

question “how do we, as teachers, encourage readiness in readers for challenging literature of all kinds? Shall we teach the art of insightful reading, or shall we live in fear that parents and other well-meaning arbiters may bar Shakespeare and other challenging texts from the curriculum?” (Kupfer, 2009). If the role of the youth librarian is to guide patrons toward becoming true, critical readers, then surely having challenging and controversial works available in the collection for borrowing is essential, as is being prepared to discuss—and possibly defend—their content if questioned.

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## Book Review: *Wondrous Strange* by Lesley Livingston

By Tammy Whynot

Rating: 4.5/5



While seventeen-year-old Kelley Winslow rehearses for the role of Titania in her troupe’s production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, she is unaware that there exists a *real* Faerie Otherworld—one that apparently desires her destruction. In the nine nights leading up to Halloween, the magic sealing the Gates

between the Otherworld and the mortal realm is weakened, threatening to open wide and let loose dark forces in the middle of New York's Central Park. Tasked with the job of protecting the Samhain Gate is a member of Auberon's guard, Sonny Flannery, a changeling with an instant and puzzling attraction to Kelley. As Sonny and Kelley race to unravel the mystery of her identity and powers, Kelley gradually accepts that she is more than mortal, and that the "handsome stranger," Sonny, has claimed a place in her heart.

Winner of the CLA 2010 Young Adult Canadian Book of the Year, *Wondrous Strange* is full of references to Shakespeare and his plays, with Auberon, Titania, Queen Mab, and Puck all playing vital roles in the story. It also contains common Shakespearean themes of mistaken identity, scheming rivals, political intrigue, and forbidden love. With richly drawn characters, witty dialogue, and a pace that sweeps the reader away, this book will appeal to teens looking for an action-packed and romantic fantasy. Fans of the book will be pleased to know that it is followed up by two sequels, *Darklight* and *Tempestuous*, and the attractive cover art will make this book a valuable addition to library displays.

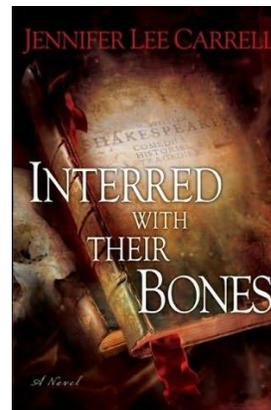
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## Book Review: *Interred with their Bones* by Jenifer Lee Carrell

By Amanda Wilk

Rating: 2.75/5



*Interred with their Bones* is a historical thriller in which a female protagonist and male companion are sent on an international adventure searching for Shakespeare's long lost play, *The History of Cardenio*. Sound familiar? Unfortunately *Interred with their Bones* is more than reminiscent of Dan Brown's *The DaVinci Code*. The characters and plotline both follow Dan Brown's thriller just a little too closely, and worse still *Interred with their*

*Bones* lacks the level of suspense and intrigue held throughout *The DaVinci Code*.

The story begins in England where Kate, a scholar turned director, is running through rehearsals for *Hamlet* at the famous Globe Theatre. All is progressing well until her mentor Roz arrives and tells Kate she has a secret, presenting her with a gold box. Kate is quick to dismiss Roz, but later that evening Roz is murdered and Kate's life is turned upside down. Roz's gold box starts Kate on a journey in which she finds herself searching for Shakespeare's long lost play. But Kate is not alone on her quest; all the while she is stalked by Roz's killer, who also longs to unearth the play. Will Kate find the play? Or will she become the killer's next victim?

*Interred with their Bones* is a novel written for adults, but is also suitable for older young adults 16 and up. It provides interesting insights and little known facts on the life of Shakespeare. It also deals extensively with the debate over whether Shakespeare actually authored his plays. However, at times the plot drags and gets too bogged down in history. On the whole, the author makes a good attempt to reset *The DaVinci Code* into the world of Shakespeare, but ultimately if you're

looking for a dramatic and thrilling read, look elsewhere.

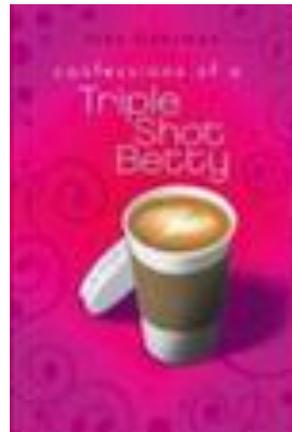
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## Book Review: *Confessions of a Triple Shot Betty* by Jody Gehrman

By Jeanna Greene

**Rating: 2.5/5**



*Confessions of a Triple Shot Betty* is a modern take on *Much Ado About Nothing*. The novel follows teenage Geena through a summer of friendship, scandal, revenge, and unexpected romance.

Excited to spend the summer working and hanging out with her friend, Amber, and her cousin Hero, Geena is

disappointed by the animosity that develops as soon as the two meet. Things get more complicated as Hero falls head over heels for an Italian intern, Claudio, but is forbidden to date him by her dad. Meanwhile handsome and slimy John (unacknowledged love interest of Amber) sets his sights on Hero, is rejected, and begins scheming to destroy her reputation. Geena must reason with her overprotective uncle, protect her cousin from John, and act as a buffer between Hero and Amber – all-the-while trying to decide if boy-next-door Ben is a love interest or a sparring partner. In all of its twists and turns, *Confessions* is faithful to *Much Ado About Nothing*'s plot, although events are updated and altered to mesh with modern expectations (for example, a feigned death is transformed into a feigned return to boarding school).

As a stand-alone work, *Confessions* is mediocre. Geena narrates, and although her voice is full of attitude, she does not convincingly express any depth of emotion. The novel's characters are entertaining, but lack complexity. In addition, although the dialogue is witty, it does not sparkle as would befit a novel based on a Shakespearean comedy.

The greatest strength of *Confessions* is its playful treatment of the source work. The novel is peppered with references to the play, as well as direct quotations. For readers familiar with *Much Ado About Nothing*, these references are fun to spot. For example, characters retain the names of their Shakespearean counterparts, but these names are often hidden or distorted. *Much Ado*'s Dogberry appears in *Confessions* as Dog Berry or Dog, and the reader does not learn that Geena's first name is Beatrice until her guidance counsellor lets it slip on page 107. Best of all, Gehrman transforms Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon, into PJ, whose "official name is Pedro Jamieson, but people call him DJ-PJ, or sometimes The Prince" (p. 21).

Fast pasted and plot-driven, this is a somewhat superficial but mostly fun read. Because of its playful treatment of the original Shakespearean work, this novel is best read with at least a general understanding of *Much Ado About Nothing*'s characters and plot. Recommended for teens looking for light fare or a good book to read on the beach.

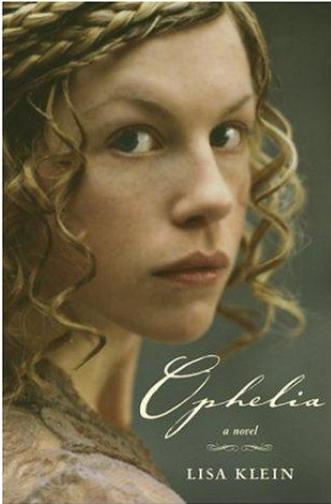
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## Book Review: *Ophelia* by Lisa Klein

By Ashley Levy

Rating: 3/5



Klein's novel is a new take on the Shakespearean play *Hamlet*. The story is told from the point of view of Ophelia, the love interest of Hamlet in the original play. The novel is introduced as the memoirs of Ophelia as she pens them herself. She states that their purpose is to clarify her role in the tragic demise of Hamlet and the royal family of Denmark, and to describe what really happened to her.

*Ophelia* begins when the title character is just a small girl. The reader gets to read about how she grew up, how she met Hamlet and how he first became interested in her when she was swimming in a pond. It

follows her life as she grows older and becomes a lady in waiting to Queen Gertrude, how she becomes proficient in healing and how she and Hamlet eventually meet again, fall in love and get married in secret.

When trouble begins to brew in Denmark, Hamlet feigns madness to avoid suspicion, but Ophelia fears that madness is not feigned at all, but completely real. His madness causes her to lose faith in his love and realize that her own position at the court of Elsinore is very precarious. She makes the decision to escape and preserve her own life.

With the help of Hamlet's friend Horatio, she herself feigns madness and then fakes her own death with her herb knowledge. She is able to escape Elsinore, but is still hiding a big secret.

Ophelia provides an alternate view of a classic play. In *Hamlet*, the character of Ophelia always seemed underdeveloped and is dead before viewers have a chance to see who she is. The book provides great insight into this lesser explored character. This novel, intended for an older young adult audience, allows the reader to see another side of Ophelia. No longer is she a grief-maddened young woman, but a lady with a

mind of her own and enough courage to put her thoughts into action.

### References

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## Book Review: *Kill Shakespeare* by Colin McCreery and Anthony Del Col

By Lindsay Parsons

Rating: 4/5



After the mistaken murder of Polonius, Hamlet is banished to England while his uncle takes over the throne with Hamlet's mother as his Queen. On his way, his ship is attacked by an evil-looking entity that calls Hamlet the "Shadow King". Hamlet loses consciousness and when he awakes, he finds himself in the castle of Richard III. Richard tells Hamlet that if he helps him find Shakespeare, he

will resurrect Hamlet's father in return. Hamlet agrees to his offer.

The quest to find Shakespeare begins with a battle in their first stop in a small town. Hamlet is knocked unconscious and saved by Falstaff. Iago is sent after Falstaff to bring Hamlet back. Falstaff explains to Hamlet that he is part of the rebel group against Richard the third. Meanwhile, Lady Macbeth kills her husband after forming an alliance with Richard III.

Hamlet and Falstaff eventually meet up with Othello and Juliet. Othello attempts to kill Iago after he finds Hamlet, but ends up sparing his life. Juliet convinces Hamlet to not leave with Iago and starts to believe that Falstaff may be right about Hamlet being the "Shadow King". Now both sides must find this mysterious William Shakespeare in hopes that they will be victorious in their battle.

This graphic novel has excellent illustrations that really give the book a dark and medieval feel. The storyline takes many of Shakespeare's main characters and collaborates them into one adventure. The dialogue could have been a little more "Shakespearean" at times, but it does bring the feel of Shakespeare to the reader. It

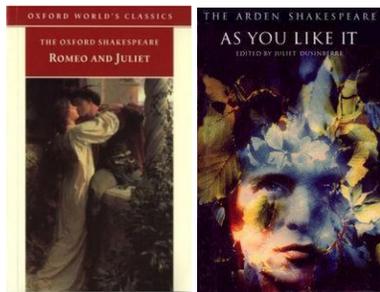
would be a great addition to a young adult collection.

### References

McCreedy, Colin; Del Col, Anthony; Belanger, Andy (2010). *Kill Shakespeare Volume 1*. San Diego: IDW Publishing.

## Why Does Shakespeare Still Matter?

By Amanda Wilk



### Introduction

Unfortunately, for many young adults, learning the plays of Shakespeare can be a torturous experience. Numerous young adults fail to see the relevance of reading centuries old texts, and cannot see how these texts apply to the world today. However, the brilliance of Shakespeare is its ongoing relevance, and today more than ever the words of Shakespeare can be applied to our

society and to the lives of young adults.

Antoni Cimolino, the general director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, has given a number of talks and interviews in which he discusses the ongoing relevance of Shakespeare today – two of which are discussed below. Full video links to each of the talks are also provided, and are wonderful examples of Shakespeare's continuing relevance today.

### Shakespeare on Inspiring Leadership:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I2x9SbGJsM&feature=feedu\\_more](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I2x9SbGJsM&feature=feedu_more)

In this talk, Antoni Cimolino explores examples of leadership in Shakespeare's works and discusses how they can be applied to modern times (Stratford Festival, 2011). He provides examples of both good and bad leadership, citing characters in many plays including: *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, *Phillip the bastard* and *Prospero* (Stratford Festival, 2011).

Antoni Cimolino argues that leadership is a central theme in many of Shakespeare's plays, and that the theatre