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Beautiful Stories From Shakespeare (Illustrated)



Synopsis

The writings of Shakespeare have been justly termed "the richest, the purest, the fairest, that genius uninspired ever penned." Shakespeare instructed by delighting. His plays alone (leaving mere science out of the question), contain more actual wisdom than the whole body of English learning. He is the teacher of all good-- pity, generosity, true courage, love. His bright wit is cut out "into little stars." His solid masses of knowledge are meted out in morsels and proverbs, and thus distributed, there is scarcely a corner of the English-speaking world to-day which he does not illuminate, or a cottage which he does not enrich. His bounty is like the sea, which, though often unacknowledged, is everywhere felt. As his friend, Ben Jonson, wrote of him, "He was not of an age but for all time." He ever kept the highroad of human life whereon all travel. He did not pick out by-paths of feeling and sentiment. In his creations we have no moral highwaymen, sentimental thieves, interesting villains, and amiable, elegant adventuresses--no delicate entanglements of situation, in which the grossest images are presented to the mind disguised under the superficial attraction of style and sentiment. He flattered no bad passion, disguised no vice in the garb of virtue, trifled with no just and generous principle. While causing us to laugh at folly, and shudder at crime, he still preserves our love for our fellow-beings, and our reverence for ourselves. Shakespeare was familiar with all beautiful forms and images, with all that is sweet or majestic in the simple aspects of nature, of that indestructible love of flowers and fragrance, and dews, and clear waters--and soft airs and sounds, and bright skies and woodland solitudes, and moon-light bowers, which are the material elements of poetry,--and with that fine sense of their indefinable relation to mental emotion, which is its essence and vivifying soul--and which, in the midst of his most busy and tragical scenes, falls like gleams of sunshine on rocks and ruins--contrasting with all that is rugged or repulsive, and reminding us of the existence of purer and brighter elements. These things considered, what wonder is it that the works of Shakespeare, next to the Bible, are the most highly esteemed of all the classics of English literature. "So extensively have the characters of Shakespeare been drawn upon by artists, poets, and writers of fiction," says an American author,--"So interwoven are these characters in the great body of English literature, that to be ignorant of the plot of these dramas is often a cause of embarrassment." But Shakespeare wrote for grown-up people, for men and women, and in words that little folks cannot understand. Hence this volume. To reproduce the entertaining stories contained in the plays of Shakespeare, in a form so simple that children can understand and enjoy them, was the object had in view by the author of these Beautiful Stories from Shakespeare. And that the youngest readers may not stumble in pronouncing any unfamiliar names to be met with in the stories, the editor has prepared and included in the volume a Pronouncing Vocabulary of

Difficult Names. To which is added a collection of Shakespearean Quotations, classified in alphabetical order, illustrative of the wisdom and genius of the world's greatest dramatist.

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Customer Reviews

I received the Kindle version of this book and it had illustrations every few pages. I wanted to get this book for my son's homeschool AO literature study (1st grade). We tried Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare" but I found that version more confusing and longer. Nesbit's book has been better for us and easier for my 1st grader to understand.

I'm not a fan of dumbing down great literature, even for children, but I actually like this one. It makes the language and themes easy for little ones to understand. One of my children is an advanced reader, and she read this in first grade. She enjoyed it, although I would recommend it for a slightly older reader.

Simplified version for 2-3 grade. Very useful introduction to Shakespeare that will undoubtedly kindle desire and love to read his plays and stories. Not watered down at all. Shakespeare naturally appeals to even young children and these retellings are a fantastical intro.

I haven't read all of these yet but the one from *Midsummer Night's Dream* was very brief but not entirely true to the original story by Shakespeare, I think. However I liked the presentation and they could be a good introduction to Shakespeare's stories for a child of about 9 or 10 years old.

Nicely written stories which provide a succinct overview of each play. I enjoyed the poetry section and found the categorisation of quotes useful. I will refer back to them in the future as the need arises in my drama teaching.

I was surprised at how the stories are told in a way that I could understand. I loved to gain insight, knowledge and read the stories or at least some of it, makes me want to read the whole story some time in the (near) future!

It'll "work" for a youth version of Shakespeare, but the prose is nothing like Nesbit's *Railway Children*. It's one of those shortened versions of a story that feels like a shortened version, not a story itself.

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