society.

***“My God, the things they said to me they seared my soul forever” (Winners)***

## THE WOMAN IN BLACK – SUSAN HILL

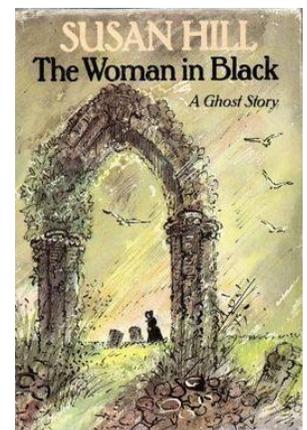
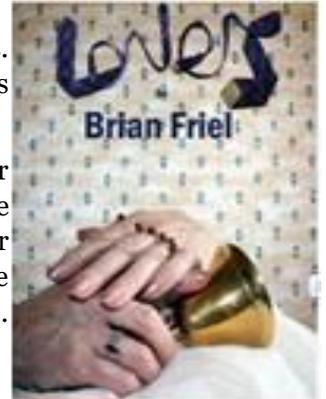
**Publisher: Samuel French Ltd. London. 1989. Pages 52.**

*The Woman in Black* is a captivating, haunting drama in which two actors recreate the mysterious story of a ghostly figure whom the play's central character, the younger Mr. Kipps, first met while attending the funeral of the elderly Mrs. Drablow.

The play begins in an empty theatre where Arthur Kipps, an ageing lawyer, and a newly hired young actor recreate Kipps's own story. The young actor agrees to play the part of the younger Kipps while Arthur plays all the other character roles and narrates the story.

The story brings us back in time where the young Arthur Kipps travels to Crythin Gifford to attend the funeral of an elderly, eccentric lady named Mrs. Drablow and to sort out her papers. At the funeral, he 'sees' a woman in black, apparently suffering from some severe illness. On speaking of the lady to his guide, Mr. Horatio Jerome, he is somewhat bemused and puzzled by Jerome's terrified reaction. At Mrs. Drablow's house he again encounters the woman in black and this begins a story of mystery and ghostly happenings where we learn of the tragic tale surrounding the death of the mysterious lady; the fear gendered in the community and of the apparent consequences for those who have met The Woman in Black.

**Themes:** The supernatural, fear, revenge, conspiracy.

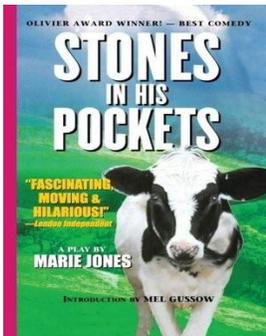


The Woman in Black will intrigue all young readers as they uncover the mystery that surrounds this strange ghostly lady.

***“I felt confused, teased by it, as though it were made up of millions of live fingers that crept over me, hung onto me and then shifted away again.”***

## **STONES IN HIS POCKETS - MARIE JONES**

**Stones in His Pockets by Marie Jones Publisher: Double Joint Theatre**



In *Stones in His Pockets*, a Hollywood movie is being filmed in a small sleepy village in County Kerry, Ireland, and two local men are among many who have been cast as extras. If that sounds like an unpromising idea for a play you haven't seen Marie Jones's delightful comedy, which recreates the filming and the town – pub, parish, farmland. On its most immediate level, *stones in his pockets* is a performance piece for actors. With slight shift in manner, gesture and costume, they play Charlie Conlon and Jake Quinn who in turn become a cross-section of characters, those from Hollywood as well as those from Ireland (almost all of whom seem to be distantly related).

The actors imitate the stuffy English director of the film, the flighty American star and her entourage, assistant directors, extras, hangers on- the diverse population of a movie on location. What begins- and continues- as a sharply satiric portrait of filmmaking, the crotchets, customs and egocentricities of artists in action, soon becomes a full vivid landscape of this corner of Ireland. Subtly the playwright offers commentary on the Hollywood invasion, the susceptibility (and the shrewdness) of the natives and the universal craving for a chance to stroll in the spotlight. Hollywood may be a corruptive influence but there are those who are eager to be exploited. The subtext of the play is in the authors words” the whole disintegration of rural Ireland”.

“Sad, Hilarious and Irresistible” – The London Sunday Times.

**Themes:** rural Ireland, friendship, conflict, tragedy

## GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY - CONOR MC PHERSON

**Publisher: Nick Hern Books, London. Pages:102**



This is a musical drama written and directed by Conor McPerson. It is set in Dylan's hometown, Duluth, Minnesota. The musical uses Dylan's songs to reinforce the mood of desperation and yearning that characterised America in the Depression era. The title of the musical is from the song that Bob Dylan wrote in 1963.

Girl from the North Country has been described as a dustbowl drama, it epitomises the struggles and desperation of a random mix of guests staying in a run-down boarding house owned by one of the main characters, Nick.

Elizabeth, Nick's wife suffers from dementia, their adopted daughter Ruth is black, pregnant and refuses to reveal the identity of the father. Guests who lodge in the boarding house range from a blackmailing bible selling Reverend, a boxer-turned-convict on the run, a financially ruined couple with a disabled son, an opium addicted doctor and a widow who is having an affair with Nick.

Dylan's songs poignantly reveal the prevailing mood of longing mixed with hope. Powerful and compelling, the drama premiered at the Old Vic theatre in 2017 then transferred to the West End.

**Themes:** love, poverty, racism.

***“Well, if you're travelin' in the north country fair  
Where the winds hit heavy on the borderline...”***

## WAR HORSE – MICHAEL MORPURGO

**Publisher: Faber & Faber, 2007. Pages 112**

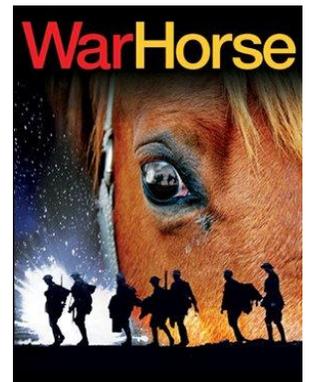
*War Horse* is the powerful story of a young boy called Albert and his beloved horse, Joey. The play is based on a novel by Michael Morpurgo and adapted by Nick Stafford.

The play begins in England, 1914, with a drunk farmer buying a colt at auction. His young son Albert quickly forms a bond with the colt and names it Joey and raises him. At the outbreak of World War One, the farmer sells Joey to the military to pay for his struggling farm. Albert is heartbroken. Joey is shipped to France and soon caught in enemy fire. Fate takes him on an incredible journey, serving on both sides during the war before landing in no man's land. But Albert cannot forget Joey and, still too young to enlist, he embarks on a treacherous mission to find his horse and bring him home.

The stage production features ground-breaking puppetry work, bringing breathing and galloping horses to life on stage.

**Themes:** War, friendship, loyalty and courage.

***“cause when there's life there's still hope”***



## THE SHADOW OF A GUNMAN - SEÁN O'CASEY

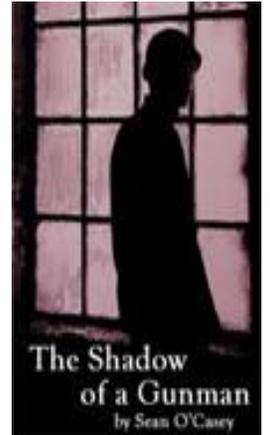
**Publisher: Faber & Faber, 1998. Pages 62**

*The Shadow of a Gunman* is a powerful play depicting the gripping effects of poverty, nationalism and violence on the lives of the Irish tenement dwellers in the Dublin of 1920. Ordinary lives are controlled by forces which seem to offer solutions, but which apparently only bring further misery.

The play begins in May 1920 and is set in a Dublin tenement occupied by Seamus Shields, a pedlar, and Donal Davoren, a dreamer and poet who is mistakenly believed by other tenement residents to be an on-the-run member of the IRA. Davoren plays along with this notoriety and it has positive benefits for him, as it initially wins him the spurious admiration of other would-be freedom fighters, but more importantly, it wins him the affections of Minnie Powell, an attractive young lady of strong nationalist beliefs who, like Donal is slightly delusional as a result of the times in which she lived. As the play progresses, we see the negative impact of Davoren's supposed heroism.

He is the mere 'shadow' of a gunman and ultimately the shadow turns out to be a cowardly figure who must shoulder responsibility for much of the tragedy that befalls others in the play.

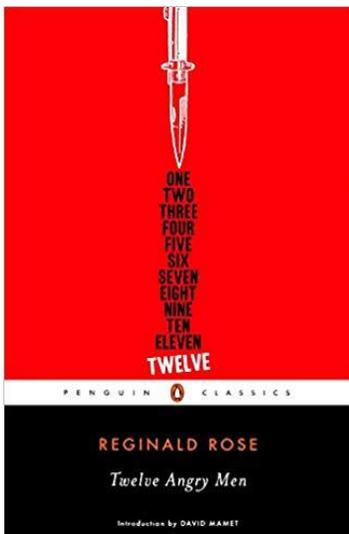
**Themes:** Deception, war, religion, nationalism, poverty, love.



***Minnie, Donal; Donal, Minnie. Very pretty, but very ignorant. A gunman on the run... But Minnie is attracted to the idea and I am attracted to Minnie. And what danger can there be in being the shadow of a gunman?"***

## TWELVE ANGRY MEN - REGINALD ROSE

**Publisher: Samuel French Ltd. 1977 Edition. Pages 59.**



*Twelve Angry Men* is a gripping 1957 courtroom drama where the life or death of a young Puerto Rican teenager, charged with murdering his father, lies in the hands of a diverse group of twelve jurors.

As the play begins, we see a twelve-man jury entering the jury room of a New York City courthouse on a sultry, hot summer's day to decide on the guilt or innocence of a teenager accused of murdering his father

We hear the offstage voice of the judge giving instructions to the jury and learn that, if found guilty, the accused will face the death penalty.

What at first appears as a straightforward guilty verdict, given the apparent bank of incriminating evidence against the accused, soon becomes a case of intrigue and suspense, as one juror, Juror 8, following an initial guilty vote of 11 to 1, insists that they re-examine the evidence to be absolutely certain of what they are entrusted with. Despite the protests of the other jurors, the evidence is re-viewed, and the initial certainty of the jurors is put under the spotlight with a surprising outcome.

**Themes:** Prejudice, justice, truth, power of conviction.

***“And now gentlemen of the jury, I come to my final instructions to you. Murder in the first degree - premediated homicide – is the most serious charge tried in our criminal courts.”***

## **BLOOD BROTHERS - WILLY RUSSELL**

**Publisher: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2013. Pages 108.**

Set in Liverpool, Willy Russell's Blood Brothers tells the story of twins who are separated at birth as their mother is unable to afford to keep both. As a result, Eddie is raised in a privileged family while his twin brother Mickey is raised in poverty by their birth mother, along with the rest of their siblings.

Despite their different backgrounds, both boys meet at age 7 and become best friends, in fact they become 'blood brothers' both unaware of the identity of the other.

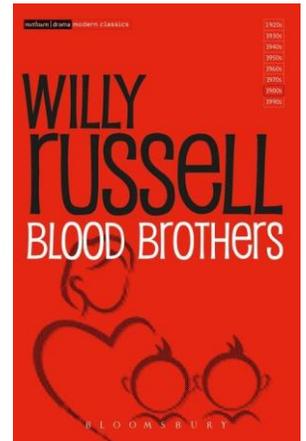
They share happy times as they grow up, first into teenagers and then into adulthood, until their different backgrounds finally become an issue and a misunderstanding lead to a tragic end. Blood Brothers is also a very successful musical. The

text contains elements of this.

**Themes:** Social class, growing up, family, friendship, superstition.

The themes and issues explored in Blood Brothers will appeal to all students.

***“Do we blame superstition for what came to pass? Or could it have been what we, the English, have come to know as class?”***



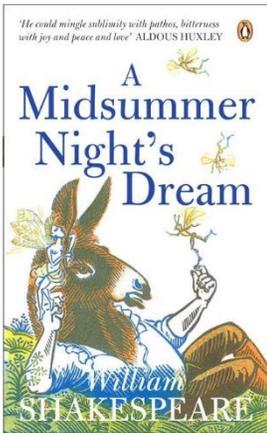
# SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

There are **five** Shakespearean dramas on the prescribed list of texts for Junior Cycle English.

Students intending to take the **Final Assessment at Higher Level** must study a Shakespearean drama during second and/or third year

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**Publisher: Penguin Books, 1967. Pages 82.**



*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a Shakespearean comedy that cleverly interconnects four different subplots to form a united piece of light-hearted slapstick comedy. Theseus, the Duke of Athens and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons are to be married. Great celebrations are planned. Egeus brings his rebellious daughter Hermia in front of the Duke. Egeus wants her to marry Demetrius but Hermia is refusing, because she's in love with Lysander. The Duke orders Hermia to obey her father or she must face the death penalty or banishment to a nunnery.

Hermia and Lysander decide to elope that evening. As they contemplate the plan, Helena enters. She is in love with Demetrius. They tell Helena of their elopement plans, but Helena decides to tell Demetrius in an attempt to win his love. All four end up in the forest but the intercession of Oberon, the king of the fairies, and the mischievous Puck (Robin Goodfellow) adds to the confusion when they attempt to get Demetrius to fall in love with Helena, but mistakenly gets Lysander to fall in love with her. Both men love Helena and neither love Hermia. More comedy moments follow, until eventually Oberon gets Puck to fix things and there is a happy ending.

**Themes:** Love, magic, dreams.

***“O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent to set against me for your merriment. If you were civil and knew courtesy, you would not do me thus much injury.”***

## AS YOU LIKE IT – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**Publisher: Penguin Books 1967 Pages: 93**

Written in 1599, this is a pastoral comedy, set in the countryside in France, specifically in the forest of Arden. Rosalind is the heroine. Her father Duke Senior has been usurped and exiled by his brother Frederick. Rosalind is permitted to stay in court since she is best friend to her cousin Celia. Orlando, a young gentleman falls in love at first sight with Rosalind. This displeases Frederick and both ladies flee to the forest seeking refuge and looking for love. Touchstone, the court fool accompanies them. Rosalind disguises herself as a young man, Ganymede, while Celia pretends to be a poor woman, Aliena.



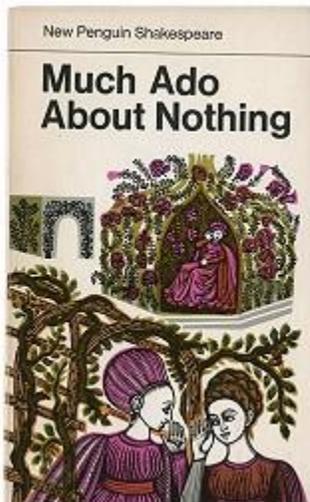
Here they encounter a variety of memorable characters, notably Jacques, a malcontent and melancholy figure. Unknown to the ladies, Duke Senior and his supporters are also in the forest. Orlando posts simplistic love poems on the trees for Rosalind. She as Ganymede encounters him and tries to cure him of his lovesickness. The shepherdess Phoebe falls in love with Ganymede while Silvius loves Phoebe. Further romantic complications occur but all is resolved in the end.

**Themes:** Love, deception, loyalty.

*“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players...”*

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**Publisher: Penguin Books, 1967. Pages 104.**



*Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare is a comedy set in Messina in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy. The story revolves around two love stories, one straightforward between Claudio and Hero, the governor's daughter and a more complex union between the governor's niece Beatrice and a family friend, Benedick.

A spiteful villain, Don John, having suffered a defeat in war, is keen to get revenge on his brother Don Pedro and Claudio, who helped defeat him. He encourages his friend Borachio to enact a love scene with Margaret, Hero's serving woman, but convinces both Claudio and Don Pedro that the woman is Hero. Believing this tale, Claudio angrily denounces Hero during their wedding ceremony. The friar performing the marriage arranges for Hero to be hidden, as if dead, until her innocence can be proven. A blundering local constable discovers the truth and following a series of comical events, Hero and Claudio are reunited. Love has blossomed also for Beatrice and Benedick and the play ends on a happy note.

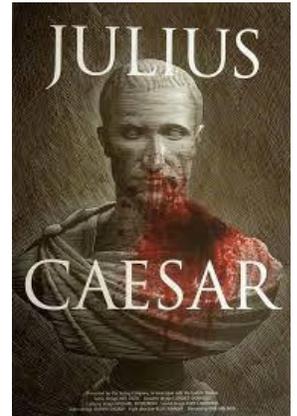
**Themes:** Deception, romance, honour.

*“I do love nothing in the world so well as you- is not that strange?”*

## JULIUS CAESAR – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**Publisher: Penguin Books 1967 Pages:98**

Written in 1599 this is a tragedy and a history play based on real events. The play opens with the fickle commoners celebrating Julius Caesar's military defeat of the sons of his rival Pompey. Two tribunes chastise the crowd for switching allegiance from Pompey to Caesar. Cassius plots to kill Caesar and tries to persuade Brutus, Caesar's friend to join the conspiracy. Brutus is hesitant to do so even though he fears that if Caesar were leader of Rome, he might abuse his power. Mark Anthony has offered Caesar the crown of Rome three times but even though Caesar wants it he refuses it, hoping that the crowd will encourage him to take it.



Ignoring warnings and premonitions, 'beware the ides of March' Caesar goes to the senate and is stabbed by the conspirators, including Brutus, 'et tu Brute?'. Brutus delivers a rational speech defending their actions explaining it was for the good of Rome. However, Mark Anthony's speech appealing to emotion and convincing the crowd that Caesar was not power-hungry turns public opinion against the assassins. Brutus admonishes Cassius for accepting bribes to commit regicide. A civil war ensues. Mark Anthony's side are victorious, and he pays tribute to the dead Brutus proclaiming him to be 'the noblest Roman of them all' acting for the good of Rome, having been motivated by honour and patriotism.

**Themes:** Deception, war, honour, ambition

**“When the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept”**

## ROMEO AND JULIET – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**Publisher: Penguin Books, 1967. Pages 120.**

Romeo  
and Juliet  
William Shakespeare



*Romeo and Juliet* is classified as a tragedy but is perhaps one of the most powerful love stories ever told. The city of Verona is beset by a feud between two wealthy feuding families, the Montagues and the Capulets. The young Romeo from the Montague family gate-crashes a feast hosted by the Capulets and falls in love with Juliet, the daughter of the Capulets.

As their union is forbidden, they meet in secret, and following a meeting in the Capulet orchard they decide to marry. Romeo seeks the help of his friend, Friar Laurence, who agrees to marry them. Later Tybalt, a nephew of the Capulets, is killed by Romeo in a street fight and Romeo is banished but hides in Friar Laurence's cell. It is agreed that Juliet will marry Paris in three days. Friar Laurence hatches a plan which involves Juliet taking a drug which will give her the appearance of death. Sadly, a series of unexpected events ruin the plan and the final scene is filled with tragedy.

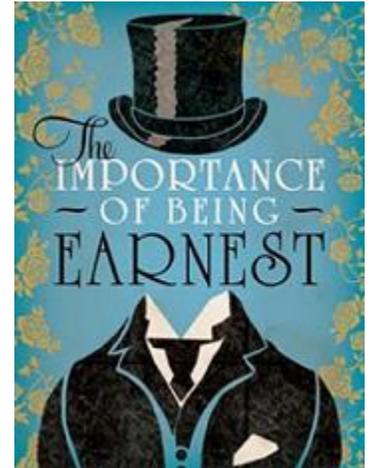
**Themes:** Love, the destructive power of hatred, fate.

**“But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east and Juliet is the sun.”**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST – OSCAR WILDE

**Publisher: Dover Publications, 1895. Pages 64.**

Two gentlemen living in 19th century England decide to live a lie in order to put some excitement into their indulgent and mundane lives. Jack Worthing has invented a brother 'Earnest' and uses his existence as an excuse to leave his life in the country to visit the rather beautiful Gwendolyn in London. As it happens, he has told Gwendolyn that he is Earnest. His friend Algernon Montcrief, who lives in London, also decides to take on the name of Earnest and pretends to be Jack's brother when visiting Jack's home in the country and when meeting Cecily Cardew, Jack's ward. However, things begin to go awry when they end up together in the country and their double lives are discovered, threatening to ruin everything...



This is one of Wilde's best known and most successful plays. It has some very funny moments and memorable quotations. Yet this seemingly frivolous play has a much darker side beneath the humour and the memorable quotations. It is a very strong critique of Victorian society of the time. It is a biting satire on the time and the people who live in this society.

**Themes:** Social Class, relationships/marriage, humour, hypocrisy, role of men and women in society.

***“I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.”***