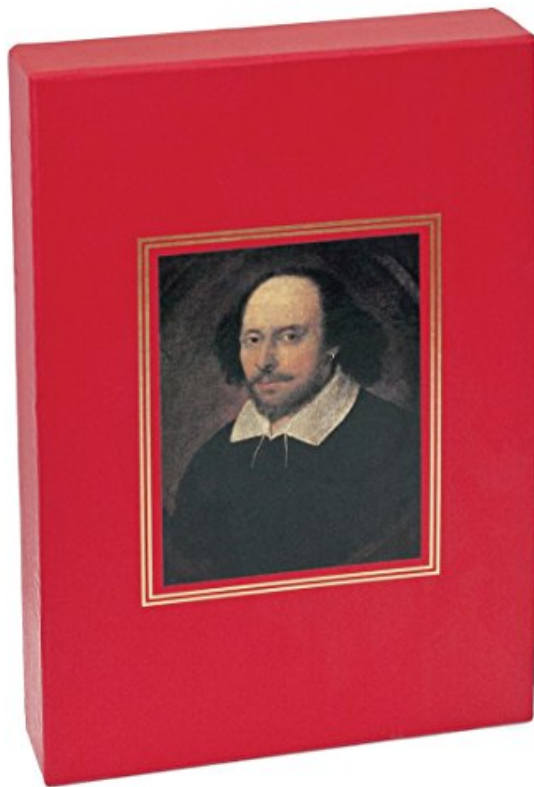
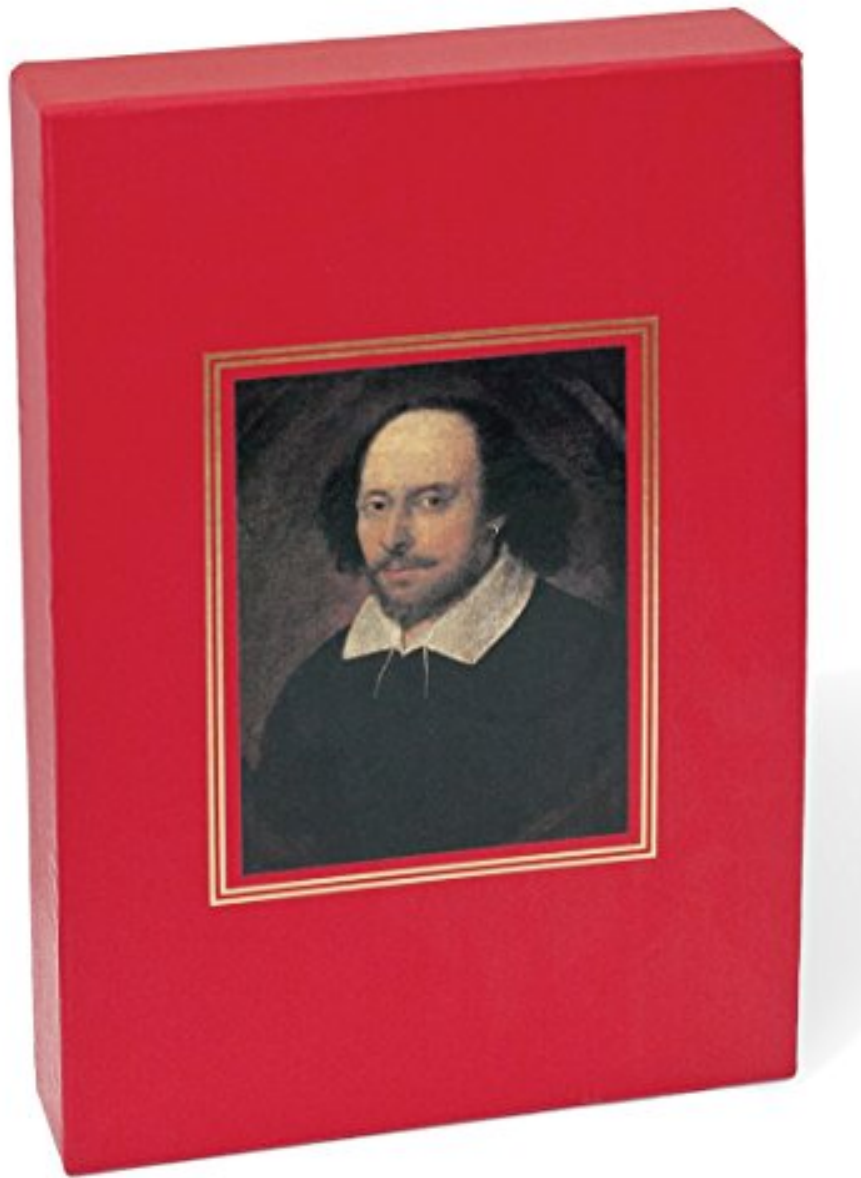


# **THE FIRST FOLIO OF SHAKESPEARE: THE NORTON FACSIMILE BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**



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## Amazon.com Review

Charlton Hinman's facsimile of Shakespeare's First Folio was a colossal achievement when it was first published in 1968, and its reputation is further enhanced by this beautiful second edition. Looking for a way to provide scholars with a reliable version of Shakespeare's text, Hinman invented a device that sped up the collation process, allowing him to compare 82 of the surviving copies of the Folio and bring to light features of Shakespeare's work that have been--and continue to be--edited out of most modern editions. A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, contains what are known as false starts, fragments of earlier versions of certain speeches. These traces of the composition process survive only because the printers, working directly from Shakespeare's handwritten copy, were not given a chance to thoroughly proofread their work. Though they would make crucial changes during the printing process, it was too wasteful to throw away pages that were already printed. Thus, when they went to bind the Folios, each book contained a fascinating patchwork of corrected and uncorrected copy.

Also hidden beneath the familiar text of the plays is a portrait of the printers who created the book. Their names remain unknown, but Professor Hinman was able to track individuals' work by examining their spelling habits. Their story is as important to this book as the works of literature that it contains. The many errors the printers introduced into the text of Shakespeare's work still provide fertile ground for theatrical and academic debate. Hamlet, for example, wishes that his "too, too solid flesh would melt."--or is it his "sullied" flesh, or perhaps his "sallied" flesh? Which is Shakespeare, and which is an error? We cannot blame the printers; they spent long hours setting page after page of tiny type, working in a cramped space that smelled strongly of the stale urine they used to soften the inking pads. It is ironic that the most revered symbol of English high culture owes its existence--in part, at least--to the productive bladders of a handful of pressmen. This book gives these men their due, demonstrating the extent to which Shakespeare's plays were the work not just of one man but of a whole society.

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When it was published in 1968, The Norton Facsimile set a new standard for scholarly accuracy. It was the first facsimile in which every page had been selected from a large number of copies in an attempt to find a clean, clear example with minimal show-through. Even more important, it offered the latest, most corrected state of pages known to vary from copy to copy because of correction at press. Finally, it introduced a standard system of reference, "through line numbering," based on the lines printed in the 1623 edition rather than on the acts, scenes, and lines of a modern edition. These improvements, the meticulous work of the great Folio scholar Charlton Hinman made possible by the extensive Folger Library Collection, established The Norton Facsimile as an indispensable volume for book collectors and serious readers of Shakespeare.

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Here's What the First Folio Is - and Isn't!

By Anne P. Mitchell

If you are not familiar with what the First Folio is, the First Folio is considered to be the very first published collection of Shakespeare's plays. It was put together by John Heminges and Henry Condell (colleagues of Shakespeare) back in 1623. It is believed that 750 copies of the First Folio were published back in 1623; there are 234 copies known to exist today. The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. has 82 of them.

Let me repeat: the first folio was put together and published in \*1623\*. So, no scholarly annotations, no footnotes, no modernized English. That means that any facsimile of the First Folio will, by definition, be in the language of the day, the style of the day, etc.. This is 'Olde English'. (If you want to see what it looks like inside, while this edition of the First Folio doesn't have the "Look Inside" option, this newer edition does: The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile.)

Anyways, this First Folio facsimile is awesome, and a great gift for any lover of Shakespeare, or of classic literature generally. I gave one to the man I was dating last year, who is a serious classics scholar, and he loved it!

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Simply awesome

By Lynn

I researched this book and a few others like it before purchasing the Norton Facsimile. Bear in mind that I am not a Shakespeare scholar and cannot speak to details that an expert may notice; I had to educate myself about how a facsimile

is different from a textbook, the contents, the purpose, the compilation, editing, and last but not least, the cost. From this lay person's point of view, the Norton Facisimile hit high marks on all points. I bought this book as a gift; judging from the

recipient's delight, I made the right choice (he didn't ask specifically for the book). The First Folio is a sumptuous volume and will become a dearly loved permanent part of their library. The cost is reasonable and well worth the expense.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Amazing edition!

By bassman\_mark

I love this book. I gave the first one I owned as a gift (long story), and a decade later I finally got around to buying another one. I much prefer this edition to the second edition, which has slicker paper and a different sleeve. I agree with the statements of many here about possible scholarly limitations of this edition, but I am not a scholar. I was an Equity actor (now an instructor of communications and theatre), and before each role I consulted four books: this facsimile, the Norton Oxford edition, Schmidt's Lexicon, and Harold Bloom's Shakespeare, the Invention of the Human. I believe this to be indispensable to the actor, but I also use it in my classes as an example of how acting cues were not just written into the language but also into the text itself. Yes, it's expensive, but it is an amazing piece of work and an example of excellent craftsmanship.

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