



# William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace

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**O Threepio, Threepio, wherefore art thou, Threepio?**

Join us, good gentles, for a merry reimagining of *Star Wars*: Episode I as only Shakespeare could have written it. The entire saga starts here, with a thrilling tale featuring a disguised queen, a young hero, and two fearless knights facing a hidden, vengeful enemy.

'Tis a true Shakespearean drama, filled with sword fights, soliloquies, and doomed romance... all in glorious iambic pentameter and coupled with twenty gorgeous Elizabethan illustrations. Hold onto your mini-chlorians: The play's the thing, wherein you'll catch the rise of Anakin!

## William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace Details

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Author : Ian Doescher

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## From Reader Review William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace for online ebook

### Abby says

These books never fail to tickle me. Every time I pick one up, I expect a Shakespearean version of the classic films. However, Doescher puts his own twist on the stories. I particularly like how he made Jar Jar an intelligent creature, who is simply misunderstood. What? A likable Jar Jar? I know, I'm in shock too.

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### Daniel says

Pa nastavlja se u istom stlu, mada imam osecaj da je pisanje jace ili mi se to cini posto je uzeo pricu najgoreg filma i digao je na znacajno veci nivo. Plus JAr Jar je postao daleko ozbiljniji igrac tako da idemo dalje.

Kada vidim da su ostale jos samo dve knjigenekako me bude zao. Valjda ce obraditi i najnoviji film :)

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### Caidyn (SEMI-HIATUS; BW Reviews; he/him/his) says

Okay, so I went into this with the plan of doing a serious review. You know, examining lines, plot, characters, and all that good stuff. An actual review.

About halfway through, I realized there was no way that would happen. It was too funny and brought up too many memories for me to actually make this a review that you got something out of.

I was three when this movie came out. May 1999. April was my birthday, so I was literally just three. So, I obviously didn't see this in theaters. (Although, part of me does remember seeing this in theaters. Maybe one of those special things where theaters play the first movie in a series before the next one.) But, I was little when this came out. I remember the first time watching it, I loved Amidala and didn't care for anyone else. The whole handmaiden/queen thing really confused me for a while, until I got old enough to actually understand what was going on. Still, I'd have to say that this is my least favorite Star Wars film.

As a kid, I distinctly remember owning a game for this movie. Like, a computer game. Not the sort you played on the internet, but an actual disk I stuck into the computer. A huge computer, too. Not a laptop. So, this was probably early 2000s that this was going on. I'd probably place it roughly about 2001-2002, and on. I loved the game. When you got to the end, it was the huge parade and they played the music from the movie's end with the big party. Loved that stuff, too.

See why I knew I couldn't write a serious review of this book? But, let's get to the highlights.

- Yoda speaks only in haikus.
- Jar Jar is not what he seems.
- Huge soliloquies from R2-D2. (Another fun fact: When I was little, I'd run around after watching Star Wars making R2-D2 noises. Specifically, the really loud "WOW!" noise he makes. I loved scaring my mom with it and the dogs.)
- Padme is beast. Always will be. Natalie Portman, you have my heart. Probably my first big crush on an

actress.

Also, read the afterward. It adds some explanations of things I didn't pick up on while reading it, but definitely add a bit of heart to the book.

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### Jessamyn Leigh says

These mashups of two of my favorite things never disappoint. Highlights of this one include using asides to reveal Jar Jar as secretly intelligent but playing dumb to unite the Naboo and the Gungans, and meta references to Liam Neeson and Samuel L. Jackson's other movies. The already good dialogue (Palpatine) becomes glorious, the painful (Lil Anakin) becomes bearable.

And can we talk about the illustrations?! I'm already a huge fan of The Phantom Menace's production design and it married so well with Elizabethan styles. Brb drooling over that cover art forever.

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### David says

Was die inneren Monologe R2-D2s in den anderen drei Büchern waren, ist hier Jar Jar Binks, der uns allen was vorgemacht hat. Die Schlacht kommt zum Glück nur kurz vor, das Podracing ist gut umgesetzt und Doescher hat wieder viele kleine Details eingebaut. Yoda spricht in Haiku, in allen Mace Windu-Dialogen ist (angeblich) ein Filmtitel eines Films mit Samuel L. Jackson versteckt... Doescher gehen die Ideen nicht aus und ich bin froh, dass er sich doch noch entschieden hat, die drei neuen Filme zu vershakespearen.

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### Amanda says

This was like reading the movie's script, but done up in faux-Shakespearean style. It gets a bit cheesy using famous lines from Shakespeare's plays (like "Et tu, Brute?"), but otherwise does an admirable job of bringing that sort of language to the Star Wars plot. Jar Jar Binks is retold as a gifted philosopher posing as a nitwit due to Qui-Gon's prejudices. R2-D2 also speaks proper English in his asides, as well. Yoda speaks in haiku, which is also pretty neat. I had fun reading this and remembering the movie I'm fond of, but I won't be reading any more Shakespeare/Star Wars mash ups.

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### Debby says

#### 4 stars

I embarked on this quirky little series when I thought it would only be the original Star Wars series, so I was a bit surprised to hear about *William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace*. You would think that after three books, the novelty of the Shakespearification of Star Wars might wear off - but no! I enjoyed *The Phantom of Menace* immensely.

I'll be upfront with you and say that of all the Star Wars movies, The Phantom Menace is my *least* favorite. This is the case for many fans, I believe, because the story's weaker and - well - Jar Jar Binks happened. But

I might venture to say that *William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace* is my favorite of Ian Doescher's retellings so far. I KNOW. I'm just as surprised as you are. While in essence the story lacks some of the elements that made the original trilogy so great (Han Solo, HanxLeia, Darth Vader, Han Soloooooo), Doescher's really hit his stride in this one.

First off, I felt the writing has gotten so much stronger. It's immediately noticeable that Doescher's gotten even more comfortable with Shakespearian English and has adopted more and more of his techniques. In the previous books something might have felt a bit clunky a time or two, but I honestly didn't notice it anymore. Doescher's writing is faithful to both Shakespeare and the Star Wars films and there are so many hilarious Easter eggs - from modified Shakespeare quotes to modified classic film quotes. It's so clever and witty and enjoyable.

Doescher also takes some risks in *The Phantom of Menace* - truly reinterpreting the original film and making modifications here and there to show his interpretation while also staying faithful to original Shakespeare storytelling norms. The biggest of these changes, obviously, would be Jar Jar Binks's role. Jar Jar is famously hated as being annoying and stupid - generally getting in the way of the other characters. Doescher transforms his character as one who is actually keenly aware of what is happening around him, who *plays* a stupid role to get others to respond in the ways he desires. It's daring. Not all readers will agree. But I liked it quite a lot. Jar Jar does come across as stupid in the films, but he does help the group sometimes, in important ways, though that might be brushed off as coincidence more often than not. But Doescher gives this character a lot more depth that I do find believable and I think makes the story as a whole much stronger.

Now, there are a few weaker points in this book - namely that there are so many characters that it's hard to keep track of at times. Of course, there is the cast list at the beginning, but I was too lazy to keep flipping back and forth. But I really enjoyed this book, perhaps even surprising myself by how much. The thing is, while the prequel trilogy gets a lot of shit from hardcore Star Wars fans, I will always have a special place for it in my heart because of the super important character arc that Anakin has. In *The Phantom of Menace* there is ample foreshadowing for how this will shape up in the remaining two books, and I can't wait for it. I know Doescher can add so much depth to these characters, so I trust the rest of the series to be amazing.

### ***Summing Up:***

With much stronger writing and interesting creative liberties, Doescher has a hit in *William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace*. Honestly, when I started reading this series, I thought it would be amusing but not that remarkable. Now I'm just in full enjoyment and awe of the writing and this unique take on a much loved saga.

### ***GIF it to me straight!***

### ***Recommended To:***

All Star Wars fans (provided Shakespeare doesn't scare them off).

*\*A finished copy was provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the contents of the review.*

## Natália says

The Phantom Menace is that movie that I honestly pretend that never happened in our lives, since it doesn't bring much to connect with the other movies. In the case of this book it was better, but I still were pretty bored at some parts.

Thank God that the author always makes it funnier and add things that doesn't sound out of context.

Jar Jar Binks (which is a bit different and cooler in this book) is still a very annoying character, and it's terrible to think that he has more lines and depth than Darth Maul...

(how badass)

Qui-Gon is another character that it was promising and I think they wasted a great opportunity to make a very VERY cool movie if they had given more background for him, and of course, having Anakin as a main character (he's f\*\*\*ing Darth Vader, c'mon).

The movie is just a mess of nothings, so it's kind hard for me to give it more than 3 stars for its book. Anyways, Ian Doescher's books are still awesome and clever and oh yes, quite funny ?

Ps: In case u love this movie, just don't take it personally. It's just my opinion :)

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## Matt says

Ian Doescher takes on the task of bringing the Star Wars prequels to the Elizabethan stage in "William Shakespeare's The Phantom of Menace" to fantastic results that will be jarring to any of those who dislike the film. Given the first prequel's notorious reputation amongst the Star Wars fandom, Doescher gives the maligned film a magnificent theatrical presentation that would make any hardcore fan happy.

The biggest issue Doescher had to deal with was obviously Jar Jar Binks, who instead of being just a vacant-minded fool is instead a radical-who-plays-the-fool to help united the Gungans with the Naboo. As one reads, you notice the subtlety that Doescher gives to Jar Jar as the acting fool in front of everyone else and his true political radical personality in soliloquies and asides. The other issue that Doescher dealt with was the 10-minute podrace, his answer was by following Shakespeare's led in having Padme and Jar Jar act as messengers relating the action of the race to Qui-Gon and Shmi and those the audience. Once Doescher had dealt with these two big issues the rest of "The Phantom of Menace" was like his previous three Star Wars Shakespearean adaptations, keep true to the film while adding background for characters in soliloquies and asides. Doescher even has fun with Qui-Gon and Mace Windu's dialogues by sprinkling references to Liam Neeson and Samuel L. Jackson's other film roles but still staying true to the scene in which they are in.

Overall "The Phantom of Menace" is a wonderful adaptation and is a credit to Ian Doescher's imaginative writing that makes it feel better than its film inspiration. Whether or not you like The Phantom Menace, if you like Doescher's Shakespearean adaptations do not hesitate to read this one because you will enjoy it.

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## Hayley says

This book makes my English major's heart so happy. There is plenty of literary cleverness, both with nods to Shakespeare and to other elements of pop culture (Qui-Gon's speech to Darth Maul right before they fight is my personal favorite). This book/play also offers an interesting take on Jar Jar Binks - he is merely playing the fool in order to manipulate the other characters into taking the path he desires. I thoroughly enjoyed this and look forward to reading the others in the series!

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## Kayla says

I forgot how much I love this series! In fact I don't even have a good reason as to why it took me this long to finally pick it back up. Even though I dislike these movies, Ian Doescher worked his magic and made me find a reason to love them. He might have even given me a few reasons to enjoy JarJar, just a few. Though, I still find C3PO annoying not matter in what form he's written.

Hats off to Ian Doescher as well. Not only for how many times he had to watch this movie, but for how amazing this book flowed. Writing in iambic pentameter is hard enough, but having to do while describing a podrace and droid battle to the point they have to make sense. Amazing!

Personally I felt the book flowed well and had great pacing. While this was supposed to be a bus book, it quickly became a while I was cooking, not into this show, and right before bed book. Devoured faster than I do most books, and I've already downloaded the next book in this series. Not because I enjoy the prequels, but because I can't wait to see how Ian Doescher writes angsty Skywalker.

A lot of work went into this book and it shows. Never once did the theme of the book drop. The characters were as true to themselves as I remember them being. Though I have to admit it's been so long since I've seen this movie I had to go back and check to see if things really happened. I forgot Padme had a body double. I forgot about how the movie even opened up, and I also forgot that Skywalker has always crush on Padme.

Also, I loved famous moments of Shakespeare's work appeared throughout the story. Which as a lover of most of Shakespeare's work, I enjoyed. And, got a few weird looks on the bus when I laughed. Which is fine, this book is totally worth the odd looks. It might have even convinced me to re-watch the movies. Maybe.

But, I'm definitely picking this series back up and getting caught up in time to catch the next book in the series, Jedi the Last.

Buy, Borrow, or Skip: Personally I borrowed this one from local library, but anything that gets you to pick up this series is a plus. It's hilarious and so well put together.

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## Sesana says

Compared to the original movies, the prequels are going to be a bit more of a challenge to Shakespeareify. Not because the basic plots are bad, but because the dialog is atrocious. I'm doing my damndest to come up with a solidly quotable line from the prequels and coming up blank. But believe me, I can come up with dozens of cringingly awful ones. Doescher, I think, does his best, but this is kind of a weak movie to adapt.

He helps his cause by applying his own interpretation to JarJar: he's only playing the fool to try and help his goal of achieving unity between Naboo's Gungan and human populations. And it generally works, but there's just not much helping this character. More than anything, this book reminds me that, with a good screenwriter, the prequels would have been much, much better movies.

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### **Jordan Lahn says**

Another wonderful adventure through this strange hybrid universe merging Star Wars with Shakespeare. Once again, the cleverness with which Ian Doescher weaves Shakespeare's trademark wit and wordplay into familiar dialogue is incredible, and I frequently laughed out loud at certain turns of phrase. I wish I'd been able to enjoy this in audio form the way I did the first 3, but it was still a very enjoyable reading experience. Already pre-ordered the next two!

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### **Tony Laplume says**

Here's an admission to kick things off: I'm one of those odd fans of Star Wars who grew up with the classic trilogy and liked the prequels anyway. Yes, including *The Phantom Menace*. And Jar Jar Binks...

This might be the only Shakespeare Star Wars that I read, not because I was not impressed with *Phantom of Menace* (clearly I was, so the stars indicate; no war necessary here), but because, I think, this is in fact the ideal adaptation to sample, if sample is all you end up doing.

Which is also brilliant. (Although I'd caution Quirk not to do what it did after the likewise brilliant *Pride & Prejudice & Zombies*, which was to flood the market with other such efforts, possibly none of which were nearly as inspired.)

Getting back to Jar Jar, he's easily the biggest revelation in Doescher's deft hands. Damned as a buffoon by fans, Binks is turned into the real phantom of this opera as the only character with extensive awareness as to what's really going on, including inside his own head. Between this and a recent theory that Binks might actually have secretly been the eponymous menace, it's a good time to revisit this particular movie all around.

The only real complaint I have is when Doescher explains in an afterword that he slipped a few slide nods for Samuel L. Jackson fans into Mace Windu's dialogue, which amount to name-checking some of his movies. (No *Pulp Fiction* references, alas.) Of greater interest for readers will be deciphering the nods to Shakespeare, most of which are lost to those who aren't as well-versed with the Bard as they are Star Wars, likely.

Whether you like *Phantom Menace* already or hate it with a passion, and intend to read this only for complete sake, I think you'll be pleasantly surprised. Don't pin the result on a lack of George Lucas, because it's still his story and dialogue (which itself was blamed for half the mess). Just a little altered. Forsooth!

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### **Liz says**

## Short Review

I've reviewed Ian Doescher's William Shakespeare's Star Wars original series, which I thoroughly enjoyed overall. *The Phantom of Menace* was good, but it had a lot of missed opportunities. For one, whole scenes were deleted (the funeral of Qui-Gon Jinn), which could have had some lovely asides from Anakin and Obi-Wan both.

I know a lot of people detest Jar-Jar Binks, but what Ian Doescher did with his character was to give him some depth. I liked this quite a bit. The pacing was uneven in this book, compared to the others (but a lot of it is because of the material it was based on).

I still loved the illustrations, but the last illustration was very telling with the way Palpatine, Anakin, and Obi-Wan were drawn. I enjoyed this start of the prequel series, but it wasn't as good as I had hoped.

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## Natalie says

Hilarious! I'm not sure what else I can say. Ian Doescher does an amazing job taking the stories we all know and love yet putting a new spin on them.

In this one for example, I loved Jar Jar. I really like the way his character was handled and developed. I only got one of the Samuel L Jackson references but it was still fun to look for them.

I don't know how this guy does it. He's brilliant. Even the podrace worked as part of the play.

Oh and I will always and forever love Artoo. Qui-Gon's death scene was really witty too. Well, really the whole thing is witty and wonderful and....

Wait a minute. Why are you reading my review???? You should be reading this book!

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## Blamp Head says

O, wherefore art thou but so little pleased?  
Because thou read not Phantom of Menace,  
Alack! But this be but the fourth of four  
So far released in this most grand old lot.

Behold! Mister Binks, he is no one's fool.  
'Ere thou too harshly judge his wretched soul,  
In this iambic pentameter play,  
Binks plays his cards with perfect aptitude.

O, wert thou not but wasting thy short time,  
Thou wouldst mayhap hath read yet Anakin's  
A-rising out from podraced slavery  
To clench his place in the wise Jedi ranks.

And noble Qui Gon, fie! That thou shouldst die  
So early, saga-wise. And Gungans fight,  
Dear Padme rules, while Palpatine doth plot,  
And Maul, well, thou art **still** a weakling true.

Dost thou sit? Wherefore read thou not the book?  
O, but a holy crap! I tire early.  
Iambic pentameter: thou art hard.

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### **Zach says**

Once again, these books are amazing. I even liked Jar Jar how he is depicted here.

Also loved the Liam Neeson reference towards the end.

Love this series, highly recommend.

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### **Krystle says**

3.5 stars.

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### **Jessica says**

\*I received this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review\*

I was very surprised by this book! It's no secret that I love Star Wars, but when I first heard of this book I thought the author had changed the story a bunch... And was just a little skeptical. I put it off, but recently watched the newest Star Wars, the Force Awakens, and decided to pick these up. I was super pleased to realize that not that much from the original story was changed! I loved how the author changed the dialogue however and I thought he did a fantastic job! I could hardly tell it wasn't Shakespeare himself writing! Haha I also enjoyed Jar Jar Binks' character. First off, NO I don't hate him like the rest of the world. But this author really took a unique spin on his story and made him much more aware of what was going on around him. I really liked this change! I'm definitely going to pick up the rest of these!

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