



A Midsummer Night's Dream for Kids (Shakespeare Can Be Fun!)

By Lois Burdett

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"Who is William Shakespeare?" For more than 20 years, Lois Burdett has asked that question of her elementary school students in Stratford, Ontario, Canada, leading them on a voyage of discovery that brings the Bard to life for boys and girls ages seven and up.

A Midsummer Night's Dream for Kids, written in rhyming couplets is suitable for staging as class plays as well as reading aloud.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 1-3?An adaptation of the play retold in rhyming couplets. The greatest strength of the presentation is in the contributions of Burdett's elementary-age students. The obviously neatened-up drawings of the characters in various scenes are done in brightly colored markers on white backgrounds and retain many stylistic traits unique to young creators. So, too, do the diary entries of the characters, letters between them, and other documents supplied by the youngsters and reproduced (complete with their creative spelling) on most pages. The charm of this precocious output will appeal more to adults than to children. The verse (the actual story of the play) does manage to scan throughout without noticeable forcing, but is rather heavy-handed. The most graceful phrases are the few that are direct quotes from the play. Unfortunately, nothing in this book distinguishes Burdett's words from the Bard's. This book is one of the end results of an extensive learning project that includes a performance by the children. Unfortunately, the active experience of all this creation is only hinted at on the page.?Sally Margolis, formerly at Deerfield Public Library, IL
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Review

Shakespeare is presented in a manner that is understandable to children without lessening the quality of the work. (Sheree Van Vreede *Children's Literature*)

Makes it come wonderfully alive for young students. (*Curriculum Administrator* 1998-06-01)

Included in the "Great Books for Children" program. (*Canadian Toy Testing Council*)

If you are looking for more fun ways to teach Shakespeare to your children, the Shakespeare Can Be Fun series by Lois Burdett is an excellent way to introduce the playwright's many works. The author takes Shakespeare's entire works and puts them into a poetic, flowing version that is easy on children's attention spans while leaving the crux of the works intact. It's helpful for mom and dad as well. The books also offer suggestions for lesson plans. (Tere Scott *St. Louis Homeschooling Examiner, Los Angeles edit* 2009-06-24)

From the Author

Shakespeare Can Be Fun!

Most students will be exposed to the works of Shakespeare, typically in high school. The language and content of the plays is seen as too difficult for younger children but primary children are underestimated as to what they can accomplish given the challenge. The study of Shakespeare has become an integral part of my grade two program at Hamlet School, in Stratford, Ontario, Canada.

When I first moved to Stratford, I had no intention of teaching Shakespeare to 7 and 8 year olds. Stratford is a beautiful city noted for its Shakespearean theatre and I was interested that the schools were all named after Shakespearean characters. I asked my class, "Who is William Shakespeare?" and "Why is our school called Hamlet?" Their answers were surprising. One thought he was a famous boxer. Another believed he was the President of Canada. A third student responded, "I don't know who William Shakespeare is. I don't know any of the big kids." It was the children's enthusiasm and excitement on making the connection between an historical figure and the name of their school, which led me to continue. Thirty years later I can't imagine

teaching anywhere in the world and not introducing Shakespeare. The study provided tremendous growth, particularly in the area of language and communication and evolved into a learning experience of a lifetime. I have endeavored in my books and workshops for teachers to share the excitement of exploring with children, the timeless emotions and ideas of Shakespeare.

The comments of two of my children, written at various times in their daily journals show the lasting impression Shakespeare has had on them.

"Shakespeare is like a big piece of chocolate cake. Once you've started you wish you could go on and on forever, in a non-stopping dream." (Anika, age 7)

"William's incredible words are like a velvet silk coat that rap around his pure thoughts. His pen writes on like all colors of the wind." (Sean, age 7)

Users Review

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Jesus Thresher:

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Kyra Franson:

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