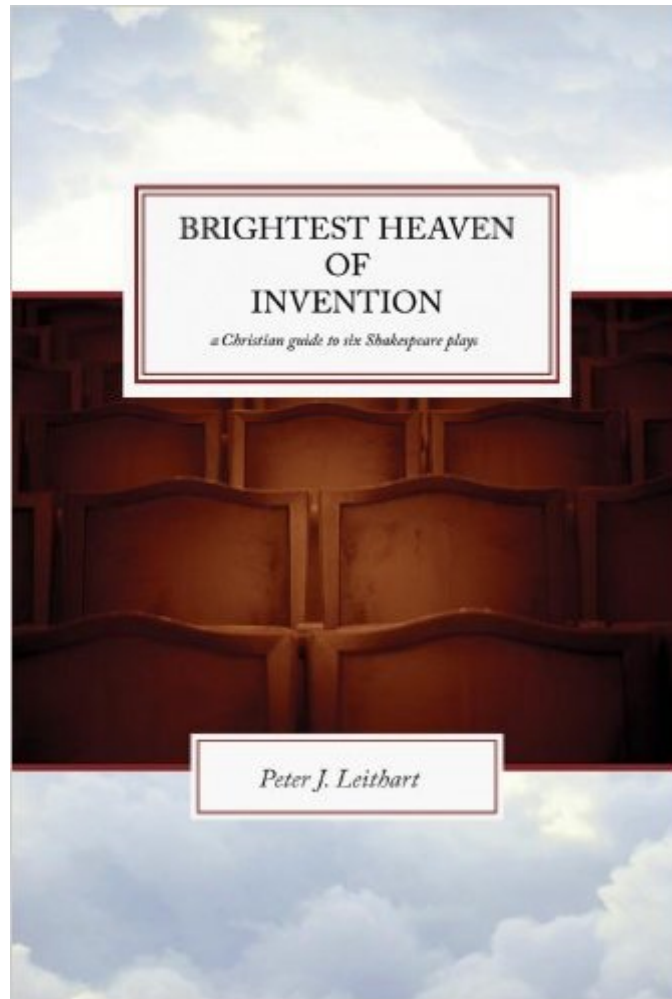


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Brightest Heaven Of Invention: A Christian Guide To Six Shakespeare Plays



Synopsis

Shakespeare was, as Caesar says of Cassius, "a great observer," able to see and depict patterns of events and character. He understood how politics is shaped by the clash of men with various colorings of self-interest and idealism, how violence breeds violence, how fragile human beings create masks and disguises for protection, how schemers do the same for advancement, how love can grow out of hate and hate out of love. Dare anyone say that these insights are irrelevant to living in the real world? For many in an older generation, the Bible and the Collected Shakespeare were the two indispensable books, and thus their sense of life and history was shaped by the best and best-told stories. And they were the wiser for it. Literature abstracts from the complex events of life (just as we all do in everyday life) and can reveal patterns that are like the patterns of events in the real world. Studying literature can give us sensitivity to those patterns. This sensitivity to the rhythm of life is closely connected with what the Bible calls wisdom.

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Customer Reviews

I appreciated this book for its Christian perspective on a few of my favorite Shakespeare plays. The author explored not only the plots, but also the characters' relationships to Christ. The author made insightful parallels and comparisons between the characters and Christ and His church. I also appreciated the critiques of some of the film versions of the plays. I heartily recommend this eye-opening book!

My copy of this book is highlighted and dog-eared, with book marks popping out all over the place. Mr. Leithart's analysis is wonderfully unforced. He's not jamming Shakespeare's work into a Christian mold. He is uncovering what is there. I found this especially effective in his analysis of "The Taming of the Shrew". Since Leithart wrote these when he was teaching a class himself, they are classroom tested. The introduction supplies a suggested schedule to follow. Each play is introduced, then examined Act by Act with review and thought questions. Each chapter ends with suggested essay topics, and some review of movie versions that are available to see. This is great, and I make constant use of it. Six more, Mr. Leithart, please!

I have used this text several times when teaching a high school homeschool literature class. Almost all of my students were "forced" to take my class by their parents and did not expect to learn anything. They began the class hating Shakespeare even though the majority of them had never read any Shakespeare before this class. That all changed with this text. The manageable bites of work, the questions and even the essay suggestions made for interesting discussion, strong debate, and wonderful comparisons to God's Word. On several occasions, students have returned after a year or two of college and commented that this course was one of the most helpful high school classes for preparing them for college. I highly recommend this text and encourage users to find several students to include in the study. The discussions are the best!

And one of the reasons for that is this book, *Brightest Heaven of Invention*. It is a wonderful guide to read along with your next Shakespeare play. It explains the scenes from a unique perspective--a must-have book for Shakespeare fans! Mr. Leithart, we're waiting for the next book in this series.

Peter Leithart opens our eyes to various patterns that exist in the lives of famous literary characters as well as in our own life's narrative. Studying excellent literary works such as Shakespeare helps us to recognize and connect with these patterns. We can relate to the virtues and vices of Shakespeare's characters because we've experienced tragedy and triumph in our own lives--the Fall as well as the Resurrection and as Leithart eloquently states, "This sensitivity to the rhythm of life is closely connected with what the Bible calls wisdom."

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