

**ALL IS TRUE****2018****101 minutes**Directed by **Kenneth Branagh**

Starring: Kenneth Branagh, Judi Dench, Ian McKellen

After the Globe Theatre burns down in 1613 during a performance of Shakespeare's play *Henry VIII*, William Shakespeare, aged 49, returns home to Stratford^[6] to rejoin his wife, Anne Hathaway. Shakespeare and Anne have a distant relationship, as he has spent most of their marriage working in London, and she is a down-to-earth country woman who cannot write. Their marriage has never recovered from the death of their son Hamnet, aged 11, in a plague outbreak in Stratford while his father was in London. Although they also have two daughters, Shakespeare regarded Hamnet as his favorite child, especially because of the poems which the child wrote before his death. Shakespeare devotes his time to tending to the family garden although in spite of his hard work he is not very successful. The Shakespeares' eldest daughter Susanna is married to a doctor named John Hall, who is a prominent Puritan in town. Susanna is forced to stifle her independence and her own personality to live by her husband's moral codes. Susanna is falsely accused of committing adultery and faces a public trial. Shakespeare manages to terrify her accuser by claiming that he knows an African actor who was once in love with Susanna, and the actor would kill anyone who ruined her good name. As a result, the accuser recants his testimony and Susanna is found innocent. Anne is impressed by her husband's actions, especially as she knows that he was lying: the African actor was a gentle person, who would never harm anyone.

Shakespeare's youngest daughter, Judith (Hamnet's twin), is outspoken in her doubts about the role of women in Jacobean England. She has not been allowed to have an education or opportunities in life because it is expected she will marry and provide children. As a result, Judith has refused to marry and is bitter at her father for not loving her as much as her dead brother. One night during an argument, Judith confesses to Shakespeare that she actually wrote the poems, not her brother. They were written in Hamnet's handwriting because Judith is illiterate, and thus had to dictate them to her brother. Anne agrees that Hamnet was not especially intelligent, and that they have hidden this from Shakespeare so he would be able to keep his fond memories.

Critics' comments:

The website's critics consensus reads, "Impressively cast and beautifully filmed, *All Is True* takes an elegiac look at Shakespeare's final days."

A gem of a movie as Branagh explores the most famous author of all time. He takes the Bard off the pedestal and examines the man behind the words. The ten minutes of repartee between Branagh and McKellen is the best ten minutes in a movie this year. Beautiful cinematography and music.