

Despite its fascinating story and popularity during Shakespeare's life in Elizabethan England, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, is one of the lesser-known and lesser-produced works in Shakespeare's canon. One reason for this might be that scholars believe that Shakespeare is not the sole author of the work. Though credited to Shakespeare in order to heighten its popularity, scholars theorize that another playwright from the early 1600s named George Wilkins wrote a large portion of the play. There is no consensus on who wrote and/or edited each specific portion of the text, but particularly because Gower's lines shift from tetrameter to pentameter in the fourth act, the most common theory is that the first three acts were written by Wilkins and the last two acts were either written or heavily edited by Shakespeare. In addition to the disparity in writing styles within the show, the omission of *Pericles* from the First Folio also indicates that Shakespeare is not the only author of the play. Thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays were compiled into the First Folio and published by two contemporaries seven years after his death; because *Pericles* is only one of two of his surviving plays excluded from this collection, it is very likely that Shakespeare is not the sole author of the play.

When some people first hear the title *Pericles*, they mistakenly associate the show with the Pericles who ruled Athens during its Golden Age in the 5th century BC. Despite the identical name and shared association with the Greco-Roman world, this play is neither based on nor tied to the Athenian statesman named Pericles. Instead, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, is actually based on the story of Apollonius of Tyre, a fictional character from a legend originating in Ancient Greece. This story became adored during the Middle Ages, and in the fourteenth century a notable poet named John Gower eventually wrote down this story in his lengthy poem called the *Confessio Amantis*. As you might guess, Shakespeare and Wilkins based the character of "Gower" on the poet John Gower, who not only provided inspiration for the play itself, but also gained notoriety as a contemporary of Geoffrey Chaucer. In his *Confessio Amantis* ("The Lover's Confession"), Gower tells a story about the confession of a man to the goddess Venus, and within this structure he tells eight sub-stories, one of which focuses "wisdom" and the rest of which chronicle an example of each of the seven deadly sins. Gower tells the story of Apollonius of Tyre in the eighth and final book, and this story serves to represent the deadly sin of lust, particularly by emphasizing the contrast between good love and bad love. Therefore, as you watch this production, we encourage you to take note of the examples of both "good" and "bad" love and to remember that love is good when it is life-giving, selfless, and full of genuine care for another human being.