



# Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood (Palgrave Shakespeare Studies)

*Deanne Williams*

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*Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* is the first scholarly study devoted entirely to Shakespeare's girl characters. Revealing the dramatic and cultural centrality of the young girl in early modern English culture, and highlighting the 'girl' as a distinctive category in Shakespeare, this book locates Shakespeare's girl characters and representations of girlhood at a pivotal moment in the history of girlhood as an identity and social condition. Illuminating Shakespeare's girl characters in their relationship to earlier historical discourses and representations, and charting the development of Shakespeare's construction of the girl as a dramatic and literary figure throughout his career, Deanne Williams demonstrates that Shakespeare's girl characters are consistently and self-consciously invested in performance, from playing dramatic and musical parts, to performing public and domestic roles. Calling attention to the influence of Shakespeare and his girl characters on girl performers, patrons, and playwrights, Williams makes an original contribution to the history and culture of the early modern girl.

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