

not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

The Merchant of Venice

If music be the food of love, play on.

Twelfth Night

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears

Julius Caesar

What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

Romeo and Juliet

We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep.

The Tempest

Et tu, Brute?

Julius Caesar

The play's the thing

Hamlet

I am fortune's fool

Romeo and Juliet

All that glisters is not gold

The Merchant of Venice

This above all: to thine own self be true

Hamlet

References

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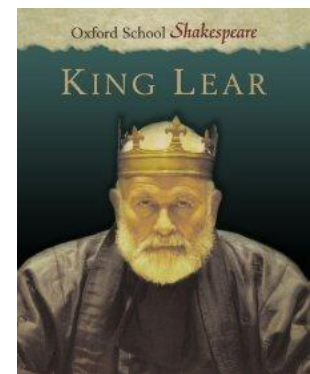
Shakespeare's Plays for Teens

By Ashley Levy

Those who have tried to teach the Bard's plays to a teenaged audience or to a high school class are all too

aware of how painful those lessons can be. Many teens only see the plays in a text heavy, incomprehensible format, and are turned off when they don't immediately understand.

What is needed in the classroom is an accessible version of the plays that still manages to capture the essence of the playwright. Most Shakespeare texts that cover the plays provide a glossary for words that are no longer in frequent use, but even that often does not make it easy for most to understand what is actually happening in a scene.



For practical use, teachers, librarians and facilitators need a version of the text that has the original play, a glossary, illustrations and an explanation of the action. *The Oxford School Shakespeare* series is one of the best examples of this type of text.

The series includes the original text in large font, with explanatory notes on the same page, also in easy to read typeface. Each book is also illustrated quite extensively. In addition to this, each book in the series includes a commentary on the play, a timeline of Shakespeare's life and essays that cover the historical period that Shakespeare wrote in. What makes these books the most unique and accessible series to those with little experience in the Bard's work is the character summaries and the plot and scene synopses. These attributes clarify confusing plots and expose any hidden nuances to the metaphors that the characters use that might not be seen at first glance.

When a teen reader is finished reading one of the books in this series, they can come away with a clear understanding of what they have read. They will get to experience Shakespeare without the confusion and frustration that often accompanies first time reading. A new generation gets to appreciate the Bard and

his work with ease and enjoyment, which ultimately is what those who teach Shakespeare aim to accomplish.

Many other book series aim to achieve what the *Oxford School Shakespeare* does, and they do it with varying degrees of success. The *Oxford School Shakespeare* series is one of the best due to the aforementioned attributes but also because the Oxford name is one of the most reliable in terms of consistent quality and excellence. The *Oxford School Shakespeare* is suggested here as just one of many options for teachers, librarians and facilitators to choose from.

