AN INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE

An Introduction to Shakespeare

The Dramatist in His Context

Peter Hyland

Macmillan Education

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For Theresa

Prefatory Note

Dr Johnson once wrote, 'Notes are often necessary, but they are necessary evils.' Anyone who writes about Shakespeare has inherited a vast amount of knowledge, and it is impossible to assign all of it to its original source. I have tried to keep to a minimum my own footnotes by acknowledging only direct quotation or citation, but all the sources I have used are to be found in the 'Suggested Reading' list.

I have quoted throughout from the New Arden editions of Shakespeare's plays, published by Routledge. Documentary matter taken from E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923) is noted in the text, using the abbreviation *ES* and volume and page numbers. In the interests of consistency I have modernized spelling when appropriate.

P.H.