

MACMILLAN MASTER GUIDES

HENRY IV PART ONE

by **WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE**



Helen Morris

MACMILLAN MASTER GUIDES

General Editor: James Gibson

Published:

JANE AUSTEN: **PRIDE AND PREJUDICE** Raymond Wilson

EMMA Norman Page

MANSFIELD PARK Richard Wirdnam

ROBERT BOLT: **A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS** Leonard Smith

EMILY BRONTË: **WUTHERING HEIGHTS** Hilda D. Spear

GEOFFREY CHAUCER: **THE PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES**

Nigel Thomas and Richard Swan

THE MILLER'S TALE Michael Alexander

CHARLES DICKENS: **BLEAK HOUSE** Dennis Butts

GREAT EXPECTATIONS Dennis Butts

HARD TIMES Norman Page

GEORGE ELIOT: **MIDDLEMARCH** Graham Handley

SILAS MARNER Graham Handley

E. M. FORSTER: **A PASSAGE TO INDIA** Hilda D. Spear

THE METAPHYSICAL POETS Joan van Emden

WILLIAM GOLDING: **LORD OF THE FLIES** Raymond Wilson

OLIVER GOLDSMITH: **SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER** Paul Ranger

THOMAS HARDY: **FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD** Colin Temblett-Wood

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES James Gibson

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE: **DOCTOR FAUSTUS** David A. Male

ARTHUR MILLER: **THE CRUCIBLE** Leonard Smith

GEORGE ORWELL: **ANIMAL FARM** Jean Armstrong

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: **MACBETH** David Elloway

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Kenneth Pickering

ROMEO AND JULIET Helen Morris

THE WINTER'S TALE Diana Devlin

HENRY IV PART I Helen Morris

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW: **ST JOAN** Leonée Ormond

RICHARD SHERIDAN: **THE RIVALS** Jeremy Rowe

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL Paul Ranger

Forthcoming:

SAMUEL BECKETT: **WAITING FOR GODOT** J. Birkett

WILLIAM BLAKE: **SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND SONGS OF EXPERIENCE**

A. Tomlinson

GEORGE ELIOT: **THE MILL ON THE FLOSS** H. Wheeler

T. S. ELIOT: **MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL** P. Lapworth

HENRY FIELDING: **JOSEPH ANDREWS** T. Johnson

E. M. FORSTER: **HOWARD'S END** I. Milligan

WILLIAM GOLDING: **THE SPIRE** R. Sumner

THOMAS HARDY: **THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE** R. Evans

SELECTED POEMS OF GERALD MANLEY HOPKINS

PHILIP LARKIN: **THE WHITSUN WEDDING AND THE LESS DECEIVED**

A. Swarbrick

D. H. LAWRENCE: **SONS AND LOVERS** R. Draper

HARPER LEE: **TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD** Jean Armstrong

THOMAS MIDDLETON: **THE CHANGELING** A. Bromham

ARTHUR MILLER: **DEATH OF A SALESMAN** P. Spalding

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: **HAMLET** J. Brooks

HENRY V P. Davison

KING LEAR F. Casey

JULIUS CAESAR David Elloway

MEASURE FOR MEASURE M. Lilly

OTHELLO Christopher Beddows

RICHARD II C. Barber

TWELFTH NIGHT Edward Leeson

THE TEMPEST Kenneth Pickering

TWO PLAYS OF JOHN WEBSTER David A. Male

Also published by Macmillan

MASTERING ENGLISH LITERATURE R. Gill

MASTERING ENGLISH LANGUAGE S. H. Burton

MASTERING ENGLISH GRAMMAR S. H. Burton

WORK OUT SERIES

WORK OUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ('O' level and GCSE) S. H. Burton

WORK OUT ENGLISH LITERATURE ('A' level) S. H. Burton

MACMILLAN MASTER GUIDES

HENRY IV PART I

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

HELEN MORRIS

with an Introduction by
HAROLD BROOKS

M
MACMILLAN

© Helen Morris 1986

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956 (as amended).

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First edition 1986

Published by
MACMILLAN EDUCATION LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS
and London
Companies and representatives
throughout the world

Typeset in Great Britain by
TEC SET, Sutton, Surrey

ISBN 978-0-333-39770-1 ISBN 978-1-349-08217-9 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-08217-9

CONTENTS

<i>General editor's preface</i>		vi
<i>An introduction to the study of Shakespeare's plays by Harold Brooks</i>		vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>		xii
1 Life and background	1.1 Shakespeare: life and career	1
	1.2 Elizabethan theatre	4
2 Shakespeare's English histories	2.1 The series	7
	2.2 The sources	8
	2.3 Elizabethan ideas about history	9
3 Summary and critical commentary	3.1 Summary	11
	3.2 Critical commentary	12
4 Themes and issues	4.1 Order and disorder	34
	4.2 Rebellion	35
	4.3 Kingship	35
	4.4 Honour	36
	4.5 'Redeeming time'	38
5 Technical features	5.1 Characterisation	41
	5.2 Style and language	52
	5.3 Wordplay	55
	5.4 Images	56
6 Analysis of specimen passages	6.1 Blank verse	59
	6.2 Prose	62
7 The play on the stage	7.1 Stage history	66
	7.2 Structure of the play	69
	7.3 Falstaff as Vice	71
	7.4 Hal and Hotspur	72
8 Critical reception		74
<i>Revision questions</i>		76
<i>Appendix: Shakespeare's Theatre by Harold Brooks</i>		78
<i>Further reading</i>		82

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The aim of the Macmillan Master Guides is to help you to appreciate the book you are studying by providing information about it and by suggesting ways of reading and thinking about it which will lead to a fuller understanding. The section on the writer's life and background has been designed to illustrate those aspects of the writer's life which have influenced the work, and to place it in its personal and literary context. The summaries and critical commentary are of special importance in that each brief summary of the action is followed by an examination of the significant critical points. The space which might have been given to repetitive explanatory notes has been devoted to a detailed analysis of the kind of passage which might confront you in an examination. Literary criticism is concerned with both the broader aspects of the work being studied and with its detail. The ideas which meet us in reading a great work of literature, and their relevance to us today, are an essential part of our study, and our Guides look at the thought of their subject in some detail. But just as essential is the craft with which the writer has constructed his work of art, and this is considered under several technical headings – characterisation, language, style and stagecraft.

The authors of these Guides are all teachers and writers of wide experience, and they have chosen to write about books they admire and know well in the belief that they can communicate their admiration to you. But you yourself must read and know intimately the book you are studying. No one can do that for you. You should see this book as a lamp-post. Use it to shed light, not to lean against. If you know your text and know what it is saying about life, and how it says it, then you will enjoy it, and there is no better way of passing an examination in literature.

JAMES GIBSON

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

A play as a work of art exists to the full only when performed. It must hold the audience's attention throughout the performance, and, unlike a novel, it can't be put down and taken up again. It is important to experience the play as if you are seeing it on the stage for the first time, and you should begin by reading it straight through. Shakespeare builds a play in dramatic units which may be divided into smaller subdivisions, or episodes, marked off by exits and entrances and lasting as long as the same actors are on the stage. Study it unit by unit.

The first unit provides the exposition which is designed to put the audience into the picture. In the second unit we see the forward movement of the play as one situation changes into another. The last unit in a tragedy or a tragical play will bring the catastrophe and in comedy – and some of the history plays – an unravelling of the complications, what is called a *dénouement*.

The onward movement of the play from start to finish is its progressive structure. We see the chain of cause and effect (the plot) and the progressive revelation and development of character. The people, their characters and their motives drive the plot forward in a series of scenes which are carefully planned to give variety of pace and excitement. We notice fast-moving and slower-moving episodes, tension mounting and slackening, and alternate fear and hope for the characters we favour. Full-stage scenes, such as stately councils and processions or turbulent mobs, contrast with scenes of small groups or even single speakers. Each of the scenes presents a deed or event which changes the situation. In performance, entrances and exits and stage actions are physical facts, with more impact than on the page. That impact Shakespeare relied upon, and we must restore it by an effort of the imagination.

Shakespeare's language is just as diverse. Quickfire dialogue is followed by long speeches, and verse changes to prose. There is a wide range of speech – formal, colloquial, dialect, 'Mummerset' and the broken English

of foreigners, for example. Songs, instrumental music, and the noise of battle, revelry and tempest, all extend the range of dramatic expression. The dramatic use of language is enhanced by skilful stagecraft, by costumes, by properties such as beds, swords and Yorick's skull, by such stage business as kneeling, embracing and giving money, and by use of such features of the stage structure as the balcony and the trapdoor.

By these means Shakespeare's people are brought vividly to life and cleverly individualised. But though they have much to tell us about human nature, we must never forget that they are characters in a play, not in real life. And remember, they exist to enact the play, not the play to portray *them*.

Shakespeare groups his characters so that they form a pattern, and it is useful to draw a diagram showing this. Sometimes a linking character has dealings with each group. The pattern of persons belongs to the symmetric structure of the play, and its dramatic unity is reinforced and enriched by a pattern of resemblances and contrasts; for instance, between characters, scenes, recurrent kinds of imagery, and words. It is not enough just to notice a feature that belongs to the symmetric structure, you should ask what its relevance is to the play as a whole and to the play's ideas.

These ideas and the dramatising of them in a central theme, or several related to each other, are a principal source of the dramatic unity. In order to see what themes are present and important, look, as before, for pattern. Observe the place in it of the leading character. In tragedy this will be the protagonist, in comedy heroes and heroines, together with those in conflict or contrast with them. In *Henry IV Part I*, Prince Hal is being educated for kingship and has a correct estimate of honour, while Falstaff despises honour, and Hotspur makes an idol of it. Pick out the episodes of great intensity as, for example, in *King Lear* where the theme of spiritual blindness is objectified in the blinding of Gloucester, and, similarly, note the emphases given by dramatic poetry as in Prospero's 'Our revels now are ended. . .' or unforgettable utterances such as Lear's 'Is there any cause in Nature that makes these hard hearts?' Striking stage-pictures such as that of Hamlet behind the King at prayer will point to leading themes, as will all the parallels and recurrences, including those of phrase and imagery. See whether, in the play you are studying, themes known to be favourites with Shakespeare are prominent, themes such as those of order and disorder, relationships disrupted by mistakes about identity, and appearance and reality. The latter were bound to fascinate Shakespeare, whose theatrical art worked by means of illusions which pointed beyond the surface of actual life to underlying truths. In looking at themes beware of attempts to make the play fit some orthodoxy a critic believes in – Freudian perhaps, or Marxist, or dogmatic Christian theology – and remember that its ideas, though they often have a bearing on ours, are Elizabethan.

Some of Shakespeare's greatness lies in the good parts he wrote for the actors. In his demands upon them, and the opportunities he provided, he bore their professional skills in mind and made use of their physical prowess, relished by a public accustomed to judge fencing and wrestling as expertly as we today judge football and tennis. As a member of the professional group of players called the Chamberlain's Men he knew each actor he was writing for. To play his women he had highly-trained boys. As paired heroines they were often contrasted, short with tall, for example, or one vivacious and enterprising, the other conventionally feminine.

Richard Burbage, the company's leading man, was famous as a great tragic actor, and he took leading roles in seven of Shakespeare's tragedies. Though each of the seven has its own distinctiveness, we shall find at the centre of all of them a tragic protagonist possessing tragic greatness, not just one 'tragic flaw' but a tragic vulnerability. He will have a character which makes him unfit to cope with the tragic situations confronting him, so that his tragic errors bring down upon him tragic suffering and finally a tragic catastrophe. Normally, both the suffering and the catastrophe are far worse than he can be said to deserve, and others are engulfed in them who deserve such a fate less or not at all. Tragic terror is aroused in us because, though exceptional, he is sufficiently near to normal humankind for his fate to remind us of what can happen to human beings like ourselves, and because we see in it a combination of inexorable law and painful mystery. We recognise the principle of cause and effect where in a tragic world errors return upon those who make them, but we are also aware of the tragic disproportion between cause and effect. In a tragic world you may kick a stone and start an avalanche which will destroy you and others with you. Tragic pity is aroused in us by this disproportionate suffering, and also by all the kinds of suffering undergone by every character who has won our imaginative sympathy. Imaginative sympathy is wider than moral approval, and is felt even if suffering does seem a just and logical outcome. In addition to pity and terror we have a sense of tragic waste because catastrophe has affected so much that was great and fine. Yet we feel also a tragic exaltation. To our grief the men and women who represented those values have been destroyed, but the values themselves have been shown not to depend upon success, nor upon immunity from the worst of tragic suffering and disaster.

Comedies have been of two main kinds, or cross-bred from the two. In critical comedies the governing aim is to bring out the absurdity or irrationality of follies and abuses, and make us laugh at them. Shakespeare's comedies often do this, but most of them belong primarily to the other kind - romantic comedy. Part of the romantic appeal is to our liking for suspense; they are dramas of averted threat, beginning in trouble and ending in joy. They appeal to the romantic senses of adventure and of wonder,