



TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

Saving Hamlet By Molly Booth Reviewed by Marlena Titus

Name: Marlena Titus

Grade: 10

Book Title: Saving Hamlet

Author: Molly Booth

Number of Pages: 342

Rating (on a scale of 1-5): 5/5

Character List:

- **Emma Allen**—Emma is a 10th grade girl who was just newly put into the position of stage manager and stumbles through the pressure of the drama club's production of Hamlet, which is directed by her crush, Brandon. She discovers she can travel back in time through the stage's trapdoor to the Globe Theatre.
- **Lulu Parks**—Lulu is Emma's best friend who deals with harsh conservative parents after they discover she is bisexual and has a girlfriend. She aims to play the role of Hamlet but is angry when she's casted as Ophelia by Brandon.
- **Brandon Aiello**—Brandon is Emma's longtime crush and student director of the production of Hamlet. He decides to cast Josh as Hamlet rather than Lulu for the play and makes many unexpected decisions for the production (such as choosing not to cut any scenes, making the entire production last over five hours.)
- **Josh Jackson**—Josh is a school athlete who decides to audition for the school's play, much to everyone's surprise. He struggles with his role as Hamlet and seeks Emma's help to understand and memorize his lines.
- **Stanley White**—Also known as the "Theatre Design King of BHS," Stanley is the chief designer of the production who uses this opportunity for his portfolio for college. He is originally friends with Lulu and meets Emma through Lulu and the drama club. Through the rollercoaster that is the school's play, he becomes closer friends with Emma.

Review:

Emma, an avid fan of Shakespeare and theater, pictured that her sophomore year would be better than last year and is excited to be the assistant stage manager of the school's production of Hamlet! Suddenly, she is thrust into the position of the stage manager under her crush Brandon, who is the director. Brandon casts Emma's best friend, Lulu, who was on "lockdown" under her parent's strict punishment all summer, as Ophelia, despite her aspirations to be Hamlet. Instead, Brandon casts Josh as Hamlet and chaos ensues. The next thing Emma knows, Lulu won't talk to her and the production seems to be getting worse as Josh fumbles terribly through acting. One day, Stanley, the play's designer, builds a trapdoor into the set of the stage and Emma happens to fall right through. Instead of falling to the underside of the stage, Emma is sent back in time to the original Globe Theatre, where Shakespeare is performing Hamlet! Mistaken as a boy (thanks to her short haircut) Emma becomes the backstage assistant, adding another problem to her busy life as she must travel back and forth between time periods. Can she save two productions of Hamlet from disaster at once?

Saving Hamlet is a wonderful novel that relates to those in high school who must deal with confusing and stressful situations throughout the school year. The book also contains an equal amount of romance and humor as you follow Emma's crazy sophomore year. Author Molly Booth adds the interesting twists of time travel and Shakespeare related facts that will keep your eyes glued to the page! Along with that, she includes realistic obstacles that the characters—as well as some teenagers today—face, such as the topic of unaccepting parents of LGBT youth, self-doubt, and how people can push through those obstacles. All in all, this book is great for those who love to read about the process of stage production and performance, as well as for fans of Shakespeare.