

World of Shakespeare | Small Group Tour

Reading List

This Is Shakespeare

by Emma Smith

A *THE TIMES* BOOK OF THE YEAR 2019

'The best introduction to the plays I've read, perhaps the best book on Shakespeare, full stop'
Alex Preston, *Observer*

'It makes you impatient to see or re-read the plays at once' Hilary Mantel

A genius and prophet whose timeless works encapsulate the human condition like no others. A writer who surpassed his contemporaries in vision, originality and literary mastery. Who wrote like an angel, putting it all so much better than anyone else.

Is this Shakespeare? Well, sort of.

But it doesn't really tell us the whole truth. So much of what we say about Shakespeare is either not true, or just not relevant, deflecting us from investigating the challenges of his inconsistencies and flaws. This electrifying new book thrives on revealing, not resolving, the ambiguities of Shakespeare's plays and their changing topicality. It introduces an intellectually, theatrically and ethically exciting writer who engages with intersectionality as much as with Ovid, with economics as much as poetry: who writes in strikingly modern ways about individual agency, privacy, politics, celebrity and sex. It takes us into a world of politicking and copy-catting, as we watch him emulating the blockbusters of Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd, the Spielberg and Tarantino of their day; flirting with and skirting round the cut-throat issues of succession politics, religious upheaval and technological change. The Shakespeare in this book poses awkward questions rather than offering bland answers, always implicating us in working out what it might mean.

This is Shakespeare. And he needs your attention.

Shakespeare: A Book of Quotations

by William Shakespeare

Shakespeare is without doubt the most quoted writer in English. His plays and poems comprise an inexhaustible source of memorable and often profound thoughts beautifully and concisely expressed.

This remarkably affordable volume presents over 400 quotations conveniently arranged by topic: love, marriage, conduct and morality, truth, beauty, time, death, music, and more. Included are such timeless observations as: "All that glitters is not gold," "Brevity is the soul of wit," "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is/ To have a thankless child"; "While you live, tell truth and shame the devil!"; "The very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream," and many more. Romantic thoughts receive a particularly rich treatment; extensive selections on the subject of love include quotes from the plays ("The course of true love never did run smooth"; "Speak low if you speak love") and sonnets ("For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings,/ That then I scorn to change my state with kings"). Each quote bears a complete citation. Ideal for writers, speakers, students of literature, and any lover of Shakespeare's works, this inexpensive treasury lends itself admirably to a virtually endless number of uses, from casual browsing to designing personal greeting cards.

In Search Of Shakespeare

by Michael Wood

Almost 400 years after his death, William Shakespeare is still acclaimed as the world's greatest writer, and yet the man himself remains shrouded in mystery. In this absorbing historical detective story, the acclaimed broadcaster and historian Michael Wood takes a fresh approach to Shakespeare's life, brilliantly recreating the turbulent times through which the poet lived: the age of the Reformation, the Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Plot and the colonization of the Americas.

Drawing on an extensive range of sources, Michael Wood takes us back into Elizabethan England to reveal a man who is the product of his time - a period of tremendous upheaval that straddled the medieval and modern worlds. Using a wealth of unexplored archive evidence the author vividly conjures up the neighbourhoods of the Elizabethan London where Shakespeare lived and worked during his glittering career. Full of fresh insights and fascinating new discoveries, this book presents us with a Shakespeare for the twenty-first century: a man of the theatre, a thinking artist, playful and cunning who held up a mirror to his age, but who was also, as his friend Ben Jonson said, 'not of an age, but for all time'.
