



# Women of Will: The Remarkable Evolution of Shakespeare's Female Characters

*Tina Packer*

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## **Women of Will: The Remarkable Evolution of Shakespeare's Female Characters** Tina Packer

*Women of Will* is a fierce and funny exploration of Shakespeare's understanding of the feminine. Tina Packer, one of our foremost Shakespeare experts, shows that Shakespeare began, in his early comedies, by writing women as shrews to be tamed or as sweet little things with no independence of thought. The women of the history plays are much more interesting, beginning with Joan of Arc. Then, with the extraordinary Juliet, there is a dramatic shift: suddenly Shakespeare's women have depth, motivation, and understanding of life more than equal to that of the men. As Shakespeare ceases to write women as predictable caricatures and starts writing them from the inside, his women become as dimensional, spirited, spiritual, active, and sexual as any of his male characters. Wondering if Shakespeare had fallen in love (Packer considers with whom, and what she may have been like), the author observes that from Juliet on, Shakespeare's characters demonstrate that when women and men are equal in status and passion, they can—and do—change the world.

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