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Twelfth Night, Or What You Will: The Oxford Shakespeare Twelfth Night, Or What You Will (Oxford World's Classics)



The Oxford Shakespeare
Twelfth Night

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



Synopsis

Twelfth Night is one of the most popular of Shakespeare's plays in the modern theatre, and this edition places particular emphasis on its theatrical qualities throughout. Peopled with lovers misled either by disguises or their own natures, it combines lyrical melancholy with broad comedy. The introduction analyses its many views of love and the juxtaposition of joy and melancholy, while the detailed commentary pays particular attention to its linguistic subtleties. Music is particularly important in Twelfth Night, and this is the only modern edition to offer material for all the music required in a performance. James Walker has re-edited the existing music from the original sources, and where none exists has composed settings compatible with the surviving originals. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

Book Information

Series: Oxford World's Classics

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Reissue edition (June 15, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199536090

ISBN-13: 978-0199536092

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 0.8 x 5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (276 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #42,862 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Dramas & Plays > Comedy #57 in Books > Literature & Fiction > British & Irish > Dramas & Plays #61 in Books > Literature & Fiction > British & Irish > Shakespeare > Works

Customer Reviews

For a long time I would not let my students use No Fear because I wanted them to be able to read the play in Shakespeare's words, but when I tried to discuss the plays with them, I always felt like I was the only who read the play. (I use it for Hamlet as well.) After I let them use it the first time, I was so excited to hear my students' comments on the play because they actually understood what

they were reading. When they write about the play and when we discuss it, we use Shakespeare's words. We also compare the modern words and Shakespeare's words. I really like the No Fears and recommend them to people who really want to understand Shakespeare. I have taught high school and am now teaching at a university, so I know the No Fears are great on both levels.

There are several really worthwhile editions of *Twelfth Night*, but don't overlook this one. The Foreword and notes are excellent and useful; the format's sturdy and readable. It's a good copy to have for the scholar/performer/director.

Please notice that G.H.'s in-house review above does not refer to the recording pictured above, nor do any of the reviews so far. What follows refers only to the Naxos set. There are now three complete recordings of *Twelfth Night* available. We have the older and elegantly read version on Harper Audio with Dorothy Tutin as the best Viola of the lot. Acted with a bit more verve though with less poetry is the Arkangel Shakespeare recording with a Scottish Malvolio and a cast of younger sounding actors who are making names for themselves in Great Britain. However I am very impressed with the "Twelfth Night" that is one of the latest additions to the Naxos Classic Drama series. By far, this is the best-produced "Twelfth Night." One actually feels he is hearing an actual stage performance with all of the action but with the loss of none of the poetry. Perhaps the Viola does sound a little maturer than imagination would have her and the Sir Toby Belch a little less belchy sounding than others. None of the Feste's sing as marvelously as did Peter Pears on the long deleted Marlowe Society recording (also with Tutin); however, on this Naxos set David Timson stays nicely in tune--and directs the production to boot. And he keeps things moving neatly along, which is saying a lot for Shakespeare recordings. The CD version has the advantage of excellent tracking cues for not only each scene but for key points within the scene. The Harper CDs give a new track only for each new scene and the tapes (of course) are quite useless in that regard. The Arkangel series at present exists only on tapes but they are planning to reissue the entire series on CDs. So this Naxos release is the one of choice so far.

The Folger Shakespeare edition of this play gives it a leg up on other versions as far as homeschooling goes. First, the text of the play appears on the right-hand pages, leaving the left-hand pages for glosses, text notes, and illustrations that clarify numerous allusions in the play. Second, sections in the introductory material explain Shakespeare's language, life, and theater, as well as the print history of the play. In the closing material, the editors have included textual notes,

an essay entitled "'Twelfth Night': A Modern Perspective" by Catherine Belsey, an annotated list for further reading, and a key to famous lines in the play. Most useful for homeschooling, perhaps, are the lesson plans available at the Folger web site in either PDF or print version. This play served as the basis of the popular movie *She's the Man*, which can be viewed as a follow-up for comparison and discussion.

Each of the Harper/Caedmon Audio series of Shakespeare's plays, originally recorded in the 60s by the Shakespeare Recording Society and now being reissued on cassette, lives up to a high standard of performance. But the "Twelfth Night" recording is, in my view, the best. The stellar cast includes a young Vanessa Redgrave as Olivia, and a hilarious Willoughby Goddard as Sir Toby. The scenes where Paul Scofield as Malvolio is deceived with a forged letter into thinking that Olivia loves him have a side-splitting humor that comes through even though the play is nearly 400 years old. The sound quality is excellent. I would have to say that this is the crown jewel of the whole Caedmon series.

The Oxford Shakespeare series is one of my favorites because of its extensive and helpful annotations and insightful commentary and analysis. Editorial choices, make sense and serve the story. I teach and direct Shakespeare productions and find that Oxford helps my actors understand the text!

I had to read Twelfth Night for my British Literature class. I'm homeschooled in 12th grade, so I don't have a teacher helping me understand the language. I remembered using another edition of No Fear Shakespeare in the past (A Midsummer Night's Dream) for my 8th grade English class, so I decided to try it again. This story is amazing, and I'm grateful to be able to fully understand it now. I read through it in a couple of days and honestly enjoyed every moment of it. What I love is that I was able to easily look over to the original text when I wanted to get a feel for the writing style - important with this story, because it includes a lot of songs and poetry - but the translations make it easier to understand. I got an A on my book report which I never would've achieved without the help of Spark Notes!

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