



Something Rich and Strange: a Treasury of Shakespeare's Verse

Books Reviewed:

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News & Choice:

off

Media type:

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This is a selection of Shakespeare's verse for eleven-year-olds and above, richly decorated with full colour illustrations. The extracts, mainly from the plays but including a few sonnets, are unobtrusively grouped, not only to reveal the beauty of his language and imagery but to explore some of his preoccupations: whether it is the folly of youth, love, political rivalry, the cares of state or the fall of kingdoms. It is so craftily orchestrated, from single lines, to couplets, to songs, to some of the great speeches, and so well in tune with the original works, that it seems a perfect distillation.

If the collection lacks anything, it is the rough and tumble playing to the crowd side of the bard. Chichester Clark's illustrations are beautiful. But they are often contained within cameo frames, and, even in the most violent or tender scenes, her characters look past one another and away from the reader, distancing us from their passion and maintaining the atmosphere of awed contemplation suggested by the selection's title. So this may not be the book to give to cynical young teenagers to convince them that Shakespeare has something to say to them.

Running Order:

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