

Twelfth Night (Simply Shakespeare)

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Because Orsino is hopelessly in love with the aloof Countess Olivia, he doesn't notice Viola, who, disguised as a boy, is in love with him. This comedy's plot bristles with intrigues galore, but all finally ends happily as lovers are paired. Books in this new, illustrated series present complete texts of Shakespeare's plays. However, the lines are set up so students can see the bard's original poetic phrases printed side-by-side and line-by-line with a modern "translation" on the facing page.

Starting in the late 1580s and for several decades that followed, Shakespeare's plays were popular entertainment for London's theatergoers. His Globe Theatre was the equivalent of a Broadway theater in today's New York. The plays have endured, but over the course of 400+ years, the English language has changed in many ways—which is why today's students often find Shakespeare's idiom difficult to comprehend.

Simply Shakespeare offers an excellent solution to their problem. Introducing each play is a general essay covering Shakespeare's life and times. At the beginning of each of the five acts in every play, a two-page spread describes what is about to take place. The story's background is explained, followed by brief descriptions of key people who will appear in the act, details students should watch for as the story unfolds, discussion of the play's historical context, how the play was staged in Shakespeare's day, and explanation of puns and plays on words that occur in characters' dialogues.

Identifying icons preceding each of these study points are printed in a second color, then are located again as cross-references in the play's original text. For instance, where words spoken by a person in the play offer insights into his or another character's personality, the "Characters" icon will appear as a cross-reference in both the introductory spread and the play proper. Following each act, a closing spread presents questions and discussion points for use as teachers' aids. Guided by the inspiring format of this fine new series, both teachers and students will come to understand and appreciate the genius of Shakespeare as never before.

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, on England's Avon River. When he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway. The couple had three children—an older daughter Susanna and twins, Judith and Hamnet. Hamnet, Shakespeare's only son, died in childhood. The bulk of Shakespeare's working life was spent in the theater world of London, where he established himself professionally by the early 1590s. He enjoyed success not only as a playwright and poet, but also as an actor and shareholder in an acting company. Although some think that sometime between 1610 and 1613 Shakespeare retired from the theater and returned home to Stratford, where he died in 1616, others believe that he may have continued to work in London until close to his death.

Other Books

Shakespeare and Youth Culture. This book explores the appropriation of Shakespeare by youth culture and the expropriation of youth culture in the manufacture and marketing of 'Shakespeare'. Considering the reduction, translation and referencing of the plays and the man, the volume examines the confluence between Shakepop and rock, rap, graphic novels, teen films and pop psychology.

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