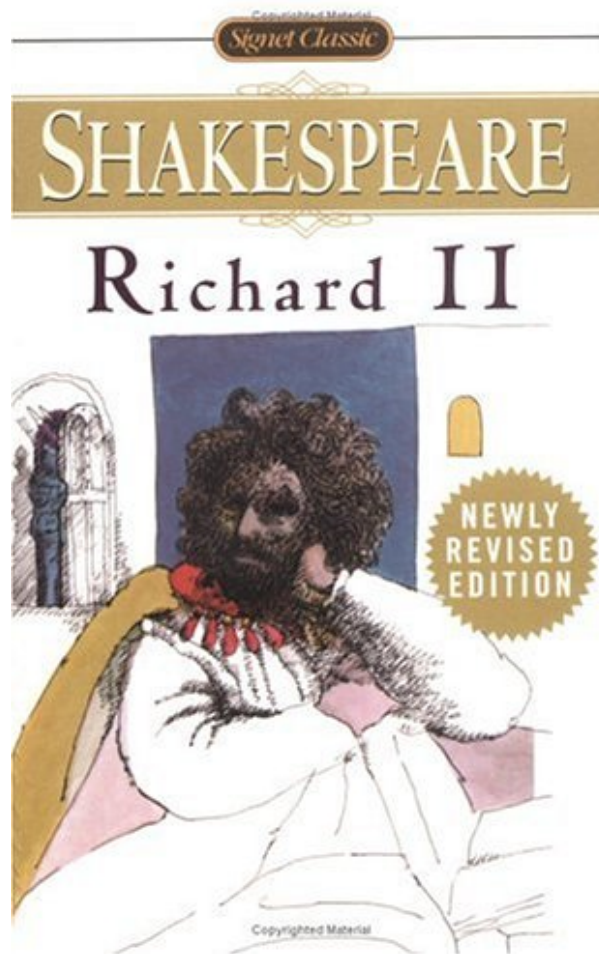


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This edition features an overview of Shakespeare's works by Sylvan Barnet, former Chairman of the English Department at Tufts University, as well as a comprehensive stage and screen history, dramatic criticism from the past and present, and sources from which Shakespeare derived this great work.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

82 of 85 people found the following review helpful.  
Arden Shakespeare Hamlet

By Nathan Records

I am currently working on my MFA/Directing. I directed Hamlet and am now writing my defense of it. I have two thoughts on this third edition.

After going through this edition, from a point of view of the script, I'm not sure I understand the need to update Harold Jenkins's 2d edition. The script itself was easier to navigate in the 2d edition and I thought Jenkins's notes were more helpful. I also disagree with some of what Thompson and Taylor have to say in their editorial notes below the script. That said, I am biased because I used the 2d edition as a sort of "Hamlet Bible" as I directed the piece. Jenkins's notes were extremely insightful and useful. I became very comfortable with it.

On the other hand, this third edition has some different insight into the play in performance than does the second edition, as well as information on casting and music that was not included in Jenkins. Obviously there is much written about William Shakespeare in the world, and this 3rd edition of Arden is probably the most up-to-date resource for bibliographic material (as well as some photos of past productions of the play). Jenkins edition is 24 years old, ancient in the scholastic world's "what's new" when it comes to sifting the vast quantity of material written on Shakespeare and Hamlet.

Obviously, the needs of the theatrical world for playing Hamlet are different than that of the scholastic world (of which I am currently stuck in both). I think Jenkins is more user-friendly for the theatrician while Thompson & Taylor suit the needs of the scholastic better. My final thought is that a scholar/student of Shakespeare will want to have both the second and third editions for the differences they have to offer.

79 of 82 people found the following review helpful.

Middle aged and finally able to read Shakespeare

By Gilgamesh

I cannot more highly recommend this particular book, No Fear Shakespeare's Hamlet.

I am approaching 50 years old and my only real experience trying to read Shakespeare was in high school where we were assigned roles in class and made to read, without comprehension, Romeo and Juliet and Julius Cesar. In the interim, I tried watching a few plays and dragged my kids to see the play Taming of the Shrew, which they hated because they couldn't understand the language nor the plot. Rather than becoming a Shakespeare hater, I've always felt inadequate and dumb for this huge hole in my education.

My current inspiration to try Shakespeare again was my desire to try and help my high school aged son become more educated and cultured than I have been.

I tried first with the Folger annotated editions of Shakespeare. They look excellent and define the unfamiliar words, but I still could not make sense of a substantial portion of the dialogue. I guess maybe I'm just dumb, I don't know.

Anyway, I saw good reviews about this No Fear series, and I ordered several. So far I have read the modern English translations of Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, and The Tempest. While I feel a bit like I'm 'cheating', I actually have really enjoyed all the plays and at least now I know the plots and the characters and even some of the more subtle themes. I can't answer the complaints that the translations don't adequately translate Shakespeare's meanings. There are a few side notes that point out double meanings and things like that, though there are not extensive footnotes or sidenotes.

To answer those who rate these books one or two stars, my answer is that they are at least a door into the

world of Shakespeare for those of us unable to navigate the originals on our own. And they only take a couple of hours to read. It's not like this is a lifetime commitment or anything. The book only costs five bucks, so why not invest a couple of hours and read it? And, for me, I liked the plays so much that I AM now going to dig out the Folger editions and read the originals, with the No Fear books available in case I get in trouble. These modalities of trying to appreciate Shakespeare are not mutually exclusive.

Well, hopefully that's helpful to someone. I wanted to write this so that people would know that these books are not just for lazy students hoping to avoid reading the originals or somehow 'cheat' in their English classes. I'm not a Shakespeare scholar or teacher and never will be, just an ordinary guy, but for me, these books were the window of opportunity that I had been searching for. Two thumbs up, most definitely.

41 of 41 people found the following review helpful.

Best Shakespeare Edition Available: Arden

By Drew

The Arden editions of Shakespeare are the best available. While they cost a lot more than the standard cheap editions, they have so much more. The Folger editions (probably the most widely available editions of Shakespeare) have footnotes that are quite general and never do they have enough. In addition, they really don't have that much extra information on the play--only a small essay analyzing the modern issues of the play. The Arden editions are truly the scholarly editions of Shakespeare. Ninety percent of the time that I have a question on the text, a footnote provides more information. In addition, a lengthy introduction is included. Everything is documented. While at this point I don't care that much about how the quarto version of Hamlet said "no", when the folio version said "so", it's nice to know that if I have a specific question, the answers in there. My thoughts on Hamlet: Don't fret about understanding the material, just dive in. Shakespeare offers interesting plots to the beginners and vivid prose to pick over to the advanced scholar.

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