



Hamlet For Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun!)

By Lois Burdett

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Perhaps the best-known of Shakespeare's tragedies, **Hamlet** has all the ingredients for a gripping story: revenge and power, familial love and betrayal, dramatic sword fights, dark spooky scenes. Once again Lois Burdett has woven her own brand of magic by transforming Shakespeare's complex verse into rhyming couplets. She has created a version of **Hamlet** especially for children, even as young as seven, and one that readers of all ages will enjoy.

At the appropriately named Hamlet Elementary School in Stratford, Ontario, where Burdett has taught for over 20 years, her students have created wonderful drawings of **Hamlet** to illustrate Burdett's fluid rhymes. The students' interpretations are vivid evidence of Burdett's clever ability to bring Shakespeare's complex characters and intricate plots to life for young people.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 2-4-This seventh series entry retells the story in rhymed couplets with illustrations by the author's students, ages 7 to 12. The style is lively and interesting, and some of the phrasing is humorous: "Meanwhile, King Claudius was still uptight./The cause of Hamlet's madness had not come to light." The fact that stage directions and speakers' names are included within the verses poses some difficulty when acting out the play. A very perceptive narrator would be needed to make it all come out just right. Boxed insets of children's rewritten segments of the play as letters or diary entries offer interesting insights into their perception of the characters. Since the colorful drawings represent the characters in a wide variety of styles, they lack a sense of unity. Activities are presented at the end of the book to extend the experience. This is a good source of ideas for teachers who want to use Shakespeare in their elementary classrooms. Leon Garfield's *Shakespeare Stories* (Houghton, 1991) is still the best retelling, but school libraries could make good use of this book.
Carol Durusau, Newton County Public Library, Covington, GA
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Review

Burdett has received numerous awards and commendations for her work in making Shakespeare more accessible to children; *Hamlet for Kids* demonstrates why Burdett's work is deserving of these honors. (Jennifer Ailles *Canadian Children's Literature* 2002-09-01)

The style is lively and interesting, and some of the phrasing is humorous. (Carol Durusau *School Library Journal* 2000-08-01)

A simplified but responsible version of the tragedy. Meant to be read aloud and staged by children. (Julia Bookman *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* 2000-07-29)

Ideal for introducing the play (and Shakespeare) in the classroom or before the theatre. (Susan Perren *Globe and Mail* 2000-05-27)

From the Author

Shakespeare Can Be Fun!

Most students will be exposed to the works of Shakespeare, typically in high school. The language and content of the plays is seen as too difficult for younger children but primary children are underestimated as to what they can accomplish given the challenge. The study of Shakespeare has become an integral part of my grade two program at Hamlet School, in Stratford, Ontario, Canada.

When I first moved to Stratford, I had no intention of teaching Shakespeare to 7 and 8 year olds. Stratford is a beautiful city noted for its Shakespearean theatre and I was interested that the schools were all named after Shakespearean characters. I asked my class, "Who is William Shakespeare?" and "Why is our school called Hamlet?" Their answers were surprising. One thought he was a famous boxer. Another believed he was the President of Canada. A third student responded, "I don't know who William Shakespeare is. I don't know any of the big kids." It was the children's enthusiasm and excitement on making the connection between an historical figure and the name of their school, which led me to continue. Thirty years later I can't imagine teaching anywhere in the world and not introducing Shakespeare. The study provided tremendous growth,

particularly in the area of language and communication and evolved into a learning experience of a lifetime. I have endeavored in my books and workshops for teachers to share the excitement of exploring with children, the timeless emotions and ideas of Shakespeare.

The comments of two of my children, written at various times in their daily journals show the lasting impression Shakespeare has had on them.

"Shakespeare is like a big piece of chocolate cake. Once you've started you wish you could go on and on forever, in a non-stopping dream." (Anika, age 7)

"William's incredible words are like a velvet silk coat that rap around his pure thoughts. His pen writes on like all colors of the wind." (Sean, age 7)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Grace McClellan:

This Hamlet For Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun!) tend to be reliable for you who want to become a successful person, why. The explanation of this Hamlet For Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun!) can be on the list of great books you must have is actually giving you more than just simple reading through food but feed a person with information that possibly will shock your prior knowledge. This book is usually handy, you can bring it everywhere you go and whenever your conditions in the e-book and printed types. Beside that this Hamlet For Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun!) forcing you to have an enormous of experience for example rich vocabulary, giving you demo of critical thinking that could it useful in your day exercise. So , let's have it appreciate reading.

Jeremiah Burroughs:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or maybe go to the outside with them household or their friend. Do you know? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read any book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day every day to reading a publication. The book Hamlet For Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun!) it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book offers high quality.

Renee Middleton:

Exactly why? Because this Hamlet For Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun!) is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap this but latter it will surprise you with the secret the item inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who have write the book in such wonderful way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book get such as help improving your proficiency and your critical

thinking means. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Kim Free:

In this particular era which is the greater man or who has ability to do something more are more special than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple approach to have that. What you are related is just spending your time little but quite enough to possess a look at some books. One of the books in the top checklist in your reading list is definitely Hamlet For Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun!). This book which can be qualified as The Hungry Mountains can get you closer in turning out to be precious person. By looking up and review this reserve you can get many advantages.

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