

Dedication

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE HENRY
WRIOTHESLY,

Earl of Southampton, and Baron of Tichfield.

5 The love I dedicate to your lordship is without end;
whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a
superfluous moiety. 5 The warrant I have of your
honourable disposition, not the worth of my
untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance.
10 What I have done is yours; what I have to do is
yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were
my worth greater, my duty would show greater;
meantime, as it is, it is bound to your lordship, 10
to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all
15 happiness.

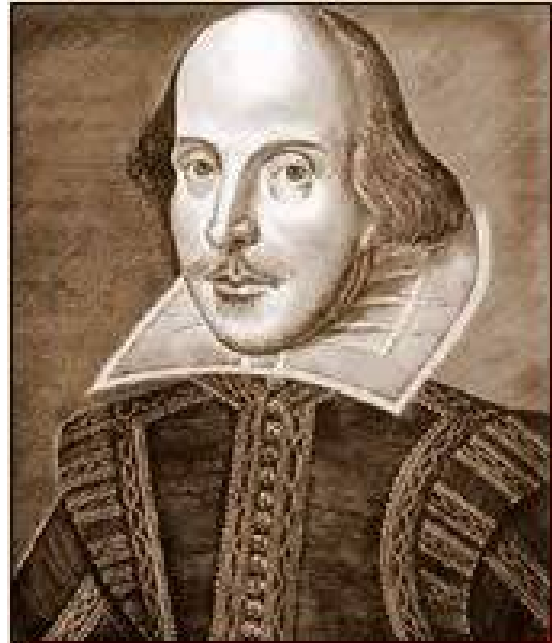
Your lordship's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

The Argument

Lucius Tarquinius, for his excessive pride
20 surnamed Superbus, after he had caused his own
father-in-law Servius Tullius to be 15 cruelly
murdered, and, contrary to the Roman laws and
customs, not requiring or staying for the people's
suffrages, had possessed himself of the kingdom,
25 went, accompanied with his sons and other
noblemen of Rome, to besiege Ardea. During
which siege the principal men of the army meeting
one evening at the tent of 20 Sextus Tarquinius, the
king's son, in their discourses after supper every
30 one commended the virtues of his own wife:
among whom Collatinus extolled the incomparable
chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant
humour they posted to Rome; and intending, by
their secret and sudden arrival, to make trial of 25
35 that which every one had before avouched, only
Collatinus finds his wife, though it were late in the
night, spinning amongst her maids: the other ladies
were all found dancing and revelling, or in several
disports. Whereupon the noblemen yielded
40 Collatinus the victory, and his wife the fame. At
that time Sextus 30 Tarquinius being inflamed with
Lucrece' beauty, yet smothering his passions for
the present, departed with the rest back to the
camp; from whence he shortly after privily
45 withdrew himself, and was, according to his estate,

royally entertained and lodged by Lucrece at
Collatium. The same night he treacherously
stealeth 35 into her chamber, violently ravished
her, and early in the morning speedeth away.
50 Lucrece, in this lamentable plight, hastily
dispatcheth messengers, one to Rome for her



father, another to the camp for Collatine. They
came, the one accompanied with Junius Brutus, the
other with Publius Valerius; 40 and finding
Lucrece attired in mourning habit, demanded the
cause of her sorrow. She, first taking an oath of
55 them for her revenge, revealed the actor, and whole
manner of his dealing, and withal suddenly stabbed
herself. Which done, with one consent they all
vowed to root out the whole hated family of the 45
Tarquins; and bearing the dead body to Rome,
Brutus acquainted the people with the doer and
manner of the vile deed, with a bitter invective
against the tyranny of the king: wherewith the
65 people were so moved, that with one consent and a
general acclamation the Tarquins were all exiled,
and the state 50 government changed from kings to
consuls.

Task

70 Summarize the text above in your own words.

http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/poems/poem_view.php?WorkID=rapelucrece