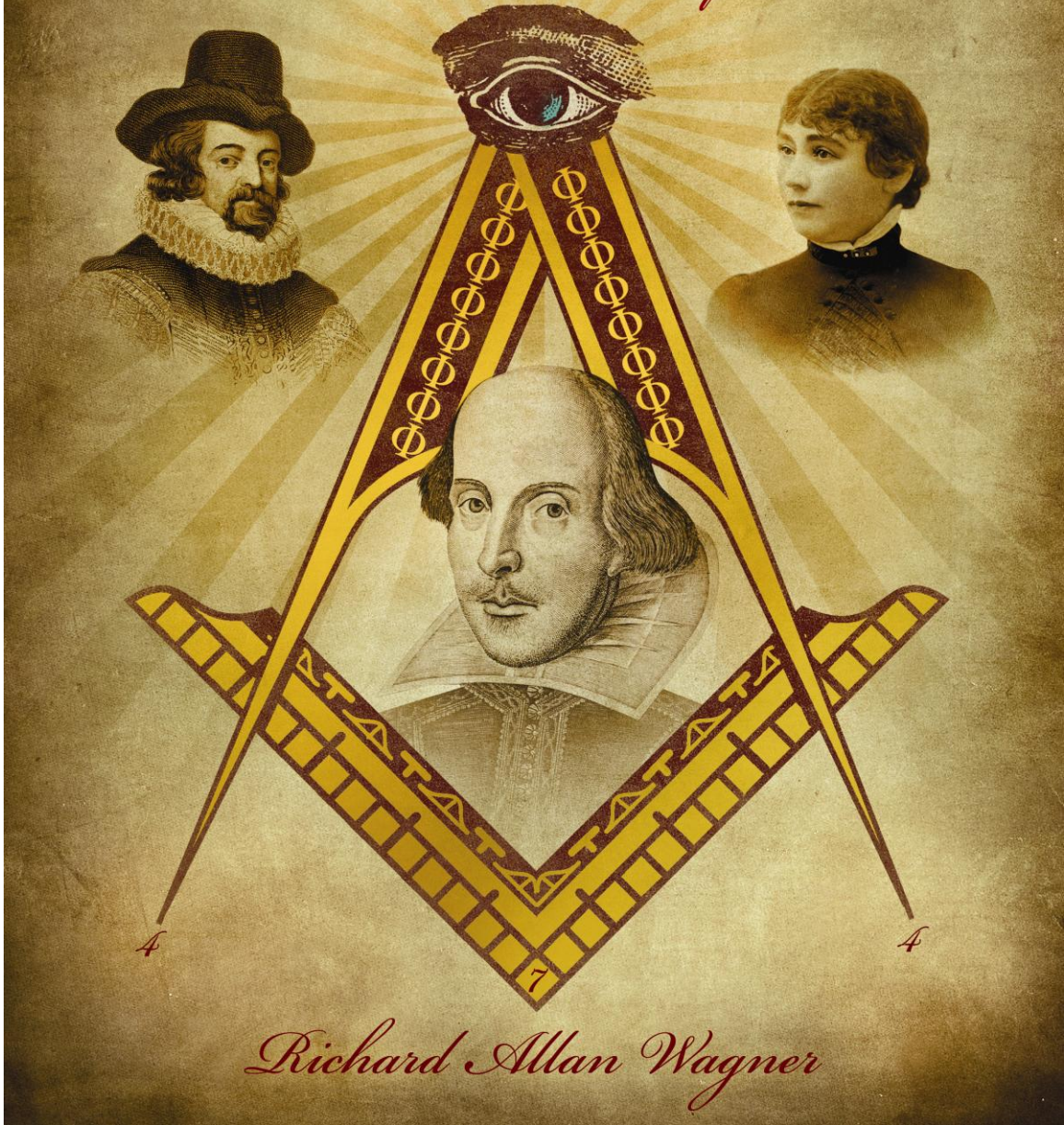


*The
Lost Secret
of William Shakespeare*



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Introduction

The writing of this book started in 1999 when I was beginning my research on the late heiress Sarah Winchester. At that time I had no idea where the research would lead. I had no preconceived notions about Mrs. Winchester nor did I have the slightest idea that she would lead me on an extraordinary journey of discovery that has transformed my life.

Originally, this was going to be a book about Mrs. Winchester and the remarkable mansion she had built in what is now San Jose, California—now known as “The Winchester Mystery House,” California Landmark number 868. As my research progressed, I clearly saw that the “House” was ingeniously built to serve as a multi-faceted puzzle. Mrs. Winchester had cleverly written a concealed story into the very fabric of the House’s architecture. Everywhere, in and about the House, she left a brilliantly crafted trail of distinct clues—clues for the “initiate”—the pure, unbiased seeker of truth.

My journey of initiation started with baby steps: here and there— sudden flashes of insight—stunning bursts of epiphany—eureka moments of discovery that gradually became more frequent and revealing—just as Sarah Winchester had planned. Gradually, over the years, the story began to unfold.

I found Sarah had been a Theosophist, a Rosicrucian and a Freemason (yes, there were women Freemasons during Sarah’s time). Her House is saturated with Rosicrucian and Masonic symbolism. Also, her overwhelming display of specific numbers show an

unequivocal pattern—a code for the initiate to read and understand. Moreover, the strange symbols and mysterious references to Shakespeare in some of her stained-glass windows reveal her thoughts and the amazing role she saw herself destined to play on the earthly stage.

My research intensified, taking me to Sarah’s birthplace in New Haven, CT. For years I scoured the historic archives, digging deeper into the recesses of her enigmatic life than anyone had previously done—resulting in a series of breakthroughs. One of the most significant breakthroughs came in January of 2005. School records (dated 1849) revealed that Sarah had been a classmate of Susan and Rebecca Bacon, daughters of New Haven’s highly respected Reverend Dr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon (no relation to Francis Bacon).

The good Reverend’s sister, Delia Bacon, a school teacher and author, who at times resided with her brother’s family, had just uncovered evidence that the works of Shakespeare were not written by the man from Stratford on Avon. Based on her findings, Delia Bacon had proposed that the Shakespearean works were the creation of a group of England’s finest Elizabethan poets, headed by Sir Francis Bacon.

By the early 1850’s Delia Bacon was presenting lectures on her thesis to the citizens of New Haven. Thus, the environment which nurtured young Sarah’s mind was, in fact, the birthplace of the Baconian doctrine. Delia Bacon’s book *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare unfolded* (1857) had a profound impact on various prominent writers and scholars who were also skeptical about the Stratford man’s authorship of the Shakespearean plays and poems. These included Thomas Carlyle, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Dickens, Walt Whitman, and Mark Twain who wrote a scathing attack on the “Stratfordian” apologists in his book *Is Shakespeare Dead?*”

As I will demonstrate in the latter section of this book, the evidence Sarah Winchester (nee Pardee) left behind clearly shows that she became a staunch adherent to the Baconian doctrine.

The Bacon connection with Sarah Winchester had been the missing KEY to her astonishing puzzle which had eluded me for years. My discovery of it now sheds new light on the most essential aspects of the mystery. The entire puzzle was finally coming together. Things I had overlooked which, all along, had been staring me in the face were now crystal clear.

Prior to my discovery of the Bacon-Winchester key, I had never considered or questioned the validity of the Stratford man's authorship of the Shakespearean works. I'd had no axe to grind one way or the other on the matter. In fact, like most people, I'd had no idea that there was ever a debate over who Shakespeare really was. Like the vast majority of people, I blindly accepted the standard orthodox (Renaissance Faire) view of Shakespeare as the man from Warwickshire who arose from the common class to become the crowning glory of English literature. I'm embarrassed to say that this was the stuff I was taught in college. But Sarah Winchester changed all of that.

The fairly simple book I was writing on Mrs. Winchester was now an entirely new deal. In fact, it was far more than I had bargained for. However, it was clear that I couldn't explain Sarah Winchester without explaining Francis Bacon—and, Shakespeare.

If I learned nothing else in college, my most prized lesson was that of Academic Discipline, which as far as I'm concerned is precisely what discovering the truth about things should be... get your facts in order by investigating all of the sources (no matter how obscure and repressed those sources might be). The reason I mention this is that, in

researching and writing this book, I started with no agenda regarding who Shakespeare was. I thoroughly investigated all of the sources—and followed where they lead.

Most people have no idea that they are unwitting “Stratfordians”—I know because I used to be one. But try to tell them that the man from Stratford wasn’t Shakespeare, and they will unflinchingly fight with you tooth and nail—it’s a knee-jerk reaction. I recall a situation with a man I once met... I mentioned the idea that the Stratford man wasn’t Shakespeare. Without thinking, his immediate response was “NO... I Just Can’t Accept That.” I responded, “Based on What?” He thought for a moment and replied “I guess you’re right. I really don’t know anything about that.” At least he was being honest. Not all Stratfordians, wittingly or unwittingly, are. When backed into a corner (with facts), most Stratfordians tend to shrug the whole thing off, saying “what does it matter who wrote Shakespeare?” Or, “I’m not really interested in who wrote the works or why they were written, I just enjoy the plays and the poetry.” As far as I’m concerned, such statements are analogous to saying “I appreciate the esthetic grandeur of Stonehenge or the Pyramids at Giza, but I really don’t care who built them, or how and why they were built.”

Works of art always tell a story. It’s the details—the background—the reasons for creating the Work that tells its’ story. Without the story there is no ART. Shakespeare is the world’s greatest example of literary art. But without knowing the WHO, HOW and WHY of the Shakespearean Work, it’s impossible to truly understand it!

Truth is rarely what you expect it to be, and it always hides in plain sight—it has to be DISCOVERED. GO... DISCOVER!

PART ONE

ROYAL SECRETS

AND THE INVENTION OF SHAKESPEARE

1

The Jeweled Mind of Francis Bacon

Upon ascending the English throne in 1558, the twenty five year old Elizabeth Tudor knew she had inherited a whirlwind of religious fervor. England was half Catholic and half Protestant. Elizabeth's Catholic predecessor Mary Tudor had allowed a reign of terror to descend on her subjects, leaving England unstable and vulnerable to its enemies. The world watched the new Queen's every move. Would Elizabeth convert to Catholicism? Who would she marry? It was all a delicate chess match, particularly with Pope Paul IV having placed a bounty on her head. Not long after her coronation, Elizabeth found an anonymous note on her pillow threatening her life and the lives of her future heirs. But the young Protestant Queen was nobody's fool. In order to keep the jackals at bay, and constantly off balance, she adopted a strategy of playing the role of a chaste, "Virgin Queen" married only to the state. It became a lifelong game she performed masterfully to the hilt—in spite of her passions.* In truth, Elizabeth's heart belonged entirely to Robert Dudley, the love of her life upon whom she bestowed numerous privileges and the title "Master of the Horse"—a highly advantageous honor that included his own bedchamber favorably adjoining hers. *

King Philip II of Spain maintained a close vigil on Elizabeth's activities through his watchdog ambassador Don Alvaro De la Quandra who was in daily attendance at her court. In December of 1560, De Quandra sent a letter to Philip, stating "the queen is expecting a child by Dudley." *

On January 1, 1561, in the house of Lord Pembroke, a very pregnant Elizabeth I secretly exchanged wedding vows with Dudley (later given the title Earl of Leicester). The union was witnessed by an intimate gathering of people close to Elizabeth's court—these included Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and his wife Lady Anne. Although the witnesses were sworn to secrecy, news of the event managed to leak out in various ways. Those caught uttering or writing words of the hushed incident were severely punished. The 1895 edition of the British *Dictionary of National Biography* (Vol. 16, under the heading "Dudley") states: "Whatever were the Queen's relations with Dudley before his wife's death, they became closer after. It was reported that she was formally betrothed to him, and that she secretly married him in Lord Pembroke's house, and that she was a mother already. In 1562 the reports that Elizabeth had children by Dudley were revived. One Robert Brooks, of Devizes, was sent to prison for publishing the slander, and seven years later a man named Marsham, of Norwich, was punished for the same offense."*

Twenty one days after the secret wedding, in her palace at York Place, the Queen gave birth to a son. A special arrangement had already been struck between Elizabeth and the Bacons providing the highly trusted couple would masquerade as the child's true parents, adopting him as one of their own. He was given the name Francis. The entry of his name in the birth registration book reads "Mr. Francis Bacon." Author Ross Jackson informs us "The addition of the 'Mr' in the registration book... was definitely placed there by someone for a reason... A 'Mr' before the name of a baby was contrary to all customs of registration, a signal that this was a very special baby. It was never done with any of the Bacon's other children."* Many years later the notice "In York House" was added. *



Elizabeth I in maternity dress

In due time, it was well noted that Francis bore a strong resemblance to the Earl of Leicester. There are other factors that hint at Francis Bacon's true birthright. For example, in one of her letters (still preserved), Lady Anne wrote of Francis as "his father's first chi..."—inking out the last two letters to cover up the slip. Four other children had already preceded Francis in the Bacon family. Another letter from Lady Anne regarding Francis, reads "It is not my meaning to treat him as a ward; such a word is far from my motherly feeling for him. I mean to do him good."* A further significant

fact is that the Bacons, who took meticulous care to document their most distant family members in the Bacon family Genealogy omitted Francis in the record.* Also, in his biography of Francis Bacon (1657) Dr. William Rawley (Bacon's life-long friend and chaplain) makes a deliberately ambiguous reference to Francis' birth place, stating that he “*was borne in YORK HOUSE or YORK PLACE in the Strand.*” * Rawley's delicate wording is a tip to the savvy reader that Bacon was given birth at the Queen's palace at York Place—conveniently located directly adjacent to the Bacon's quarters at York House. It was the perfect setting for the secret parental switch.

Thus, Elizabeth, the self proclaimed “Virgin Queen,” made certain her marriage and motherhood would be obscured by means of sheer suppression.* Even her beloved Dudley dared not speak of it—although he did send a series of letters (one of which can be found in the Spanish Simancas archives) to Philip II in which he pleads with the Spanish king to use his influence to secure public acknowledgement of Dudley as Prince Consort.*



Elizabeth I with son Francis by Elizabeth's favorite portrait artist Nicholas Hilliard

Following her near fatal bout with smallpox in 1562, Elizabeth's Privy Council pressed her to provide a document that would clarify her intentions regarding succession. Accordingly, in 1563, the Queen affixed her signature to the "Act of Succession" which stated that in the event of her demise, the Crown would go to "the natural issue of her body lawfully to be begotten." This ticklish wording posed a tricky, legal problem. In order for the Crown to pass to a successor, Elizabeth would have to acknowledge both an heir and a marriage. Therefore, in 1571, she had the words "lawfully to be begotten" stricken from the document—which had the effect of cracking the door of succession open to her heirs.* However, absolute power was the Queen's most prized possession—she would never permit herself to share it or will it to anyone.* She was fond of saying "I keep tight collars on all my dogs."

Although Elizabeth never endowed Francis with a title or an official position at court, she kept her "Little Lord Keeper"* close to her both in the palace and at York House, the Bacon's home adjacent to the royal residence. As long as Elizabeth lived and reigned, she provided for her son's most basic needs. His education, on the other hand, was well in keeping with that of a prince.

One of the Queen's reasons for choosing the Bacons as her son's adoptive parents was due to the fact that they were the most highly educated members of her court—thereby raising young Francis with a thorough knowledge of the Greek, Latin, Italian, French and Spanish languages. His notes and diaries indicate that he would often shift his thinking in whatever language suited his need, but generally, he did his thinking in Latin. He also acquired a thorough command of all Classical literature.

At a very early age, Francis exhibited a highly prodigious intellect. It was clear that he was a genius. He amazed everyone with his precocious, insightful wit, and an encyclopedic memory. The Queen often referred to him as “baby Solomon.”*

Several years after Francis’ arrival, the Bacons took up residence at Gorhambury House at St. Albans.* The Queen made frequent visits to Gorhambury, maintaining a vigilant account of her son’s progress. On one such occasion, Elizabeth made a remark to Sir Nicholas about the size of the manor: “My lord, what a little house you have gotten.” Sir Nicholas responded “Madam, my house is well, but you have made me too great for my house.”* Afterwards, the Lord Keeper made extensive additions to Gorhambury both for the Queen’s pleasure and for his own edification.

Author Peter Dawkins describes Gorhambury Manor as “complete with white plastered external walls, colourfully painted internal walls portraying myths and wise sayings, a long gallery displaying busts of philosophers and great leaders, and an unusually west-oriented chapel, it was nicknamed ‘The Temple.’ All indications are that it was fitted out to be a Platonic or Orphic school of philosophy—i.e., not just a country retreat but also a private academy.”* The entrance into The Temple was flanked by two pillars mimicking the porch pillars of Solomon’s Temple. In later years, Francis would make extensive use of their symbolic meaning in most of the engravings that accompany his works.

The most important purpose of The Temple was to serve as a meeting place for a small, secret group of Rosicrucian scholars who called themselves the “Knights of the Helmet.” Sir Nicholas appears to have been an early leader of the society, however, that honor was soon passed over to Francis. Author George Tudhope offers the following description of the secret group: “The first secret order to which he [Bacon] belonged was the Knights of

the Helmet, formed to promote the advancement of learning. He was chosen at a very early age, to be their leader. They adopted the ideals of the Goddess of Wisdom as their goal and built their order around the symbols of this mystical Goddess. She was known as Minerva, Pallas Athena, and Athena. This Goddess wore a helmet which was supposed to permit her to assume invisibility.

The Knights of the Helmet adopted her helmet as one of their symbols, and caused each knight to kiss his helmet as a token of his sincerity to keep his vow and obligation to the order. The Goddess of Wisdom was also known as the patroness of the liberal arts and sciences. Her main symbols were the helmet, the staff [spear] at her side, the serpent at her feet, a shield, a looking glass or mirror, and an owl. The helmet denotes invisibility; the staff, knowledge or wisdom by which the Serpent of Ignorance at her feet is destroyed; the shield was used as protection when warring against ignorance; the glass or mirror was a means of receiving and transmitting knowledge or wisdom by reflection; and the owl denoted secret wisdom.”*



Statue of Pallas Athena

It should be noted that Bacon also included the god Apollo, as Pallas Athena's male counterpart as well as adopting the goddess as his personal muse. Pallas Athena was known to all as the "Spear Shaker."

It was customary for sons to attend the same schools of their fathers. At the age of twelve, Francis was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, founded by his grandfather Henry VIII. Sir Nicholas Bacon had been schooled at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Young Bacon quickly mastered the college curriculum. He had devoured all of the books in the school's inadequate library. Moreover, the student had surpassed his teachers whom he found to be stagnating in an antiquated system of Aristotelian logic and methodology. His starving mind hungered for greater knowledge both in quantity and quality. Fortunately, there were two other nearby outlets of knowledge available to him. First, his uncle William Cecil (Lord Burghley), the Queen's Secretary of State, boasted one of the largest personal libraries in Europe. Francis absorbed the entire collection. And second, there was Dr. John Dee.

Arguably the greatest scholar and progressive thinker of his day, John Dee had been a tutor to both Leicester and Elizabeth when they were childhood playmates. Now, with Bacon, he was mentoring the mind that would reshape the intellectual world. Furthermore, Dee's massive library at his house in Mortlake easily dwarfed Burghley's.* At last, young Bacon was tapping into uncharted territory. Among his many activities, Dee was the most prominent member of the secret, underground Rosicrucian movement that, two centuries earlier, had spawned the Renaissance.

The various splintered groups of Rosicrucians throughout Europe were descended from the Knights Templar. Dee, more than anyone else, had amalgamated the secret Templar knowledge of mathematics, sacred geometry, architecture, art, science, and the esoteric philosophies of the ancient mystery schools—all of which the Catholic church had vehemently suppressed. For young Bacon, studying under Dee was equivalent to the proverbial child running amuck in a candy store. The knowledge gained and the lessons learned from the old master (also known as the Queen’s Magician) formed one of the most crucial influences on Bacon’s development, particularly with regard to the Kabbalistic science of numbers.* Here, Dee had opened up a previously unknown dimension of the symmetric numerical systems that govern the underlying structure of the universe. Bacon now saw the world from a completely new perspective. Later he would apply this special knowledge to everything he touched.



Dr. John Dee

Prior to the advent of modern day democracies, the business of authoring literary work was highly treacherous and sometimes life threatening. Should the Church or a monarch decide that a piece of literature was objectionable the unfortunate author would usually face imprisonment, torture or execution. Furthermore, writing poetry and plays for public consumption was regarded as a lowly occupation. Anything having to do with theatrical production was generally looked upon as the domain of rogues and scoundrels. It was, therefore, common practice for writers to publish their work anonymously, or use pen names. In some cases, nobles would pay lower class commoners for the use of their names. Usually, such an arrangement required the commoner to pose as the actual author.

Writing was a tradition in the Bacon family. Both Nicholas and Lady Anne had written numerous books. In one instance, however, Sir Nicholas made the mistake of allowing publication of a book in which his real name was given for its authorship. The book fell to the Queen's disfavor and she denied him the high honor of being promoted to her Privy Council. Thereafter, Sir Nicholas Bacon frequently lectured his children about the pitfalls of writing under one's own name. Veiled anonymity, masks and concealment were important themes Francis clung to for the rest of his life. *

In Elizabeth's England, actors were required to have both a license and a patron. Bacon's biological father, the Earl of Leicester, who loved the theater, was the first man to license a troop of actors for the stage. It was through his father that Bacon became acquainted with actor James Burbage who built the first theater in England.

During the summer of 1575, the Earl of Leicester lavished the Queen with an incessant array of extravagant entertainment at his Kenilworth Castle (on the River Avon) and later at his Woodstock estate. It was his last-ditch effort to win over Elizabeth's sentiments

toward acknowledging him as her Prince Consort. These Revels lasted for weeks. They included hunting, bear baiting, music, dancing, masques (theatrical plays), lavish banquets and spectacular displays of fireworks. Many historians regard the Kenilworth/Woodstock Revels as the “high watermark of Tudor culture.”



Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester

One of the most impressive aspects of the Revels involved a theatrical production (featuring James Burbage) in which Elizabeth and her court were portrayed as a sort of

latter day version of Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The masque was designed to depict Elizabeth as an idealized goddess called the “Fairy Queen.” Flattery was, perhaps, Elizabeth’s greatest weakness. Needless to say, she was delighted with the entertainment.

In some respects, the masque resembled a poem entitled *The Tale of Hemetes the Heremyte* ostensibly written by the poet George Gascoigne who was incorrectly given credit for the masque. Gascoigne staunchly denied having anything to do with it. However, a very young and mysterious person by the name of Robert Laneham is thought to have been the masque’s true author, producer and director. Clearly, Leicester had the utmost confidence in him. There is much evidence to show that the youthful and enigmatic Laneham was none other than Bacon himself. This was his first success as a playwright. He was definitely in his element. And, of course, Laneham or “lean ham” was one of the earliest pen names used by Bacon.* Author Ross Jackson states: “The theme of the Kenilworth/Woodstock entertainment was a lofty one that would dominate all of Bacon’s future work under all the various masks he used, and would inspire others to follow his lead. This event signified nothing less than the launching of the English Renaissance in literature, though the fact would not be realized until it was all over many years later. And it was all started by a 14 year old boy.”*

Francis and his elder foster brother Anthony were virtually inseparable. Anthony was completely devoted to Francis who often referred to his brother (in letters and other documents) as “my comfort and consort” and “my second self.” Until his death in 1601, Anthony Bacon was his brother’s secretary and chief collaborator.* The various antics and theatrical activities of the Bacon brothers were a constant cause for concern to their

puritanical mother. Lady Anne regarded everything related to poetry and theater as the devil's work. It is no wonder that she consistently scolded and wrote to them "not to Mum, nor Mask, nor sinfully Revel."* Her disapproval of writing poetry and plays is another reason Francis was reluctant to put his name on his works.

During the year following the Kenilworth/Woodstock Revels, the Bacon brothers were enrolled for further education at Gray's Inn. The Inns of Court were, in essence, the finishing schools of the nobility. There, the young nobles were schooled both in law and how to properly conduct themselves in the Royal court. Although Francis quickly mastered all facets of the law, he had no interest in its practice. His passions lay elsewhere. In a letter to his uncle Burghley, he declared "I have taken all knowledge as my province."* This idea formed the genesis of an intellectual revolution Bacon called the "Great Instauration" (great restoration) in which he would revive the great literary and scientific spirit that had been the hallmark of the Classic Greco-Roman culture—and he would catapult it to still greater heights.

At the age of 15, Bacon discovered the truth about his royal heritage. He was shocked, to say the least. In order to take the heat off the matter, Elizabeth sent Francis on an extended trip to the Continent. While abroad, he would study the customs of other countries and further expand his education. She even gave him a somewhat ceremonious send off. To those who were not in the know, the spectacle of the Queen overseeing the departure of this teenage commoner who kissed her hand must have raised a few eyebrows. *

Upon his arrival in France, young Bacon wasted little time acquainting himself with the leading scholars and poets in the land. Of particular interest was the French "prince of

poets” Pierre de Ronsard who had assembled an eclectic group of poets, scholars, and linguists called the *Pleiade*.^{*} Much like Bacon, Ronsard was dedicated to the advancement of knowledge. He also used his poetry as a medium for building and transmitting a new, more sophisticated French language. For the most part, the process involved the mixing and splicing of the prefixes and suffixes of different Greek, Latin, Italian and Spanish words. Bacon was so impressed with the simplicity of Ronsard’s methods that he decided to apply them to his own revamping of a highly primitive English Language.

The French were enamored with Bacon’s stellar intellect. They referred to him as “the jeweled mind,” and “the man who knows everything.” Elizabeth sent the artist Nicholas Hilliard to France to do a painting of her son. Bacon’s brilliance inspired Hilliard to such an extent that he inscribed the words “would I could paint his mind” around the border of the painting.



Francis Bacon by Nicholas Hilliard

Much of Bacon's stay in France was spent as a guest of Henri III, King of the Navarre Province (later Henri IV of France). Despite his constant vacillation between Catholicism and Protestantism (for political reasons) Henri was a closet Rosicrucian. He was popular with his subjects who considered him to be a good and enlightened King. Bacon's admiration for Henri would later be revealed in one of his plays.

The court of Navarre proved to be a fertile setting for Bacon's numerous projects. Using the pseudonym Pierre de La Primaudaye, he put the finishing touches on his *L'Academie Francaise* ("The French Academy"),* a piece on which he had been laboring for some time. It turned out to be the world's first encyclopedia. The *Academie* cleverly emulated Plato's style of dialogue in which the principle dialectician is named Achitob (instead of Socrates). Of course, Achitob is a sly anagram using the Kabbalist "Atbash Cipher"—reversing the letters by starting with the last letter, then the first, back-and-forth until the word has been turned outside-in, arriving at Bacohit. Thus, "baco" is Latin for Bacon, and "hit" is an old, English Chaucerian word meaning "hid" or "hide"—hence, **Bacon hid.**

The French Academy saw its first French publication in 1577. Later, more expansive English publications were printed in 1584 and 1618. As an important note, many of the "Academie's" themes show up in some of the Shakespearean works, and the writing style is undeniably that of Bacon.* Author and scholar William T. Smedley states: "A comparison between the French and English publications points to both having been written by an author who was a master of each language... The marginal notes are in the exact style of Bacon. "A similitude"—"A notable comparison"—occur frequently just as the writer [Smedley] finds them again and again in Bacon's handwriting in volumes

which he possesses. The book abounds in statements, phrases, and quotations which are to be found in Bacon's letters and works."*

At Navarre, Bacon met the great love of his life Marguerite de Valois. She was Henri's estranged wife and the daughter of Catherine de Medici. Although she was nine years his senior, Francis was head-over-heels in love with her. She was his paradigm of feminine attributes—beautiful, intelligent, educated and immensely talented. There were only four fundamental problems with Bacon's naïve and unrealistic plan to marry Marguerite. First, she was unavailable for matrimony, second, she was Catholic, third, Elizabeth sternly disapproved of such a union,* and finally, Marguerite's feelings toward Francis were not reciprocal. The odd thing about the matter is that Bacon was more resentful of his mother's disapproval than of Marguerite's rejection.

Another significant landmark Bacon reached during his sojourn at Navarre was his acceptance into the order of Operative Freemasonry. Operative Masons were the branch of the Knights Templar who built Europe's magnificent cathedrals. Each Mason had his own distinctive mark which he would etch or engrave somewhere on the structure he helped to build. Bacon's mark consisted of the capital letters IM, which in Latin is equivalent to the English words *I am*. On the title page of the 1624 Paris publication of *The Advancement and Proficiency of Learning*, he incorporated his Operative Masonic mark into the design. It can be seen within the small oval near the bottom of the page where it rests above the Masonic square and compass—serving as Bacon's coded way of saying "I am an Operative Mason."* In a Larger oval at the center of the title page, the fleur-de-lis is shown with a prince's coronet hovering above. It is an emblem that was symbolic of the Prince of Wales—clearly an allusion to Bacon's royal legacy.

In addition to the time spent in France, Bacon's travels on the Continent found him soaking up the rich cultures of Spain, and the various Italian city states such as Venice, Padua, and Verona. However, it wasn't all an adventurous romp. Elizabeth had also sent Francis to act both as a diplomat and spy. This aspect of performing multiple functions while venturing abroad was nothing new. Bacon's mentor John Dee had been playing the same role for many years. In fact, Dee was the original secret agent 007.* All of his secret correspondences to the Queen bore the unique signature of an elongated, horizontal number 7 with two circles under it.



John Dee's 007 signature

Francis and Anthony Bacon had been recruited into Elizabeth's secret service under the tutelage of her spymaster Francis Walsingham. Because of its inherent theme of concealment and invisibility, the Bacon brothers took to the occupation of spying like ducks to water. It was Francis Bacon who created the bilateral cipher* which became the cornerstone of encryption techniques for the English Secret Foreign Service. Centuries later, it would form the foundation of Morse code, and later, modern computer codes. Secret encrypted messages permeate all of Bacon's work.

Francis had been away for three years. One night, in 1579, he had an extraordinary dream in which the Bacon's Gorhambury house was covered over with black mortar. Soon after, he received word that Sir Nicholas had died.

Bacon arrived back in England heartbroken but much wiser. Sir Nicholas, who had been one of the wealthiest men in England, provided well for all of his children save one. Francis was left entirely out of his foster father's will. Scholars generally agree that the omission wasn't an oversight—rather, Sir Nicholas had rightfully assumed that Elizabeth would tend to her son's needs. Instead, she allowed Francis to drift near the brink of poverty, providing him only with a meager annual stipend. Ironically, it may have been a blessing in disguise. Writing through the eyes of destitution brings a wealth of uncorrupted truth to the page. Bacon wrote “most men study to live. I live to study.” Like most great geniuses, his passion for discovery and knowledge far surpassed all love of material wealth.

Gray's Inn became Bacon's home for the next few years. Its austere, quiet environment proved ideal for writing. It should be noted that a significant portion of the Inn's “Gentlemen” at that time were members of the Knights of the Helmet. Furthermore, Gray's students had a tradition of preparing for their future positions at court by literally acting out the parts they would play. Such was the nature of the Gray's Inn Revels. Author Peter Dawkins offers an apt summary: “As part of their training the gentlemen of the Inns of Court—and especially those of Gray's Inn, which excelled at it—were obliged to present each year four entertainments in a mock imitation of the royal court, complete with its entertainments, court life, and political and legal business. The young lawyers and noblemen of the Inns would create a mock royal court to which on certain days the chief officers of State, together with other nobles of the realm, including ladies, would be invited. Masquing and reveling then took place, mocking (i.e., imitating in parody) the

Queen and her court as well as each other. It was dangerous but exciting. The Christmas revels were especially to be noted.”*

Gray’s Inn was the perfect proving ground for much of Bacon’s work. It allowed him the luxury of always having access to a highly sophisticated audience on whom he could test and hone his ideas with complete anonymity.

With the help of Anthony and an elite group of friends who he enlisted from the Knights of the Helmet, Bacon created a new, secret organization which he dubbed the Fra Rosi Crosse society. The group adopted the rituals, customs, and symbols of both the Rosicrucians and the Operative Freemasons. Eventually the Fra Rosi Crosse society would evolve into the Order of Speculative Freemasonry. Their essential purpose was to assist their “Worshipful Master” in the performance of his work.

Essex

Elizabeth made certain her motherhood would not be revealed by stipulating that no man, i.e. doctor, would have access to her remains for examination. Thus, she effectively placed a lid of secrecy over the myth of Elizabeth the childless, virgin Queen. Besides Francis Bacon, abundant historical evidence shows that she had at least one more child by Leicester in 1567. As had been the case with Francis, the Queen arranged to have this newborn son secretly adopted by another prominent family whom she could trust.



Elizabeth I with her sons by the Dutch artist De Larray

Elizabeth placed her second son in the care of Walter Devereux 1st Earl of Essex, with his wife, Lettice, nee Lettice Knollys who was the grand daughter of Mary Boleyn, the sister of Elizabeth's mother Anne Boleyn.

The boy was christened Robert Devereux. Unlike his elder brother Francis, Robert was born to a title, 2nd Earl of Essex. He was raised at Chartley Castle at Stratfordshire. And, like Francis, Essex received his education at Trinity College, Cambridge. However, he didn't share his brother's zeal for the academic life. Instead, his interests were directed more toward military and political service, which Elizabeth and Leicester considered to be of far greater value than Francis' preoccupation with writing poetry and plays which they regarded as a frivolous pastime.

Walter Devereux died in 1576, leaving a vast portion of his estate to his foster son. Leicester, who saw many of his own traits mirrored in young Essex, decided to take a more active role in his second son's upbringing than had been the case with Francis.

Elizabeth's tactic of playing the virgin queen had, in many respects, ensnared her and those she loved, in an unfortunate trap of her own devising. Her refusal to acknowledge Leicester as her husband and prince consort created an inconsolable distance between them. Understandably, Leicester desired some semblance of a family, and his relationship with the virgin queen was not allowing it. Hence, two years after Walter Devereux's death, the Earl of Leicester married Devereux's widow Lettice—thereby making Leicester stepfather to his and Elizabeth's second son. Elizabeth was outraged at Leicester's bold move, but eventually she forgave him.

It didn't take long for young Essex to discover who his real parents were. He relished the prospect of following in his father's footsteps. Francis and Anthony Bacon also took

an interest in him, accepting him as a third brother. Years later, the Queen appointed Francis and Anthony as advisors to Essex who, in turn, became an important patron of their work.

In 1586, Leicester was placed in charge of the English forces fighting the Spanish military presence in the Netherlands. Essex (now nineteen years old) enthusiastically joined his father in the fighting, culminating with the Battle of Zutphen which turned out to be a disastrous loss for Leicester. Bacon's friend Sir Philip Sidney, who was one of England's finest poets, was killed in the Battle.

Arriving back in England, Essex was greeted with exaggerated stories of his bravery and heroism—obviously a clever piece of propaganda designed by Leicester to promote his protégé to prominence both in the eyes of the people and Elizabeth. Whether deserved or not, Essex had been propelled to stardom in his mother's court. The Queen adored him, and his father proceeded to coach him in all of the ways to gain her favor. The ultimate prize for the aging, ailing Leicester was to see Elizabeth name their second son as her successor.

Following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester died (apparently of stomach cancer). For the time being, Essex became a ward of Lord Burghley, who also held the office of the Court of Royal Wards.

Gradually, Elizabeth's grief over Leicester drew her closer to Essex, who in most respects, became his father's replacement. The Queen lavished him with many of the honors and privileges she had bestowed on Leicester. These included the prestigious rank of Master of the Horse, and ownership of the highly lucrative monopoly on sweet wines.

As Master of the Horse, Essex (like his father) was accorded the privilege of taking up residence in the chambers of Whitehall palace adjoining those of the Queen.

Privately, Elizabeth's relationship with Essex was consistent with the behavior of a doting, almost smothering mother. She spoiled him rotten, while demanding his full devotion and attention. It was a sharp razor upon which he would often tread with reckless abandon. Like his mother, Essex was vain, hot blooded, and unpredictable. Elizabeth often referred to him as her "wild horse."

Publicly, the Queen treated the Earl of Essex much the same as she would any of her many courtiers, engaging him in the same flirtatious manner as she did with those who incessantly wooed her. Unlike the case with Francis Bacon, her true relationship with her second son was a far better kept secret. Thus, her displays of affection toward Essex were commonly misinterpreted as being romantic.

Elizabeth continually indulged her second son with gifts and higher governmental status, gradually elevating him as a member of her Privy Council. His chief rivals on the Council were the Cecils, i.e. Lord Burghley and his son Robert who had previously been in perpetual opposition to Leicester's influence with the Queen.

In 1590 Essex married the daughter of Elizabeth's most loyal minister Francis Walsingham who was also opposed to the Cecils. Naturally, the marriage met with the Queen's disapproval, partly because she viewed all women as rivals, and partly because the bride was the widow of Sir Philip Sidney (Leicester's nephew). However, as had been the case with Leicester's marriage to Lettice Devereux, Elizabeth eventually cooled off.

Like his father, Essex was always eager to dash off to war, constantly defying the Queen's orders to stay at home. In 1589, he joined Francis Drake's English Armada

which sailed to Iberia in an unsuccessful bid to drive home the English advantage following the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The year 1591 found the restless Essex in command of a force sent to assist King Henri IV of France, and in 1596 he distinguished himself by briefly capturing the Spanish port of Cadiz. In truth, the event amounted to nothing less than theatrical propaganda. Nevertheless, Essex, the charmer, had become a national hero, gaining immense popularity with the English people.

Essex's celebrity only fueled his insolent behavior toward his mother. During a heated Privy Council debate, the Queen boxed his ears when he turned his back to her, prompting him to draw his sword.* Any other man would have been dealt with quite harshly for such an act, but Elizabeth did nothing. For all his charm and potential, Essex was completely lacking in modesty, sound judgment, or any measure of statesmanship—yet, he fully expected to be England's next ruler.

In addition to the double dealing Burghley and his treacherous son Robert Cecil, Essex's list of enemies was steadily growing. Even Bacon's close friend Sir Walter Raleigh (arguably Elizabeth's ablest seaman and soldier) began to view Essex as an impudent upstart while being forced to suffer the indignity and humiliation of serving as his subordinate officer in the Islands Voyage expedition to the Azores in 1597. The expedition had turned into a debacle when, in defiance of the Queen's orders, Essex allowed his men to pursue Spanish treasure ships without ever engaging their battle fleet. Secretly, Raleigh (and the Lord Admiral Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham) never forgave Essex for the disgrace the incident cast on all who were involved.*

The last straw finally came in 1599 when Essex was given command of a massive expedition to quell an Irish rebellion led by the Earl of Tyrone who refused to take on the

English force directly. Instead, Tyrone craftily adopted a strategy of hit and run guerrilla warfare which gradually took its toll on English supplies and morale. Essex's response was to permit an unauthorized truce in which he undertook to present Tyrone's demands to the English government.

Essex abandoned his army and hurried back to England, whereupon, he stormed unexpectedly into the Queen's private chamber, catching her half dressed, wigless, and quite terrified.* He desperately tried to explain away the whole Irish mess as a plot concocted by the Cecils—an allegation that was not entirely without merit. However, this time, Essex had gone too far.

Without imprisoning her beloved second son, Elizabeth kept him in seclusion for nine months. She wanted her Wild Horse broken but not killed. In June of 1600, he was brought to trial before a special court. In an ironic twist of fate, the Queen, who had previously ignored Essex's plea to promote his brother Francis to the office of Attorney General (primarily because Francis had eloquently opposed her in Parliament over an issue regarding taxes), ordered her first son to participate in the trial as a witness interrogator. This strange scenario has mystified historians for centuries. Why would Francis Bacon be forced to assist in his brother's prosecution? The answer resides in the fact that Elizabeth sought, first, to provide the fairest possible treatment for Essex, and second, she wanted Francis to council his brother against raising the matter of succession.

No sentence was actually dispensed at the trial. However, Essex had fallen from the Queen's favor. Over time, he was given his freedom. Then, with his closest friend the Earl Southampton and a handful of supporters by his side, Essex took to the streets of London in an attempt to appeal to the people to follow him in a show of force against the

Queen. Most people simply stayed home behind closed doors and watched as the band of 200 rebels made their way through the city. Once again, Essex had totally miscalculated his ability as a leader. Elizabeth's forces quickly and efficiently crushed the rebellion, dispatching Essex and Southampton to the Tower.

This time, Essex was on trial for high treason. Again, the Queen ordered Bacon to perform in the same capacity as before. Essex's defense consisted of the allegation that Robert Cecil was conspiring as an agent for Spain against the Queen, and that he (Essex) was endeavoring to protect her. Cecil, who had been eavesdropping on the trial from behind a Flemish tapestry, stepped forth to challenge Essex's claim. Naturally, Cecil was absolved of any wrong doing, and declared to be "an honest man" while Essex was condemned.

Still Elizabeth only wanted her favorite son to be broken and not killed. After Leicester's death, she had given Essex his father's signet ring which he kept in a small leather pouch that he wore around his neck. Elizabeth devised a plan whereby Essex could save himself from the block by sending the ring back to her as a signal that he sought forgiveness. The ring never arrived, leaving a very befuddled Elizabeth no choice but to sign his death warrant.

On February 25, 1601, three strokes of the axe brought a fateful end to Robert Devereux, the blood related brother of Francis Bacon. Various historical sources give an account of the Ring being sent to Elizabeth by means of a messenger boy who naively gave it over to one of her ladies in waiting, Lady Nottingham, who gave assurance that she would faithfully see that it would be delivered to the Queen—but, instead, the Ring was conveyed into the hands of the Earl of Nottingham and Sir Walter Raleigh (both

enemies of Essex) who, upon realizing its meaning, made certain that it would never reach its destination, and that the knowledge of its arrival would remain secret. Later, when Lady Nottingham lay on her deathbed, she confessed to the Queen the role she had played in the Ring's interception. The Queen violently shook the dying woman by the shoulders, screaming "God may forgive you, but I never can."* Many years after the incident, when it was Raleigh's turn to go to the scaffold, he confessed to his friend Robert Townson that Essex's execution was the result of a "trick" played on Elizabeth.*

To this day, the name "Robart Tidar" (the Welsh form of Robert Tudor) can be seen carved in a wooden beam above the cell in which Essex was confined prior to his execution.



Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex

3

Enter Shakespeare

By the early 1580's, the Great Instauration was in full swing. The Bacon brothers were perpetually coining new words which saturated the pages of the numerous plays being penned by them with the assistance of the Fra Rosi Crosse society. The Earl of Essex, who was an enthusiastic patron of their work, wrote a letter to the Queen, saying that Francis and Anthony Bacon “print me and make me speak to the world, and shortly they will play me in what form they list upon the stage.”* Later, it would turn out to be a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Before Bacon's Great Instauration, the English vocabulary was a disjointed assortment of nearly 2000 crude words. In most of the country shires, the local dialects consisted of not more than 200 words. The English aristocracy of that time conducted their reading, writing, and learning primarily in Latin. Thus, one of the principle objectives of Bacon's project was to implement an explosion of an advanced pedigree of highly descriptive English words and phrases. Similar to the scheme of Ronsard's *Pleiade*, Bacon's new verbiage was infused into the literature produced by the Fra Rosi Crosse society. Within three decades, his works introduced more than 20,000 new words into the English language—laying the foundation for an English Renaissance that would eventually evolve into the “Age of Enlightenment.”

Bacon's "enterprise" was run much like a company in which he was the chief writer, editor, and publisher—utilizing the "studio system" of the great master artists of the early Italian Renaissance who employed apprentices to produce a rough structure for a work to which the master would apply both his finishing touches and his name.*

Although he had spent years writing under numerous pseudonyms, Bacon's early work through his Fra Rosi Crosse circle was mostly anonymous. Gradually, due to the anonymity and sheer volume of production, it became necessary to deal with the problem of plagiarism and brazen piracy. The enterprise required a brand name. The historical record shows that Bacon did a lot of searching for the perfect nom de plume. So, just as he had adopted Pallas Athena as his muse, he decided to embrace the literal meaning of her name, Shake Spear. For important numerical reasons (to be discussed later), Bacon added an extra letter E to the name, resulting in Shake Speare. Up until the publishing of the 1623 Shakespeare Folio, the name appeared either as "Shakespeare" or as "Shake-speare." The hyphenated spelling of the name was aimed more at presenting the name as a brand name than as a surname.

For Bacon and the initiated members of his circle, the name Shakespeare was the embodiment of the goddess of wisdom, Pallas Athena, shaking her spear at ignorance. Moreover, she represented invisibility and concealment. To that end, Bacon's Shakespeare circle devised coded seals that they ingeniously displayed in the work as secret markers (similar to the marks of the Operative Masons). The two most prominent seals were the numbers 157 and 287.* Both numbers correspond to the name Fra Rosi Crosse in the Elizabethan "Kaye" and "Simple" ciphers (to be discussed later).

Other than being a secret society, one of the most remarkable aspects of the “Shakespeare enterprise” is that it was a non-profit organization.* Its reason for existing was to advance the Great Instauration, even in the face of financial hardship. The historical record mysteriously shows that no one named Shakespeare was ever paid (in any context) for a single play or poem. Bacon was perpetually broke because he invested all of his resources into the production of his literary “children.” Bacon regarded money simply as a means to an end, and not an end in itself. He relied heavily on loans, and support from his brother Anthony, and the loyal Herbert family (the Earls of Pembroke).

Most of the members of the Fra Rosi Crosse society were adept poets, playwrights, and scribes (experts in penmanship) whom Bacon called his “good pens.” Among these were Anthony Bacon, Ben Jonson, John Lyly, George Wither, John Davies of Hereford, Sir John Davies, and George Herbert. Other members of the Shakespeare circle included Tobie Matthew, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Fulke Greville, Thomas Nash, Robert Greene, George Peele, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, the Earl of Essex, the Earl of Southampton, Sir Philip Sidney and his sister Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke.

The Earl of Oxford, Edward De Vere, may also have been intimate with the circle if not an outright member. A modern day group of people called “Oxfordians” believe De Vere was Shakespeare. In later chapters of this book, I will provide conclusive evidence that he wasn’t. However, De Vere was too closely related to the Shakespeare circle not to have been associated with it either directly or indirectly. Mark Anderson, an Oxfordian biographer, constantly refers to De Vere’s reputation as “a great teller of tall tales.”* On that, there can be little doubt. There are certain incidents in De Vere’s life, and in his tall tales that are easily consistent with some of the sub-plots of the Shakespearean plays.

The greatest problem with De Vere as a member of the Shakespeare circle is that his pompous, truculent personality was ill suited for participation in the enterprise. He clashed with most of the circle's members. His hatred of Essex and Raleigh was well known—and his obsessive animosity toward Philip Sidney was so intense that he baited Sidney into accepting a challenge to engage in a duel to the death. Upon receiving word of the matter, Elizabeth abruptly interceded, forbidding the duel to take place.

Perhaps De Vere is remembered more for perpetrating one of history's most notorious acts of flatulence than for his writing. In his book *Brief Lives*, the biographer John Aubrey gives an account of De Vere making a grand and dramatic bow to the Queen. Aubrey writes "This Earle of Oxford, making his low obeisance to Queen Elizabeth, happened to let a fart, at which he was so abashed and ashamed that he went to Travell, 7 years. On his returne the Queen welcomed him home, and sayd, My Lord, I had forgott the fart."* One thing is certain, whatever effect De Vere may have had (wittingly or unwittingly) on the Shakespeare enterprise would still be of little consequence.

Most of Bacon's early work was continually polished, revised, and expanded upon. For example, the composition of the Kenilworth/Woodstock entertainment matured, over time, into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Bacon's ideals expressed in *The French Academy*, along with his real life experience of Henri's court at Navarre became the theme for *Loves Labour's Lost*. His anonymous piece for the 1594 Christmas Revels at Gray's Inn, titled *Gesta Grayorum* provided the basis for *A Comedy of Errors*. And, on one occasion, Bacon had become indebted to a Jewish money lender (a goldsmith named Sympson) who had him imprisoned when he was unable to repay the loan.* Anthony

came to his brother's rescue, paying off the debt. The episode inspired *The Merchant of Venice*.

In 1583 it was Anthony Bacon's turn for an extended visit to the court of Navarre. His purpose abroad was twofold: first, he was there as an agent for the English Secret Service, conveying secret political information back from the Continent to Walsingham and Lord Burghley. Second, he was tirelessly gathering anything of interest for his brother's grand project. In a letter to Anthony, Francis asks his brother to "send some new material for my private scribes." In another letter he writes "I have an idle pen or two...I pray send me somewhat else for them to write."*



Anthony Bacon, Age 36

When Anthony returned to England in 1592, he found his brother ready to unleash a flurry of works for publication under the name Shakespeare. *Venus and Adonis* was the first work to bear the Shakespeare imprint. It was magnificent, but it was also (by Elizabethan standards) pornographic.

All published literature (particularly anything that was sexually suggestive) had to undergo the test of censorship. That duty belonged to the Archbishop of Canterbury who would only grant a license for publication in the unlikely event that he found the work to be non offensive. However, it just so happened that the Archbishop was none other than Dr. John Whitgift, who, years earlier, had been the Master of Trinity College, the alma mater of his dear, close friend Francis Bacon. *

The 1593 publication of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* was highly successful. From 1594 through 1602, the Shakespeare enterprise saw the publication of *The Rape of Lucrece*, and the in-quarto versions of *Love's Labors Lost*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *Richard II*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry VI*, Parts I, II, and III, *Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Henry IV*, Parts I and II, *Titus Andronicus*, and *The Merchant of Venice*.

By 1600, when the Earl of Essex was enjoying immense popularity with the English people, while surreptitiously plotting against the Queen, all of the Shakespearean plays had been well received by her, except one. *Richard II* audaciously questioned the divine right of monarchs. Moreover, it emphasized the issue of Richard's deposition and imprisonment. Overall, Bacon crafted the play so that it would logically lead to a clear comparison between Richard II and Elizabeth I. It was, of course, tantamount to treason.

The Queen went ballistic. She stormed about Whitehall Palace shouting at her courtiers “I am Richard II. Know ye not that?”*



Elizabeth I by Nicholas Hilliard

As a further complication, Dr. John Hayward (one of Bacon’s good pens) added insult to injury by publishing a pamphlet with the misleading title of *First Part of the Life and*

Raigne of King Henrie IIII. The book quoted all of the “seditious” segments from *Richard II* in a vain appeal to the English people to rally in support of the Earl of Essex’s challenge to Elizabeth’s supremacy. The Queen instantly had Hayward subdued and imprisoned.*

It was not Bacon’s intention to see his mother over thrown—rather it was his hope to coax the 67 year old monarch toward the realization that she wasn’t going to live forever, and finally come to grips with the issue of naming her successor. Elizabeth pressed Francis for advice on the matter. The wily old Queen loved to engage her son in the sport of verbal fencing—a game at which they both excelled. In his *Apothegms*, Bacon recounts Elizabeth’s interrogation of him. She asked him if he thought Hayward’s pamphlet was treasonous. He replied “As to treason, no...but there is much felony in it.” The Queen responded “How and wherein?” Francis explained that many of the pamphlet’s passages (especially those borrowed from the deposition scene from *Richard II*) plagiarized the great Roman historian Gaius Cornelius Tacitus.* Actually, Bacon had grossly exaggerated the point. But since he was the secret author of *Richard II*, only he knew the extent and manner of the plagiarism. His explanation allayed his mother’s suspicions, and she let the matter go.

The Queen’s rage over *Richard II* had brought Bacon perilously close to disaster. The mere use of a pen name was now insufficient for his protection. He needed to insulate himself from all future inquiries regarding his work. It was time to enlist the services of a “front man” to pose as the ostensible author. Ideally, such a person would have to be an obscure nobody without any ties to nobility. And, he would have to come from the remote countryside.

The Elizabethan Secret Service was the CIA of its time. Upon the death of spymaster Francis Walsingham in 1590, Anthony Bacon was the most influential man in the Queen's Secret Service. Creating a counterfeit author for the Shakespeare works by means of inventing or forging various documents attesting to his alleged existence was entirely within the scope and skill of the Bacon brothers. However, there appears to be an uncanny relationship between the 14 year old Francis Bacon, the 1575 Revels at Leicester's Kenilworth Castle, and an 11 year old Gulielmus Shaksper who lived just fourteen miles downstream in the village of Stratford on the River Avon.

In his 1929 book *Law Sports at Gray's Inn*, Basil Brown suggests the distinct possibility that, during the hunting activities in the Arden Forest at the Kenilworth Revel's, Bacon and Shaksper met and become friends.* Young Shaksper was likely employed as Leicester's stable boy, which would explain how he easily found work as a horse holder (parking attendant) for the London theaters when he first arrived in the city. Such a scenario would also explain a vast range of coincidences and questions concerning the mystery of the "two Shakespeares (i.e. Shakespeare the actor, and Shakespeare the author)" that has puzzled historians and scholars for the past four centuries. If Brown's hypothesis is correct, Shaksper of Stratford was the perfect and opportunistic "straw man" for Bacon's cover.

The conventional (Stratfordian) version of history, taught in public schools, tells us that the Shakespearean works were produced by the mysterious man from Stratford sometime between 1590- 1611. Conversely, an enormous mountain of historical evidence clearly shows that Bacon was both the mastermind and organizational force behind the "Shakespeare mask."

Basil Brown's insight into the situation provides a most credible solution as to how the lives of the true author of the Shakespearean works and the man from Stratford became mutually involved. All other explanations tend to defy the odds. In Part 3, titled "Bacon's Smoking Guns: The Hard Evidence," I will prove the "Baconian case" beyond a reasonable doubt.

One of the greatest problems with the man from Stratford is that the scarce historical facts about him would, essentially, fit on a post card. Another significant detail about his obscure life is that his name really wasn't Shakespeare, it was Shaksper (pronounced shack spur). On his marriage certificate, his name is spelled Shaxper. Bacon, who loved to tinker with punning names and rhyming words, was clearly fascinated by the quaint similarity between the two names. We see the evidence of Bacon's tinkering with the names Shaksper and Shakespeare in his "Northumberland Manuscript" (to be discussed in Chapter 19).

The man from Stratford became the perfect front man for the "Shakespeare mask" whether by chance or by design—the exact extent of his closeness with the Shakespeare circle is not known, but it is clear that this "phantom of Stratford" was never involved with any of its workings. It was as if he had conveniently materialized out of thin air to function as the straw man at just the right time.

At the outset of the 17th Century, several events had a drastic impact on Bacon's work. Following the execution of the Earl of Essex in 1601, the ailing Anthony Bacon died, possibly (as some scholars believe) by his own hand.* Essex and Southampton had been principle patrons of the Shakespeare enterprise, but Anthony, more than anyone else, financed most of his brother's activities. Then, in 1603 the death of Queen Elizabeth

placed Bacon in a financial vacuum. Now in his early forties, he had little choice but to put his legal expertise to work in the law profession. Although his Shakespeare pen would not be silenced, it was somewhat curtailed. The historical timeline for the Shakespeare plays being written during that period shows a reduction in productivity (often referred to as the “plague years”). Some adjustments were required. Ben Johnson, who Bacon called “My man John,”* became his new secretary, while the Herbert family, particularly Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (Philip Sidney’s sister) provided vital support for the enterprise.* But most importantly, Bacon had to find ways to be in the favor of a new monarch.

The Transition to the Jacobean Dynasty

As far as anyone can surmise, Elizabeth refused to name a successor. At the time of her death, the Queen's closest advisor, and the most powerful man in England, was Robert Cecil the highly ambitious and disfigured (hunchback) son of Lord Burghley. Cecil was both Bacon's foster cousin and lifelong enemy—it was he who cruelly set the stage by which young Francis first learned of his royal identity.* Naturally, Robert Cecil became Bacon's model for the perverse and twisted characterization of King Richard in *Richard III*.

Ironically, Elizabeth's passing made Cecil the temporary head of state. For all intents, the matter of choosing her successor rested snugly in the palm of his hand. Bacon had long since abandoned the idea of ever sitting on the Tudor throne. Moreover, even if Elizabeth had made a death bed declaration that Francis should succeed her (as some historians believe she did) Cecil had the power to quash it.

The nearest blood relative (aside from Francis) in line for succession was King James VI of Scotland who was the son of Elizabeth's late cousin Mary Stuart. Elizabeth had always looked upon James with the utmost contempt. However, Cecil, who the Queen referred to as "elf," and "pygmy," saw James as a monarch with whom he could do

business. During the waning months of Elizabeth's reign, Cecil secretly brokered a deal with James, offering him the throne of England in exchange for titles and wealth.*



The Cecils, Lord Burghley and Robert

On March 24, 1603, James Stuart was proclaimed King of England—just 8 hours after Elizabeth's death. True to their bargain, James granted Cecil the title of the 1st Earl of Salisbury. Unlike Elizabeth, who exercised considerable restraint in awarding positions of privilege and high office, James recklessly handed out knighthoods and titles like cheap currency.

As the true surviving heir to the Tudor throne, Bacon posed a potential threat to James who sought assurances from him both for his loyalty and warranty that he would never

beget any Tudor heirs who, in the future, might challenge the rule of the Stuart Monarchy. In order to insure that the Tudor dynasty would end with Elizabeth, Robert Cecil took delight in acting as the King's go-between with Bacon. In a series of letters to Cecil, Bacon writes: "I desire to meddle as little as I can in the King's causes," also "as for ambition, I do assure your honor, mine is quenched," and "my ambition now I shall only put upon my pen."* Bacon's compliance resulted in James rewarding him with a progressive stream of titles and government offices, starting with his knighthood in 1603 followed by his appointment to the King's "Council Extraordinary."

The following year, King James promoted Bacon to a position of membership in the "King's Council Learned" for which Bacon was paid a sufficient sum of 60 pounds per annum. The Shakespeare enterprise was back on its feet churning out *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That End's Well*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*.

Prior to 1605, in accordance with the Rosicrucian custom of writing anonymously or using pseudonyms, Bacon had no intention of placing his real name on anything he wrote. In fact, he had initially toyed with the idea of using, still, another pseudonym for his philosophic-scientific treatises. Fortunately, after decades of non-stop writing, he decided to put his name on the first publication of his *Advancement and Proficiency of Learning* which, after *L'Academie Francaise*, was the second in his line of philosophic and scientific works—had this not been the case, Francis Bacon's name would have been lost to history.

With Elizabeth gone, and James in, Bacon's prospects had dramatically changed for the better. The year 1606 ushered in a wave of fresh events. First, Bacon's Shakespearean style had matured leading to *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and his darkest play, *Macbeth*

written specifically for James' edification. Second, Bacon married the youthful Alice Barnham, daughter of Lady Packington. Although the union produced no children (as promised), Francis and Alice were happily married until his death in 1626. The following year (1607) brought Bacon a promotion to the high office of Solicitor General.

Due to Bacon's increasing political responsibilities, the production of the Shakespeare plays dropped, generating, on average, one a year—with *Pericles* in 1607, *Cymbeline* (1609), *The Tempest* (1610), and *The Winter's Tale* (1611).

Bacon was elevated to Attorney General in 1613. In June of 1616 he became a member of the King's Privy Council. The following year, he was raised to the office of Lord Keeper of the Great Seal.*

These were busy years for Bacon. He had accomplished much in a very short span, and his intellectual pursuits were diverse. King James was not alone in enlisting Bacon's immense talent.



Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Viscount Saint Alban