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The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy acquaints the student reader with the forms, contexts, critical and theatrical lives of the ten plays considered to be Shakespeare's tragedies. Shakespearean tragedy is a highly complex and demanding theatre genre, but the thirteen essays, written by leading scholars in Britain and North America, are clear, concise and informative. They address the ways in which Shakespearean tragedy originated, developed and diversified, as well as how it has fared on stage, as text and in criticism. Topics covered include the literary precursors of Shakespearean tragedies (medieval, classical, and contemporary), cultural backgrounds (political, religious, social, and psychological), and the subgenres of Shakespeare's tragedy (love tragedy, revenge tragedy, and classical tragedy), as well as the critical and theatrical receptions of the plays. The book examines the four major tragedies and, in addition, Titus Andronicus, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus and Timon of Athens.