

THREE TRAGEDIES BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Three unique editions of Shakespeare's classic plays ['Romeo & Juliet'](#), ['Othello: The Moor of Venice'](#) and the forthcoming **'Hamlet: Prince of Denmark'** offer what can only be described as the most complete, concise, downright entertaining annotations ever published for these three timeless classics. Targeted at the modern audience, only .44 really *goes there*, carefully walking the reader through phrase-by-phrase, line-by-line, unusual-word-by-unusual-word, painstakingly taking the time to explain the meanings in a way quite simply never done before. It is not to be confused with other people's 'translations' which just skim over the surface; these editions represent a cross-section of all the information attributed to these texts as yet accepted by the academic community (and some exclusive, juicy theories besides!)

SHAKESPEARE'S NEVER BEEN SO CHILLED

These editions speak for themselves, as any line-for-line comparison will do with any other edition of Shakespeare you can find will prove (*with the exception of Horace Howard Furness' of 200 years ago, which is almost as difficult to slog through as The Bard himself is).

These editions are strongly recommended for actors/dramatists attempting to get to grips with the lines, academic studies seeking hot leads and those with a general interest who wish to be entertained and not bored silly.

Here are some great reasons why 44 CALIBRE SHAKESPEARE is THE BEST Shakespeare out there:

These editions are the only ones which list the alternative meanings, with the exception of Horace Howard Furness' of 200 years ago.

Ophelia

I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Polonius

*Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly,
Or - not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus - you'll tender me a fool.*

Ophelia

*My lord, he hath importuned me with love
In honourable fashion.*

I'm not sure what to believe, my lord.

Marry [*By Mary*]. I'll teach you: you should think of yourself as a baby that you have taken these 'declarations'/'credits' for actual hard cash, which are not sterling. Take better care of yourself or - not to wear out a poor phrase [*tender*] by using it so much - 1. you'll make me look like a fool 2. make me a grandchild [*fool* : sometimes used as a affectionate word for infant]

My lord, he has presented his love for me in honourable fashion [*conduct, behaviour*].

Iago

*If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She'll find a white that shall her blackness hit.*

If she is ugly and also has wit, she'll find a [white : 1. the centre of a target in archery 2. sounds the same as 'wight' which means 'person'] that her blackness will hit [1. hit with an arrow 2. sexual, in the sense 'to hit' on somebody] (the point is, as long as she has brains she'll find somebody who wants her sexually).

Othello

She was false as water.

[An old expression, certainly derived from Genesis 49:4 possibly meaning: 1. a false person, like water taking the shape of whatever container it fills, is not 'solid' and wholly honest 2. water in the wider sense, the seas, the rain and the rivers which are all notoriously unreliable 3. Water is, of course, transparent, like how we might describe a person as being 'difficult to read' 4. Water cannot retain an impression 5. Water cannot support weight]

Look at any classroom edition of Shakespeare and you will see a pitiful little area of no more than 8 - 12 words of terminology per page and even then, only a few brief, cryptic words to explain their meaning. How are people to enjoy Shakespeare if they do not understand what is being said?? There is nothing out there which can compare to the simplicity yet detail, clarity yet subtlety we provide.

We NEVER miss a tricky unusual word which is more than can be said for most of the so called 'academic standard' editions.

Hamlet

The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse, keeps wassail and the swaggering up-spring reels; and, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down, the kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out the triumph of his pledge.

The king is staying up late tonight and takes his [rouse : drinking to celebrate], keeps [wassail : drinking to someone's ([his own]) health] and swaggers around dancing and reeling; and, as he drains his [draughts : large quantities of alcohol] of [Rhenish : a type of wine from the Rhine river, Germany] down, the kettle-drum [those big drums in orchestras today] and the trumpet signal [to the cannon to fire this] triumphant [blast] of his pledge [toast].

Horatio

*So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:
Break we our watch up; and by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?*

So have I heard and I partly believe it. But, look, the morning, [clad : wearing] [russet : the crimson red of dawn] [mantle : cloak], walks over the dew of that high hill [yon : yonder : over there] to the east: let's finish up our watch and, as I advise, let us explain what we have seen tonight to young Hamlet [King Hamlet's son] for, I swear on my life, this spirit, dumb [who won't speak] to us, will speak to him. Do you agree we should introduce him to it, as we need to in our love for him and as would be correct in our duty?

Desdemona

*Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of crusadoes: and, but my noble Moor
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.*

Believe me, I would much rather have lost my purse full of (*crusadoes : gold coins from Portugal, stamped with a cross*) and, although my noble Moor is true of mind and made of no such unworthiness as jealous creatures are, it would be enough to make even him think ill thoughts.

These editions are not simply 'translations' but step-by-step accounts of every critical detail and apparent meaning that has been generally accepted by the academic community as of today (for they contain actual annotations in italics and brackets) filling in the space between with more simple re-arrangements of grammar. The mistake made by pioneers before us - and particularly Sparknotes or E-notes - is the lack of such annotations, that is to say, of specific references to historical fact. Without those, all that has been achieved is a gratuitous vanity of behalf of the author who could never possibly hope to compete with the sheer perfection Shakespeare provides with his own choice of words.

Othello

By the world, I think my wife be honest and think she is not; I think that thou art just and think thou art not. I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh as Dian's visage is now begrimed and black As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives, Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams, I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

By the world, I think my wife is honest and [also] think she is not; I think that you are right and think that you are not. I'll have some proof. Her name, that was fresh as (*Dian : Artemis : goddess of the moon, hunting and virginity*)'s beauty is now smeared and black as my own face. If there are cords, or knives, poison or fire, or streams where I can suffocate (*himself in suicide? Or perhaps Desdemona and Cassio?*), I won't stand for it. I wish I just knew for sure!

Lady Capulet

Hold, take these keys and fetch more spices Nurse.

Nurse

They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.

Enter Capulet

(*because spices were very rare and expensive they would be kept locked up in a safe place*)

They need dates and (*quince : Asian kind of cooking apple*) in the bakers.

Where adjectives or phrases of a particularly complex or ambiguous nature have been used, we spiel out a stream of thesauri to illuminate the core meaning. Often we would use the words from Mitford or Warburton's, Collier or Moberly's, Johnson or Malone's very own annotations! This is an art which requires a series of carefully selected words which must 'trap' the centralised meaning for the reader, who may well wish to grasp a further understanding of their own. We see this trick used at the end or beginning of dictionary definitions:

Hamlet

*To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?*

To exist (*live*) or not to exist (*die*): that is the question [I personally find most perplexing/that is universally the biggest of all questions]: whether it is more noble [*of higher moral character*] to suffer - in the mind - the slings [*missiles, catapults, cannons*] and arrows of outrageous [*absurd, fantastical, abominable*] fortune or to take arms against [*to go to war against*] a sea of troubles and by opposing [*taking a stand, doing something about it*] end them [*to definitively end the disasters of an individual's fate, to put to an end to life*]?

*Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?*

In that case, I'll look up [*to heaven, in prayer*]: my fault is past [*done, finished, irreversible*]. But, O, what kind of prayer can serve my use now? 'Forgive me my foul murder'? That cannot be; since I am still in possession of those effects [*items, consequences*] for which I did the murder, my crown, my own personal ambitions and my queen. Is it possible one can be pardoned and still keep [the profit from] the offence?

You will notice the names of characters are retained by the left hand column along with Shakespeare's original verse, which forces the reader to reassert themselves to the original text every time they finish a block of text.

We explain things a straight forward way, without trying to be too smart about it.

Hamlet

*The time is out of joint. O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together.*

The time is out of joint (*these are unsettled times/
supernatural events have messed with the
space-time continuum*). O cursed fate, that ever I
was born to fix these problems! No, come, let's
go in together.

Exeunt

Horatio

There's no offence, my lord.

There is no offence (*I'm not offended*), my lord.

These books are efficient tools that do not require a teacher or a whiteboard - to grasp as one might grasp a page-turning thriller! - just a reader who speaks a moderate level of English. There is nothing like this that has ever been made before.

[HTTP://44CALIBRESHAKESPEARE.COM](http://44calibreshakespeare.com)