

Ophelia

By Lisa Klein

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In this reimagining of Shakespeare's tragedy, Ophelia must choose between her love for Hamlet and her own life. In a surprising twist, she devises a plan to escape from Elsinore forever . . . with one very dangerous secret. Sharp and literary, dark and romantic, this dramatic story holds readers in its grip until the final, heartrending scene.

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Ophelia By Lisa Klein Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
In her impressive first novel, Klein retells *Hamlet*, expanding on the romance between its hero and Ophelia, who narrates this version. Keeping true to the framework of the play, the heroine, now 16, reports the tragic events in the troubled Elsinore castle. When she first speaks to Hamlet, Ophelia is a 10-year-old ragged tomboy tagging along after her brother, Laertes. A year later, Ophelia is accepted into Queen Gertrude's court ("Becoming a lady, I learned, was not easy"), and she grows into a beautiful, rather outspoken young woman with an interest in herbs. Her quick wit attracts the prince's attention, and their Shakespearean-style banter will delight readers. Hamlet and Ophelia secretly become husband and wife, and on their wedding night, the ghost of Hamlet's father appears at the castle; Horatio, at the stroke of midnight, barges into the newlyweds' bedroom calling, "To the ramparts, Hamlet. It comes!" Readers familiar with the play will know that Hamlet's feigned madness to seek revenge eventually proves to be his undoing. As things rage out of control, Ophelia fears for her own safety ("My life... is worth no more than a beast's"). Klein smoothly weaves in lines from the play and keeps her characterizations true to the playwright's, even as she rounds out the back story. Teens need not be familiar with Shakespeare's original to enjoy this fresh take—with the added romance and a strong heroine at its center. Ages 12-up. *(Nov.)*
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From School Library Journal
Grade 8 Up—Using Hamlet as the basis for her tale, Klein relates the familiar events from the play, with Ophelia as the focal point. Thus, readers see the social-climbing Polonius as a negligent father, the queenly Gertrude as a concerned and observant mentor, the bewildered Hamlet as a fervent lover, and Horatio as a loyal friend who loves Ophelia from afar. But the novel goes beyond the life of the play for, instead of dying, Ophelia secretly weds Hamlet, escapes Elsinore (taking refuge in a convent in France), bears Hamlet's son, and reunites romantically with Horatio to bring the story full circle. Easy to follow and moving at a rapid pace, the story introduces new characters who add depth to the tale. Klein sets the story in the Elizabethan era rather than in the medieval time frame of the original play; her detail-rich text conveys considerable information about courtly life, intrigue, and the societal mores of the times. She includes adapted versions of some of Shakespeare's best-known lines to keep the flavor of the Bard's work; however, the changes in the language may strike a discordant note with purists and with those who prefer the poetic text. Nonetheless, this is a successful and engaging story that is more thought-provoking than Lisa Fiedler's *Dating Hamlet* (Holt, 2002), as it deals with issues of justice more than revenge, with wholeness of character more than romance. It is sure to be popular with young women struggling with issues of honor, betrayal, and finding one's path.—*Nancy Menaldi-Scanlan, LaSalle Academy, Providence, RI*
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From Booklist
Beyond the maiden's madness, who was Ophelia? How did she and Hamlet fall in love? Who would she have grown up to be if she had survived? In her debut novel, Klein, a former English professor, imagines the answers in this powerful, sophisticated novel narrated by Ophelia. Klein stays close to the original plot, but adds new layers of meaning by filling in Ophelia's experiences--from her first crush on Hamlet and her secret marriage to him as he descends into his "dangerous melancholy" to the events following her perceived drowning. The elevated language, impressively researched historical detail (including lengthy passages of herbal lore), and episodic plot demand strong, patient readers, but a familiarity with Shakespeare isn't necessary. Readers who know the play, however, will certainly appreciate the skillful, smoothly integrated references to the original, and with a deepened connection to Ophelia, they will feel fresh outrage and

empathy when reading familiar lines, such as Hamlet famous "nunnery" command. But even teens encountering the characters for the first time will be swept up by the vivid, atmospheric setting, the heart-pounding romance, the palpable torment, and Ophelia's fierce, earnest questions about how to love, survive tragedy, and reconcile "the insecure state of women, who must always abide the earthly authority of men." Pair this with Lisa Fiedler's more lighthearted *Dat*ing Hamlet (2002), and the other titles listed in the adjacent Read-alikes column. *Gillian Engberg*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Reid:

What do you regarding book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what yours problem? How about your extra time? Or are you busy particular person? If you don't have spare time to complete others business, it is make one feel bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. They must answer that question due to the fact just their can do that will. It said that about publication. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is appropriate. Because start from on jardín de infancia until university need this Ophelia to read.

Ebony Thornton:

In this 21st centuries, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive currently, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a reserve your ability to survive enhance then having chance to stand up than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading the book, we give you this Ophelia book as nice and daily reading guide. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

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Susan Padgett:

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