



KENNETH BRANAGH
* HAMLET *

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
SCREENPLAY, INTRODUCTION
AND FILM DIARY



Hamlet: Screenplay, Introduction And Film Diary

Kenneth Branagh (introduction and screenplay), William Shakespeare

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Often credited with creating a popular movie audience for Shakespeare, Kenneth Branagh has wanted for many years to bring to the screen the complete, full-length version of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's greatest play.

"The film, like the play, will have something for everyone," he says. "It's a ghost story, a thriller, an action-packed murder mystery, and a great tragedy that is profoundly moving." With an outstanding cast of international actors--including Derek Jacobi as Claudius, Julie Christie as Gertrude, Kate Winslet as Ophelia, Charlton Heston as the Player King, Robin Williams as Osric, and Gerard Depardieu as Reynaldo--Branagh's version, in which he will play the title role as well as direct, is sure to go down in film history.

This beautiful volume includes Branagh's introduction and screenplay adaptation of Shakespeare's text, color and black-and-white stills, and a production diary that takes us behind the scenes for a day-to-day look at the shooting of his film.

Hamlet: Screenplay, Introduction And Film Diary Details

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Paul Bryant says

roll up, roll up

CELEBRITY DEATH MATCH

JANE EYRE VS HAMLET

JANE EYRE (dressed in full armour, with beard, and speaking in a ridiculous gruff voice)

Now, Wamlet, hear:

**'Tis given out that, sleeping in my worchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole wombat of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Wankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his cwown.**

[The Governessator is toying with the credulous Prince.]

HAMLET

O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

JANE EYRE :

**Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with woeful wifts,--
O wicked wit and wilts, won to his whameful wust
The will of my most weeming-wirtuous queen**

(JANE begins to giggle)

O Wamlet, what a walling-off was where!

(HAMLET is looking bewildered, dismayed – is this how spirits talk?)

Closer, boy!

(HAMLET draws nearer)

But yet closer!

(As HAMLET steps closer to his father's GHOST, Jane draws back her basket-hilted mortuary sword, whirls it through the air, and with a mild thwip!! and a spray of bright blood Hamlet's head leaves his body in a graceful parabola, like the final lemming from a clifftop. No need for Acts Two, Three, Four or Five now.)

JANE (dripping, taking off the helmet and fake beard) : **It's getting too fucking easy.**

Bethany White says

This has always been a favorite of mine. I understand that people may either love or hate Shakespeare, however I am unable to comprehend the latter. Shakespeare's characters provide a deep psychology for the audience to grab on to. Although one may not necessarily agree with a specific character's motives or ideals, he or she is absolutely able to now argue the character's mind set; you are in their mind and understand how they see the world. This is a literary vacation in my opinion; to be able to enter into another world and see things through their eyes. It is captivating and I only hope that I may learn how to fully replicate such an art form; to let one's talent speak for itself.

Annabelle says

'Twas okay

Darklove says

Love Shakespeare.

Hamlet is amazing! Sad that all die in the end. Not fair. Because Hamlet deserved to live. Even he wanted to revenge.

Lydia Nolan says

Such a remarkable bildungsroman: a book of development. The young Hamlet, who has to grow up when his father is suspiciously killed, and his uncle suddenly marries his mother. Hamlet is forced to decide whether or not he will honor his father's ghost who tells him that his own brother has killed him to marry his wife--Hamlet's mother. The story goes on to tell how Hamlet's decision creates the complications and final resolve, but it is amazing how Shakespeare (again) is a master at the psychological reasoning that goes on in one. Besides the book, which is wonderful, the original especially, the movie with Kenneth Branagh as Hamlet is the best I think.

Jen Chough says

This was the first work of Shakespeare's I'd ever read and is still my second favorite (Henry V being the first). No need to mention all the familiar, insightful quotes from this most famous of plays; it is a brilliant work of art. And no, I do not adhere to the Oedipal interpretation of Hamlet and his mother's relationship. I don't see much difference between his relationship with his mom as I do with even modern men, especially

coming from an ethnic culture. It's always hard, being an only child furthermore, to see the attentions of your mother go elsewhere, particularly to a man who is NOT your father...and especially to a man who possibly killed your father to usurp his throne and queen. I wouldn't be a chipper fellow if I suspected that either.

At the very least, this one's got ghosts, political intrigue, insanity-induced suicide, duels, and by the end of it, a bloodbath of 9 dead people total. Not bad for an old play. Hell, Laertes' whole family is wiped out. On the other end, it is as fine of an analysis on the human psyche as anything Freud or Jung ever wrote. Besides, this inspired the awesomely awesome Tom Stoppard play based on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, which I highly recommend. It is absurd and fun. If Shakespeare isn't your thing, watch or read The Reduced Shakespeare Company's take on all things Bardian. Even if you haven't read a single work, you will be familiar with it by the end...and possibly have laughed your ass off in the process.

MJ Huot says

Update: So it has been about 2 weeks since I saw this on stage. I still can't decide whether I hated it more or less after watching it all live. The play was...mediocre. I was told that I would be seeing a traditional Shakespearean play and yet what I got was some nonsense interpretation. If a theatrical institution receives millions upon millions of donations a year I expect more historically accurate costumes and actual props. The acting was fabulous, but the casting made little sense. Horatio and Hamlet were both played by actors similar in age to Polonius. While in one scene they were all wearing Victorian era clothing, a few were wearing modern business suits in the next. In one scene they were using modern handguns as weapons and then in the next scene they pick up medieval swords. What. I think I was most confused at the end when the soldiers came in to carry Hamlet's body away and they were all dressed in modern military uniforms. Nothing made sense. Surprisingly though, it made me appreciate the play in its written form much more.

Let's pretend I didn't just spend 2 whole months reading this. I hope I never have to read Shakespeare ever again. The plot was good, but plays are meant to be watched, not read. (In my opinion). Can't wait to go see this live at the Stratford festival in May. Turns out I'm going to be the only girl going on the trip...

Cesar says

This book is about the Prince of Denmark named Hamlet, something bad changes Hamlet's life. His father, is the late King Hamlet. He was killed. Shortly after, his mother married Hamlet's uncle instead of letting Hamlet take the throne. Hamlet's anger towards his mother and uncle grew after his father came to him in a ghost form and told Hamlet, he was murdered by his new step dad. Hamlet promises to revenge his death but stalls when he finds out it was Claudius, the new king and his mother's new husband. Many complications come up during Hamlet's mission to revenge his father, but he doesn't give up. Hamlet's love, Ophelia, ends up dying. Ophelia's death angers her brother, Laertes. Laertes and Claudius create two plans to kill Hamlet. Plan A is to have them duel and Laertes will have poison on his sword. Plan B is to have Hamlet drink from a poisoned cup. The ending surprised me. Gertrude drinks from the cup and dies. Hamlet and Laertes both get stabbed by the sword and get poisoned. Before Hamlet dies he poisons Claudius and tells Horatio his last wishes. This book takes place Europe during the early 1600's. Some important themes include revenge and sadness or depression.

I don't like this book because it was hard for me to understand. I'll recommend this book to high school

students because this book has a lot a violence.

Cheryl Kennedy says

This is a Favorite, read multiple times with an emphasis on the psychological aspects of the author's intuitive understanding of what it means to be human. As Kenneth Branagh has said:

"It has everything-intrigue, romance, politics, violence, revenge, jealousy, wit. It plays itself out on such a grand scale."

The book was ordered from SHAKESPEARE AND COMPANY, Paris and includes an introduction to Shakespeare's life and the Elizabethan theatre, an introduction to Hamlet, an essay by Paul Prescott on performance options on both stage and screen, and a commentary.

I was interested primarily in suggestions for further reading after enjoying the text. Here are a few of the last century commentaries to consider. Cedric Watts's "Harvester New Critical Introduction" (1988) that considers the reasons the play breeds 'earth-tremors and landslides of ideology.'

Michael Hattaway's in the Critics Debate Series (1987), while Paul Cantor's 'wide-angled approach' in the Landmarks of World Literature Series (1989) helps us to see the play in the 'boundless reaches of the intertextuality of world literature'.

These works celebrate the play's superiority over other similar works for over three hundred years. But other opinions find Hamlet's emotions about his parents excessive and disproportionate. G. W. Knight's essay in The Wheel of Fire (1930) judged Hamlet a villain.

This is a work that continues to hold a mirror up to human nature in all its complexity, strike emotional chords with readers engaged with the character's angst, and find new relevance with age.

Matthew Simmons says

Quite simply the greatest play ever written, in my opinion. While Branagh's film adaptation isn't my favorite, it's still very good and I generally love his take on the Bard.

Christopher says

Not as in depth as I had hoped. This film means so much to me and I was hoping this book would deepen my appreciation of it. Sadly, it's pretty superficial.

Marvin says

Written for the Celebrity Death Match Review Tournament

Act I, Scene I

Hamlet enters.

HAMLET: OK, Where's that ghost everyone told me about?

Jane Eyre enters.

HAMLET: Wait a minute. Who are you?

JANE" My name is Jane Eyre and I'm looking for Master Rochester.

HAMLET: I think you walked in on the wrong...You know...You're kind of cute for a British chick.

JANE: You're not bad yourself. Do you own a manor?

HAMLETS: (laughs) No, I own a castle.

JANE: Did I ask for Rochester...Who's Rochester? You don't by any chance have a princess locked in the tower?

HAMLET: No. I have a fiancee but she's scheduled to go crazy and kill herself in a few acts.

JANE: Perfect.

They kiss and Hamlet goes off to find someone to marry them and to reserve a room on a Baltic Sea Cruise.

Enter Claudius.

CLAUDIUS: Stop, I cannot allow this. It is a travesty! Besides, how the heck is Manny going to score this on the Death Match. There's no loser!

JANE: I don't know about that, dear Claudius. Y0u read the play right?

CLAUDIUS: Well, duh.

JANE: So what happens?

CLAUDIUS: Hamlet dies, I die, Everybody dies.

JANE: And me?

CLAUDIUS. You don't die. In fact, you're not even supposed to be here.

JANE: Exactly. So all I have to do is hide and wait, preferably not behind a curtain, and I survive, inherit a castle and move on to the next round.

CLAUDIUS: Brilliant! And will this seductive little ploy be your strategy in the final?

JANE: Depends. Who will be my rival?

Enters Winnie-the-pooh.

POOH: AW! Honey!

JANE: oh God, No!

Jane exits left stage pursued by a bear.

Verdict:

Hamlet vs *Jane Eyre*: Jane Eyre Wins

Jane Eyre vs. *Winnie-the-Pooh*: To be continued.

Kelex says

Formerly a member of the Royal Shakespearean Company, actor/director Kenneth Branagh confesses that he has been intrigued and in some ways obsessed by *Hamlet* from early on in his life, early teens and before.

That intense devotion-bordering-on-obsession serves this book well, as well as its movie counterpart. Both the introduction and the film diary give excellent insights into not just how the movie was made, but the play itself, and how things that we don't notice--for example, what a good statesman Polonius is, because he treats Hamlet well and with respect even after Hamlet disgraces Ophelia ("To a nunnery, go" and during the entire play-within-a-play)--help to create that character in more dimensions than simply the Kingmaker.

As you read the text of the play--and that is exactly what this is, the "eternity version" of Hamlet, pieced together from several quartos and one surviving copy--there are notations from Branagh, stage directions and hints for the reader of what the passage is saying. Several soliloquies have been shifted in this edition to make it flow better for filming, and I think they are actual improvements on the places they are found in the text.

However, the shifting of passages does not dull the understanding of the play a whit; even though this is made as a companion book to an excellent film, it stands alone quite well as an "everyman's" treatise on how *Hamlet* the play and Hamlet the man can influence one person's life.

Georgia Radtke says

I recently read "Hamlet" William Shakespeare. This story has many weird twists that are much unexpected. Due to all of the turns in the story, I lost interest in some parts. Basically the entire moral of the story is revenge, and who is seeking who at what given time. Hamlet, the main character has to build up the strength to seek the revenge he is looking for and in the end something happens that takes the reader for ninety degree

turn. Not only is "Hamlet" about revenge but also true love.

Throughout "Hamlet" you will realize that there are many struggles that not only Hamlet has to go through but also Ophelia. Hamlet has a state where he is grieving, furious, in love, happy, sad, and crazy. Ophelia experiences all of these feeling as well but in my personal opinion she has it harder than Hamlet because of him being pretending to go insane at the same time she was in love with him.

"Hamlet" takes place in multiple settings but mainly in the castle of Denmark. It was based in the 16th century. The castle is an important setting because this is where most of the main events take place.

There are a lot of themes in "Hamlet". The big one is revenge, everyone in the story is seeking it on others, and it throws a lot of turns in the story. Hamlet is the one who has a quest to seek revenge on another individual. By trying to accomplish this quest Hamlet has overcome many obstacles that get in his way.

I would not recommend "Hamlet" to anyone. This book was not very enjoyable. I don't like any of Shakespeare's stories and I never saw a point to them. Personally I think they drag on and have no point until the end. If you like Shakespeare then I would recommend "Hamlet" because like all his others, this one drags on.

Ivonne Rovira says

Hamlet, of course, is always amazing; however, for those who will be viewing the play rather than reading it, Kenneth Branagh's is the one. (The David Tennant film is tepid; the Ethan Hawke one is unbearable.)
