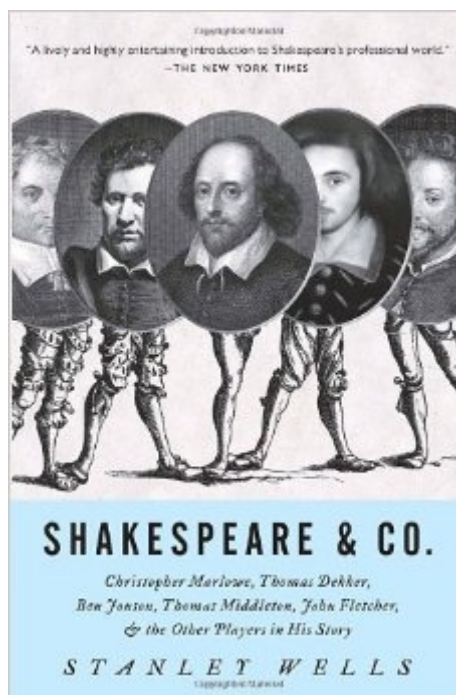


The book was found

Shakespeare & Co.: Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher And The Other Players In His Story



Synopsis

From the dean of Shakespeare studies comes a lively, entertaining work of biography that firmly locates Shakespeare within the hectic, exhilarating world in which he lived and worked. Theatre in Shakespeare's day was a growth industry. Everyone knew everyone else, and they all sought to learn, borrow, or steal from one another. Stanley Wells explores the theatre world from behind the scenes, examining how the great actors of the time influenced Shakespeare's work. He writes about the lives and works of the other major writers of the day and discusses Shakespeare's relationships-sometimes collaborative-with each of them. Throughout, Wells shares his vast knowledge of the period, re-creating and celebrating the sheer richness and variety of the social and cultural milieus that gave rise to the greatest writer in our language.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The author is the general editor of the Penguin and Oxford editions of Shakespeare's works and co-editor the Oxford Companion to Shakespeare. So he is very steeped in the context in which Shakespeare worked and obviously dedicated to that work. Yet this book is written in a non-pedantic fashion, thankfully. It begins with two chapters about the theatrical scene at the time and the actors who were prominent on the stage. Those were a little slow, for me. Then, the book picked up speed as it began presenting short biographies of other playwrights of the time, often showing connections and shared experiences with Shakespeare, and how their work influenced or was influenced by Shakespeare, although their lives are independently interesting. These men led

dicey lives given the political environment, the plague, alcohol and the disreputable image of the theater as a career. The most well known of these men were Marlowe and Ben Jonson, although I appreciated learning about the careers of John Fletcher and Thomas Middleton, with whom Shakespeare collaborated in his later years. The book's discussion of the collaborative efforts included both textual analysis of which co-author was responsible for various passages, and also sketches a rather poignant portrait of Shakespeare in his later years as it prompts speculation as to why the greatest dramatist in history shifted to the collaborative mode - was it declining physical health? Creative exhaustion? A change of public or patrons' tastes? The book does not directly speak to those issues but definitely provokes thought on them.

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