



Shakespeare Is Hard, But So Is Life: A Radical Guide to Shakespearean Tragedy

By Fintan O'Toole

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Is Hamlet really mad or is the world mad? Is Othello merely gullible or is there something about his place in society that makes him vulnerable? Why can there be no happy ending to *King Lear*? In this radical approach to Shakespearean tragedy, Fintan O'Toole, Ireland's foremost theater critic, shows how Shakespeare's plays have been made unintelligible to modern students. O'Toole explains that the plays have been filtered through a series of ideas that have less to do with what Shakespeare actually wrote than with Victorian interpretations of the plots and characters. O'Toole challenges the traditional approach to the study of four key tragedies—*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*—and provides an entertaining appreciation of the dramatic qualities of each. This is a provocative and accessible guide for students, teachers, and anyone interested in gaining a fresh insight into the world's greatest playwright.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Fintan O'Toole was born in Dublin in 1958. He has been a columnist and critic with the Irish Times since 1988 and is drama critic of the Daily News in New York. His books include *A Traitor's Kiss: The Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, also published by Granta Books.

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