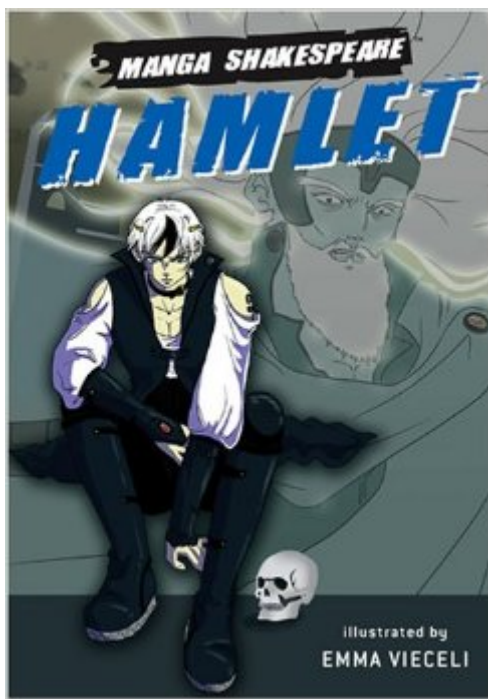


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Manga Shakespeare: Hamlet



Synopsis

Now presenting Manga Shakespeare, the Bard's greatest plays in an accessible, lively format for a new generation of readers. Hamlet is one of Shakespeare's most well-known plays, and this exciting new retelling provides young readers an innovative introduction to the melancholy Dane. Hamlet is your typical angst-ridden teen; he doesn't know how to deal with his responsibilities, how to treat his girlfriend, or how to react to his father's death. He has no one to trust, and he even acts crazy so adults will leave him alone. Manga fans and kids who find Shakespeare intimidating will be drawn to the style and action of the Manga Shakespeare series, learning that required reading doesn't have to be boring.

Book Information

Series: Manga Shakespeare

Paperback: 204 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams (April 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0810993244

ISBN-13: 978-0810993242

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #635,475 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays > Children's](#) #61 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Theater](#) #737 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Classics](#)

Customer Reviews

It is difficult to adequately express how amazing this was. It's all the spoken parts of Hamlet as Shakespeare wrote them, spoken by characters in a comic book. It is set in the future, in space, where Denmark is its own planet or something. This doesn't change the story, since characters are positioned the same to one another. Personalities and stories aren't time specific like clothes are. It has pretty good art. The style shifts to different levels of detail based on what's appropriate for that scene. Transitions between scenes and how characters are introduced are done well. So, just as a comic book this flows well. Shakespeare as a comic makes far more sense than does reading a play. Hamlet is a play. Hamlet was meant to be watched. A comic combines the language with a linear visual. This might even be better than a play; at least, for me it was much more gripping than

Shakespeare as a play. In a play, the visual is there, but due to language barriers, I haven't gotten nuances and all from the language that I probably would have picked up on had I learned English in the 1600s. However, in comic book form I could reread lines, or read more slowly or quickly and I had the visual there on the page with the lines mixed into it. The book was really gripping. I got so much more out of this than any other exposure to Shakespeare. I'm all about getting more manga Shakespeare. I highly recommend this as a way of accessing Hamlet. Libraries and school libraries should consider getting a copy, since this is required reading for classes often enough that it will get wear, and, as I've said, is a very good way of really understanding Shakespeare's nuances. Also, it's just a good read in general as a comic and reasonably priced.

In theory, the idea of pairing illustrations with Shakespeare's text makes sense: his words were, after all, meant to be watched rather than simply read; but this is not the way to do it. Artists like Hayao Miyazaki have demonstrated that Manga has the potential to be a more serious art form than many assume, but projects like this give pause: the juxtaposition of Shakespeare's rich and vibrant language with utterly flat and lifeless illustrations is unsettling, and makes one wonder if there might be inherent limitations to what can be done with the medium.

The cover of this book is misleading---the size of the wording implies that the text is partly 'manga,' but mostly 'Hamlet.' Sadly, the reality is that the book is 3/4 manga, 1/4 Hamlet. The problems start with the cutting-edge, futuristic, dystopia setting. I'm not saying that Shakespeare can't be transferred successfully to other settings (because it can and has been done very well), but when people are talking to each other through floating, virtual screens on one page, but a guy with a shovel is digging up skulls on another page, it just doesn't sync. Worse than the problems with setting, this text doesn't seem to have much appreciation or sensitivity to what Shakespeare was actually doing. Huge passages are removed. Important information is elided. Beautiful language is abandoned on the cutting room floor. I'm ranting now, of course, but it just seems that if you're going to do Shakespeare, you should trust him enough to make his material the top-priority. (For a great example of what's possible, check out the Classics Illustrated version of Hamlet with artwork by Tom Mandrake.) Back to the rant for just a second, using an ellipsis (e.g., "...") in every seventh dialogue balloon is gratuitous and uncalled-for. With that out of my system, let me say that as far as the artwork goes, the book is great. While the figures are distorted beyond plausibility (a person with proportions of 11-heads tall?! I know that's part of manga-style, but please...), other elements of sequential art are handled very well. The dialogue balloons caught my eye, I think because of the

generous white space that helps emphasize the wording. But even more, the background textures and page layouts were wonderful. On several pages I thought, "Aahh, so that's what McCloud was talking about...."So, taken all in all, this version of Hamlet leaves quite a bit to be desired, but it's a great step towards what sequential art CAN do with sophisticated texts.

OK ... considering I never expected to see "Shakespeare" and "Manga" in the same sentence, it was a pleasant surprise when I plugged the terms in for a gift search and ... voila! It exists! Good concept. Delivered on time, early actually, and in the promised condition. Thank you!

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