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Shakespeare's Histories: Ten Epic Plays at a Breakneck Pace

Timothy Mooney

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"Shakespeare's Histories; Ten Epic Plays at a Breakneck Pace!" is an indispensable primer for actors, directors, students and audiences… the fastest, most epic, insightful and funniest introduction to these ten most challenging works of the greatest author of all time! "Shakespeare's Histories" is a rapid-fire retelling of Shakespeare's ten history plays, KING JOHN, RICHARD II, HENRY IV, PARTS 1 & 2, HENRY V, HENRY VI, PARTS 1, 2 & 3, RICHARD III and HENRY VIII. The text is liberally sprinkled with the most famous and most profound speeches of those great plays, along with full-color portraits of the kings, family trees, maps and clippings from the First Folio edition. It provides historical perspective, fills in crucial gaps of what Shakespeare leaves unsaid (either for political or dramaturgical reasons) and notes the occasional revisions that Shakespeare made to history in the process! Both PLAY and HISTORY LESSON, "Shakespeare's Histories" makes seemingly impenetrable plays easily and immediately accessible! Jumping from Shakespeare's richest poetry to Mooney's playfully impetuous perspective, "Shakespeare's Histories" isolates the precise facts needed to make characters, plot nuances and levels of intrigue come vividly alive and stick in our heads! It is THE go-to resource to finally "get" these amazing plays! This book (60-75 minutes in performance) creates a foundation for further exposure to, and study of, any of these ten plays. It provides a singular frame that may free the student/reader/audience/performer to understand the other "twenty nine hours" of dramatic material that comprise Shakespeare's epic history cycle. Tim Mooney unlocks the secrets of Shakespeare's history plays, answering… Which King Henry is which? Why was King John such a weasel? What sets Richard III on his murderous rampage? What is Shakespeare avoiding saying about Henry VI and King Charles? What is "the most pandering, politically calibrated speech in all of Shakespeare?" And much more! Most Shakespeare analyses, companion works and annotated texts strive to explain the LANGUAGE of Shakespeare's works, while "Shakespeare's Histories" provides a baseline understanding of the ACTION of these ten plays. Nuanced study of Shakespeare's dialogue doesn't help the reader/actor/audience understand WHY these things are happening, what got us to this point, and where we are going. "Shakespeare's Histories" reveals that, while Shakespeare's Comedies and Tragedies are self-contained, Shakespeare's Histories can only be fully grasped COLLECTIVELY and SEQUENTIALLY. While most Shakespeare studies approach the topic with an almost religious reverence, "Shakespeare's Histories" is willing to poke gentle fun at these plays and their author. It is decidedly contemporary, and sometimes hilarious in its perspective, filled with ebullient energy and mischievous wit.

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