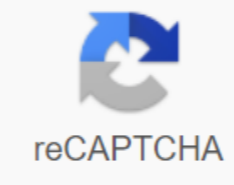




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Isaac asimov guide to shakespeare

Isaac Asimov was born in Petrovichi, Russia, on January 2, 1920. His family emigrated to the United States in 1923 and settled in Brooklyn, New York, where they owned and operated a candy store. Asimov became a naturalized U.S. citizen at the age of eight. As a youngster he discovered his talent for writing, producing his first original fiction at the age of eleven. He became one of the world's most prolific writers and published nearly 500 books in his lifetime. Asimov was not just a writer; he was also a biochemist and educator. He studied chemistry at Columbia University, earned a B.S., M.A. and Ph.D. In 1951, Asimov accepted a position as a biochemistry instructor at Boston University's School of Medicine, even though he had no practical experience in the field. His exceptional intelligence enabled him to quickly master new systems, and he quickly became a successful and distinguished professor at Columbia and even wrote a biochemistry book within a few years. Asimov won numerous awards and awards for his books and stories, and he is considered a leading writer of the Golden Age of science fiction. Although he didn't invent science fiction, he helped legitimize it by adding the narrative structure that was missing from the traditional science fiction books of the period. He also introduced several innovative concepts, including the thematic care for technological progress and its impact on humanity. Asimov is probably best known for his Foundation series, including *Foundation*, *Foundation and Empires*, and *Second Foundation*. In 1966, this trilogy won the Hugo award for best science fiction series of all time. In 1963, Asimov wrote an additional Foundation novel, *Foundation's Edge*, which won the Hugo for best novel of the year. Asimov also wrote a series of robot books with I, robot, and eventually tied the two series together. He won three additional Hugos, including a posthumous award for best nonfiction book of 1995, *I, Asimov*. *Nightfall* was voted the best science fiction story of all time by the Science Fiction Writers of America. In 1979, Asimov wrote his autobiography *In Memory Yet Green*. He continued to write until just a few years before his death from heart and kidney failure on April 6, 1992. Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare Cover of the first editionAuthorIsaac AsimovIllustratorRafael PalaciosCountryUnited StatesLanguageEnglishSubjectWilliam ShakespearePublisherDoubledayPublication date1970Media typePrint (hardcover)Pages8 43ISBN978-0-517-26825-4OCLC4498736 Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare (1970) by Isaac Asimov is a two-part guide to the works of the famous English writer William Shakespeare. The numerous maps were drawn up by the artist Rafael Structure. The work provides a short guide to each Shakespeare play, as well as two epic poems. Asimov organises the not in the usual way – as tragedies, comedies and histories – but regionally as follows: Greco-Roman Italian English The last two categories are widely covered; 'Italian' applies to neighbouring countries, and both Hamlet and Macbeth are listed with 'The English Plays'. Asimov gives a detailed justification for doing so. Within each category, the plays are arranged based on internal (historical) chronology, taking into account the different ones that are not based on actual events. Asimov notes how much real history is, and describes who the historical people were, where applicable. He tracks the characters that appear in more than one game and gives maps to explain important geographical elements. Asimov's reception approach is not popular with the prejudices of some readers: Fans of Asimov's science fiction generally have little taste for door-stopper books such as Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare or *The Shaping of England*, and specialists are never happy to see smart outsiders making hay in their fields.— Peter Temes[1] Publication data Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare, vols I and II (1970), ISBN 978-0-517-26825-4. Gramercy Books. Nearly 800 pages long plus an index, the work was originally published in two volumes; Greek, Roman and Italian in the first and 'The English Plays' in the second. Asimov dedicated the work to his late father, Judah Asimov. See also Isaac Asimov bibliography (chronologically) Notes and references ^ Temes 2002. Sources Meserole, Harrison T.; Smith, John B. (1980). *Shakespeare: Annotated World Bibliography for 1979: Reference Works*. *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Folger Shakespeare Library. 31 (4): 492–93. doi:10.1093/sq/31.4.468. eISSN 1538-3555. ISSN 0037-3222. JSTOR 2869590.CS1 maint: ref-harv (link) Temes, Peter (March 15, 2002). 100 words per minute, but eventually stopped by AIDS. Forward. Archived from the original on 7 March 2003. Retrieved on March 25, 2017.CS1 maint: ref-harv (link) Retrieved from Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare, by Isaac Asimov, vols I and II (1970), ISBN 0-517-26825-6; Maps by the artist Rafael Palacios. This work provides a short guide to each Shakespeare play, as well as his two epic poems. Asimov organizes the plays as follows: Greco-Roman Italian English Plays The last two categories are widely covered; 'Italian' applies to neighbouring countries, and both Hamlet and Macbeth are listed with 'The English Plays'. Asimov gives a detailed justification for doing so. Within each category, the plays are arranged chronologically, taking into account the different are not based on actual events. Asimov notes how much real history is, and describes who the original people were, where applicable. He tracks the characters that appear in more than one game and gives maps to explain important geographical elements. If you like things. Keeps, this, you read the full review. The Immortal Bard: Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare by Isaac Asimov It is not my intention to discuss the literary values of the plays, or to analyse them from a theatrical, philosophical or psychological point of view. Others have done this far beyond a poor capacity that I might have in that direction. [...] What I can do, however, is to go over each of the thirty-eight plays and two narrative poems written by Shakespeare in his neighborhood. If you're into this kind of thing, you read the full review. The Immortal Bard: Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare by Isaac Asimov It is not my intention to discuss the literary values of the plays, or to analyse them from a theatrical, philosophical or psychological point of view. Others have done this far beyond a poor capacity that I might have in that direction. [...] What I can do, however, is to review and explain each of Shakespeare's thirty-eight plays and two narrative poems in his quarter century of literary life, as I move on, the historical, legendary and mythological backdrop. In Isaac Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare. Asimov can say that Asimov was the greatest SF writer who ever lived. As great a writer as he was, he couldn't write a credible female character to save his life. I remember that stupid game where he wanted to prove he could do it: It came out as something stupid, patronizing, and a mess. He must have been one of the greats, but the greatest? No (but *Nightfall* is still one of the most beautiful short stories of all time, SF or not). Nevertheless, taking on Shakespeare is right in my alley. I've cherished these two-volumes-in-one since I can remember (it was one of my first buys, in 1997, in regards to Shakespeare), and it's precisely because of that all-inclusive, scattered quality of it. If you love Shakespeare, read the rest of the review elsewhere.... more So, she pulls this book ... The way my friend turns on his bantool and smiles tells me this is going to be something good. We're sitting in a quiet bar talking about his last acting gig – *Much Ado About Nothing*. The 'she' in question is the director, and the book is Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare. Being well aware of my tendencies, he assumed that I would like to know that Isaac Asimov once wrote a two-part handbook to understand each of the Bard's plays (plus two of his poems), including plot summaries, fact-checks against historical events, definitions of outdated terms, and explanations of jokes that don't make much sense after four centuries; in short, anything an obsessive word nerd would want as a companion of I bought a copy online immediately and then ordered another beer. Although I had not heard anything about this book, the connection seemed immediately clear. Of course, the voracious Asimov decided to do that he wanted to get every reference in all Shakespeare's works, and of course he wrote his findings in a book so that others could share his excitement. When a writer writes about another writer, the reader can't help but learn something about them both. Once I got my hands on the thing (both hands; it's 800 pages) and cracked it open, the wry tone, the relatable language, the ridiculously broad and deep knowledge, the sheer Asimovness of the book was obvious. How does this master of sci-fi approach Shakespeare? From his introduction: This is not to say that one cannot enjoy Shakespeare without knowing the historical, legendary, or mythological background of the events in his plays. There is still the great poetry and the deathless swing of his writing. And yet, if we knew a little more of what that writing was about, wouldn't the plays take on new dimension and lend us even more pleasure? This is what it is in my mind to do in this book. (Note to self: use the phrase deathless swing as often as is viable.) As a person - like so many others - who digs SFF literature and Will's plays, I've always leaned toward the magical things. I want fairy royalty. I want wizards on desert islands. And while Troilus and Cressida do not actually include any of the Greek pantheon, it has Odysseus. I'd never read it before, so now armed with Asimov's notes, I gave it a shot. His introductory recap of *The Iliad* floors me: The episode ... is about a row between two of the Greek leaders, with the near-disaster that the Greek cause is causing, and with the dramatic reconciliation that follows after all the participants have suffered tragic losses. It's as relatable as a Netflix blurb. Forget hazy eyes reverence; Nowhere is the god-like Homer sitting down to create a mighty epic, blind eye staring at the Muse for guidance. As he continues, Asimov explains history. Histories, I must say. The actual history of Troy as we understand it. The history of Homer himself. The history of various treatments and versions of the Trojan War, until recently. After telling us that the first translation of Homer into English wasn't finished when Shakespeare wrote the play, he takes a canon-obsessed nerd's joy at pointing out where the Bard gets it wrong. Mental images of red pen marks and tutting smiles abound. If the ridiculously informative annotations about all these aspects aren't enough for you, what about Asimov's theories that Shakespeare referred to contemporary events? That a scandal about the faction of his patron in the court cressida crept in the image? knowledge is recursive - the harder you look, the more details you find. We also see Asimov trying to get into Shakespeare's head, not from the point of view of poetry, but from craft. Op Op at the end of the fourth act, he charts Shakespeare's options for killing Troilus or not as a comparison: He must die. Troilus dies, in the Greek legends that concern him, and of what dramatic value is it to survive under the circumstances of the tragedy as described in this piece? Conditions. Value. These are mathematical terms. Problem-solving terms. Asimov envisions Shakespeare trying to work through the kind of problem every writer deals with: Do I kill him or not? What evokes the strongest feelings without being heavy-handed or corny? What the hell am I building to? And that's part of the beauty of this book. It's not just a delicious pre-hypertext nerd-fest. It's how to write. Having sated my writer's side with this lecture, I asked the director, Buffalo theater luminary Kyle LoConti, about how she has used the book in the production. What does the book actually offer people staging the plays? This was always my favorite source for 'fun facts,' maps, pedigrees and so on. While most of the information is not 'actable,' it deepens the actors' (and directors and designers') understanding of the play's universe - as it would have been understood in Elizabethan England by Shakespeare and his audience. Now that I'm directing Shakespeare, I like to learn all this information to put myself in the universe of the play. Most resources give plot summaries, character distributions, thematic treatises and the like. Asimov's assault on understanding the canon is so refreshingly unique and as fun for Bard-wonks as I am. (Note to self: use the term Bard-wonk as often as is viable.) I went to see the performance of *Much Ado* a week later, and of course prepared myself with Isaac's old essay. It contains my favorite of his notes so far: when mopey Don John is described as being born under Saturn, Asimov offers the astrological context. Saturn... is the slowest movement of the planets and is named after a particularly ancient god. Those born under his influence are therefore 'saturnine', that is, serious, gloomy and slow. Etymology, astronomy, astrology, and the history of mythology all in one sentence, without a whit of pedantry. Is there anything more Asimovian than that? Top Image: Portrait of Isaac Asimov by Rowena Morrill; the Chandos Portrait of William Shakespeare. Alex Livingston lives in an old house with his brilliant wife and a stack of old video game systems. He writes speculative and interactive fiction, most recently the cyberpunk novella *Glich Rain*. He's on Twitter as a @galaxyalex. @galaxyalex.

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