

The Framing Text in Early Modern English Drama: A Comprehensive Guide



The Framing Text in Early Modern English Drama: 'Whining' Prologues and 'Armed' Epilogues (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama) by Brian W. Schneider

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English
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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
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Screen Reader : Supported



The framing text is an important part of early modern English drama. It is the text that surrounds the main action of the play and provides context for the audience. The framing text can include the title page, prologue, epilogue, and other paratexts.

The framing text can serve a variety of purposes. It can provide information about the play, such as its setting, characters, and plot. It can also set the tone for the play and create a particular atmosphere. The framing text can also be used to address the audience directly and to comment on the play.

Types of Framing Text

There are many different types of framing text in early modern English drama. Some of the most common include:

- **Title page:** The title page is the first page of the play and it typically includes the title of the play, the author's name, and the date of publication. The title page can also include a woodcut or other illustration that provides a visual representation of the play.
- **Prologue:** The prologue is a speech that is delivered before the main action of the play begins. The prologue can introduce the characters, setting, and plot of the play. It can also set the tone for the play and create a particular atmosphere.
- **Epilogue:** The epilogue is a speech that is delivered after the main action of the play has ended. The epilogue can wrap up the play and provide a moral or lesson. It can also address the audience directly and comment on the play.
- **Chorus:** The chorus is a group of actors who comment on the action of the play. The chorus can provide information about the characters, setting, and plot. It can also set the tone for the play and create a particular atmosphere.

The Role of the Framing Text

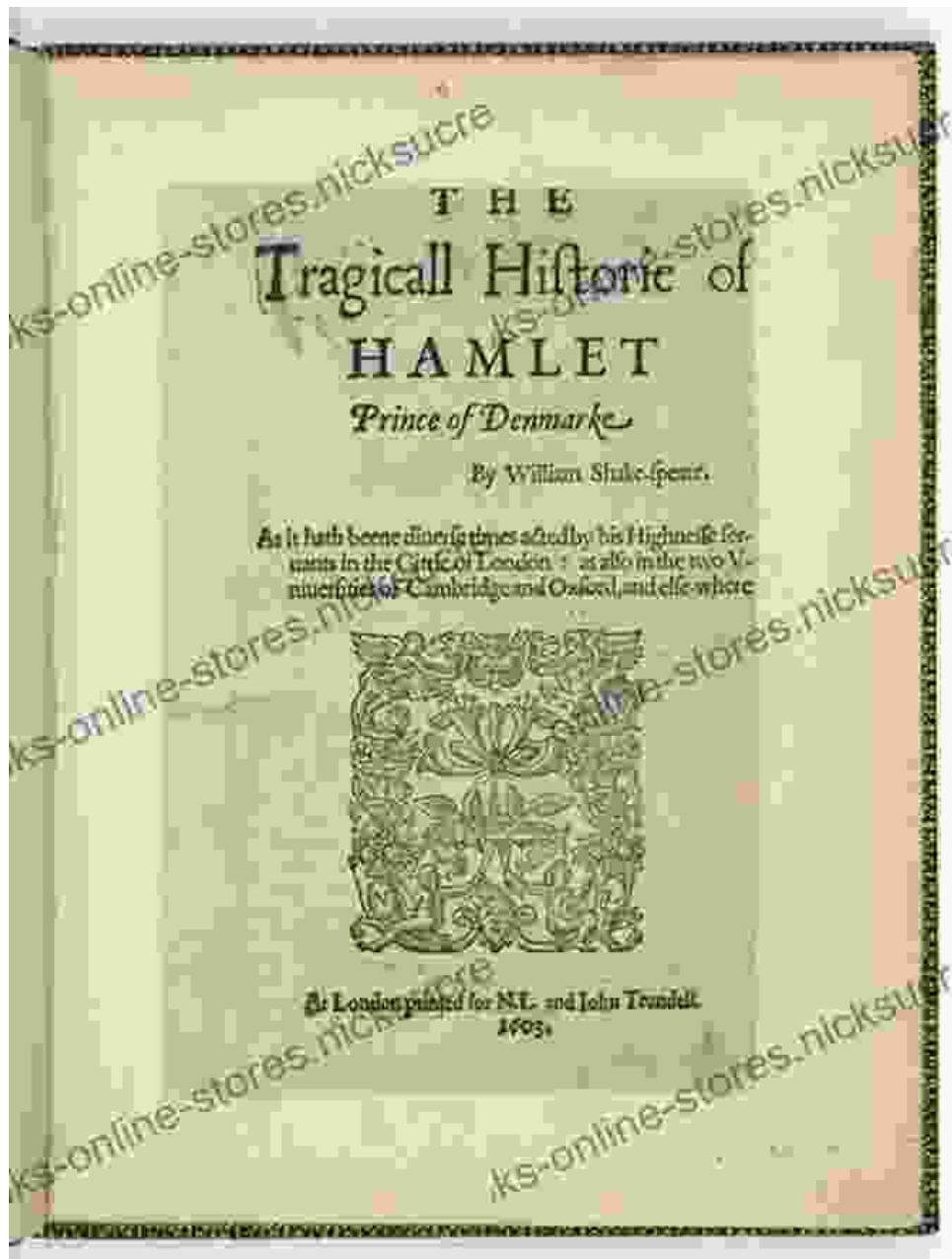
The framing text plays an important role in shaping the audience's experience of the play. It can provide information about the play, set the tone, and create a particular atmosphere. The framing text can also be used to address the audience directly and to comment on the play.

The framing text is an essential part of early modern English drama. It provides context for the audience and helps to shape their experience of the play.

Examples of Framing Text in Early Modern English Drama

Here are some examples of framing text in early modern English drama:

- Title page of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603):



- Prologue to Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1594):

Not marching now in fields of Thrasimene, Where Mars did mate the Carthaginians; Nor sporting in the dalliance of love, In courts of kings where state is overturn'd; Nor in the pomp of proud audacious deeds, Intends our Muse to vaunt his heavenly verse: Only this, gentlemen, we must perform The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad.

- **Epilogue to Jonson's *Volpone* (1606):**

The seasoning of a play is the applause; Now, though the Fox be punish'd by the laws, He yet doth hope there is no suff'ring due, For any fact which he hath done 'gainst you. If there be any, that will take his part, May they go fruitful from such a wife as Mart; Let but the ladies, and the gentlemen, His friends in Court, and his officious friends Throughout the city, let these be his bail, His life is safe, and he shall never fail.

- **Chorus in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599):**

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend The brightest heaven of invention, A kingdom for a stage, princes to act And monarchs to behold the swelling scene! Then should the warlike Harry, like himself, Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels, Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire Crouch for employment.

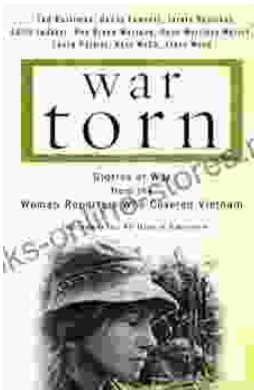
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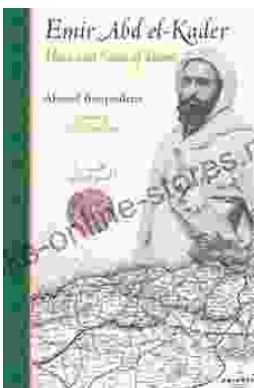
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