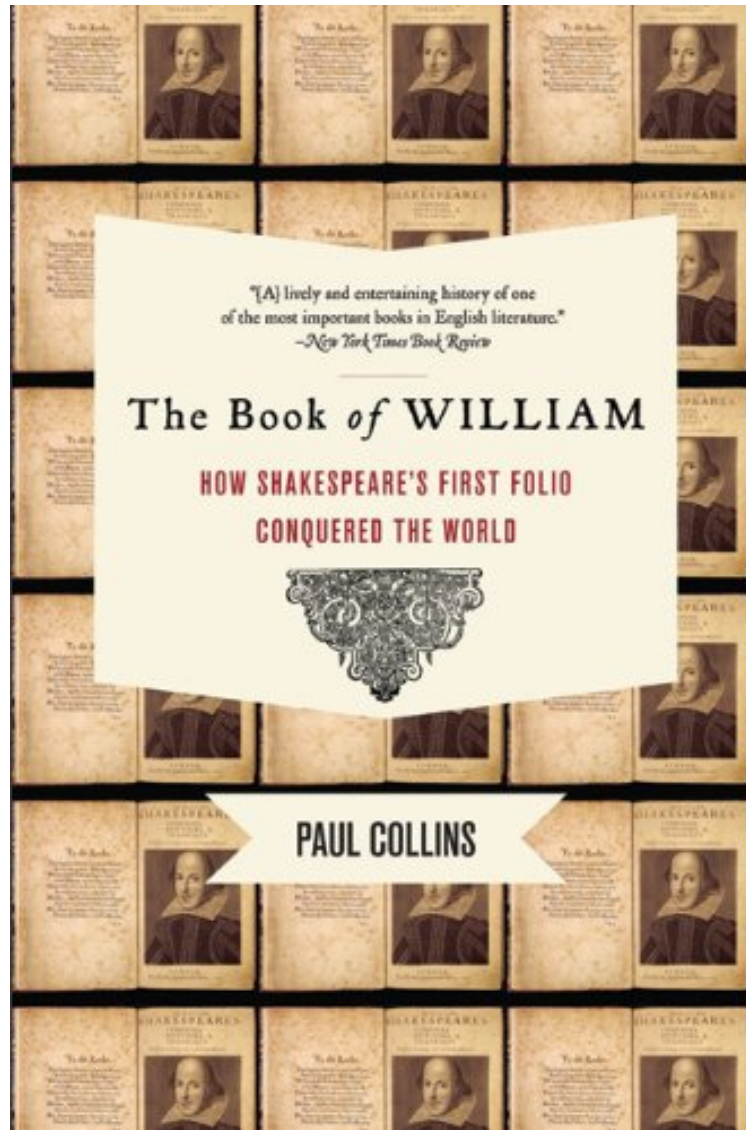


(Download free ebook) The Book of William: How Shakespeare's First Folio Conquered the World

# The Book of William: How Shakespeare's First Folio Conquered the World

*Paul Collins*

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**Paul Collins : The Book of William: How Shakespeare's First Folio Conquered the World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Book of William: How Shakespeare's First Folio Conquered the World:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A Reader's DelightBy John D. CofieldYou don't have to be a Shakespeare expert to enjoy this fine new work by Paul Collins. This informal and highly engaging study of the First

Folio is wide ranging, roaming from London auction houses to Tokyo theaters, but wherever it goes its amusing and intriguing. The First Folio was produced in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, by men who had known and acted with him. Although Shakespeare was not to be universally recognized as "England's greatest playwright" until more than a century later, the First Folio sold well and was followed by later reprintings, with additions and subtractions, over the next few decades. As with everything Paul Collins writes, he provides a somewhat discursive but extremely entertaining story. I enjoyed reading about the efforts being made to trace the original First Folios, and was amazed to discover that so many of them are still in existence with proven paper trails. (On a personal note, I was thrilled to see that one of my own ancestors, Sir Edward Dering, was one of the first purchasers of not one but two First Folios!) I also liked the many "subplots" in the story, particularly the chapters on Samuel Johnson and his edition of the plays. It was also fascinating to read about Shakespeare's role in helping Japan modernize during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and to learn that the Japanese still have high regard for the Bard. Finally, I was filled anew with admiration for the painstaking work of editors who have analyzed every line of the First Folios in the ongoing effort to present the plays as Shakespeare intended. I will keep *The Book of William* in my "hard to classify but cherished" section of my library, and I'm sure most others who read it will do the same.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Misleading Title, Though Still A Good Read  
By Randy Kadish  
I found the book's title somewhat misleading. I was expecting much of *The Book of William* to be about how, during the past four centuries, the First Folio greatly affected generation after generation, and changed the way we see the world as well as the way we read literature. After all, the rest of the book's title read: *How Shakespeare's First Folio Conquered the World*. Instead, the first half of this book is an easy-to-read history about the publishing of different editions of Shakespeare's plays from 1623 to the late 18th Century. The second half of the book is about the fate of some of the First Folios and how they were acquired. Finally, Mr. Collins describes his visits to the two libraries holding the largest number of Folios: the Folger Library in Washington D.C. and the Meisei Library in Japan. and describes the condition of several Folios, and how they were treated or mistreated over the years. One of the things that makes this book so enjoyable is the way Mr. Collins brings many characters to life, two of whom are Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson. In the pages of this book, we are often reminded that book publishing and collecting is, in the end, more about interesting people than about anything else. And so I enjoyed learning about the world of antiquarian books. *The Book of William* fueled my appetite to learn even more about the First Folio - how it was printed and what happened to many of the copies - so I was left with the feeling I wanted to know even more. Therefore, I wonder: Did Mr. Collins leave a lot of the story out? I can't answer the question. I am, however, grateful I read this book, though I think illustrations and photographs would have improved it. If you like Shakespeare and/or have an interest in book collecting you'll love this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By G. Price  
Well written and a great deal of planning went into writing this history.

*Shakespeare's First Folio*, the first complete collection of his plays, was almost never printed. Its eventual publication went practically unnoticed, and many of the original 750 copies were gone before the turn of the eighteenth century. But a hundred years later the plays were rediscovered, beginning the long, surprising process that secured Shakespeare's legacy. Paul Collins follows this book's journey through the centuries, as it lies undiscovered for decades, burns, sinks, is bought and sold, and ultimately becomes untouchable.

From Publishers Weekly  
Starred . Undoubtedly, the Bard himself would be amused to learn all about the fate of the book compiled after his death by fellow actors and colleagues John Heminge and Henry Condell. It was, a collector said recently, the most important secular work of all time.

• Collins (Sixpence House), an English professor and NPR regular, is passionate, knowledgeable and sassy in bringing this story to glorious life. Collins divides his work into five acts, leading his reader on a whirlwind trip through the Four Folios eventually printed, into feuds between Alexander Pope and Lewis Theobald and to the opportunistic reach of a financially desperate Dr. Johnson. Over the next 200 years, there are the stories of Henry Clay Folger as well as an ingenious collating machine and related technologies for today's textual scholars. Collins's remarkable voyage through time and across the globe leads to Japan, where the most obsessive collectors of Sheikusupia reside. This is for anyone with an interest in how Shakespeare has come down to us, the nature of the book business, the art of editing and the evolution of Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "[A] lively and entertaining history of one of the most important books in English literature." —New York Times Book