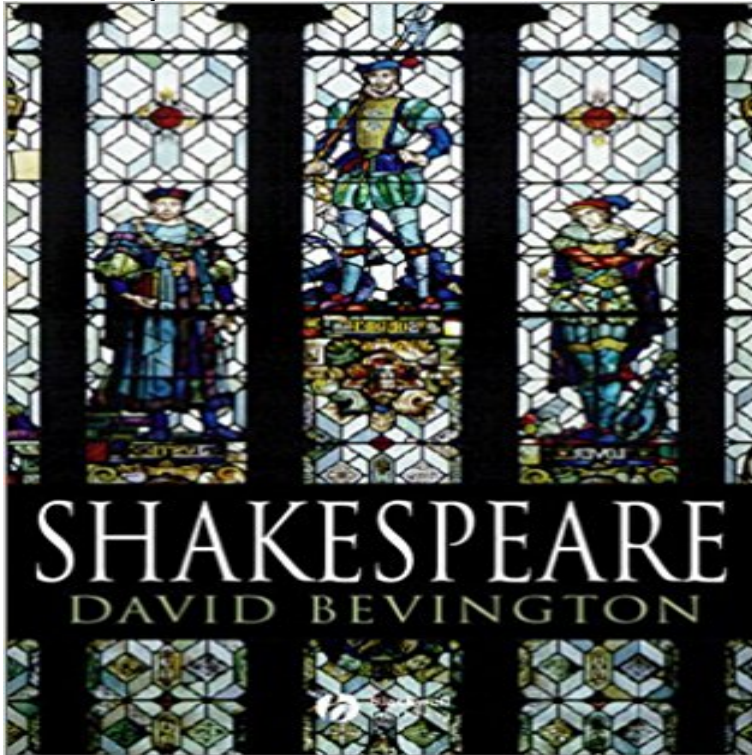


Shakespeare



What makes Shakespeare great? Why do we still read and perform his works? In this deft, witty, and unpretentiously short book, David Bevington argues that Shakespeare continues to live among us today because his representations of the human condition are believable, endearing and touchingly human. The book is structured around Shakespeares arc of human life from infancy and childhood to adulthood, advancing age and eventual death, as set out by Jaques in the so-called Seven Ages of Man speech from As You Like It. Each stage in the life cycle acts as a lens through which the reader can view Shakespeares major works. The result is a dazzling series of explorations on childhood, sibling rivalry, courtship, the competition of sons with their fathers, career choices and ambitions, disillusionment and loss of traditional faith, marriage, jealousy, midlife crisis, ageing fathers worrying about their daughters marrying, retirement, and so onward to second childishness and mere oblivion. Bevington reveals that Shakespeare wrote not just about human experience, but from human experience. His works represent a deeply humane portrait of humankind, and of the author himself, in a series of compelling dramatic representations. This is a virtuoso performance by an eminent scholar, widely noted for his great gifts of explication and for his mastery of accessible prose.

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