



Master Will and the Spanish Spy

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News & Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

From the first page the reader is back in Elizabethan Stratford upon Avon with Will Shakespeare, a boy at school in the afternoon hearing music heralding the arrival of the travelling theatre. Things at home are not good and Will slips away to be at the front of the queue for tickets as Burbage has promised a free ticket. Burbage encourages the boy but his father won't let Will go to London with the company. There is a subplot about a Catholic priest which neatly illustrates the religious intolerance of the time. At the last John Shakespeare relents and the last chapter moves on to the time when Will is famous and can give his father the coat of arms he so desperately sought.

This is a very good depiction of a boy finding his future, taking the reader deep into the past with every word. The world of the travelling theatre, how plays were written, rehearsed, costumed and played is clearly told in few words, a real art in such a short format. The tension between Will's parents, with his mother Catholic, his father a failing businessman disappointed at every turn, and his eventual pride in his son's success, is clear. The illustrations add to the story. A real gem of a book!

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