A Study Guide to

Hofstra University's

Department of Drama and Dance

Production

of

Love's Labour's Lost

by

William Shakespeare

March 2000

The Signet Classic Shakespeare version of *Love's Labour's Lost*, edited by John Arthos, is the text used in the current production. It is published in paperback by Signet.

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ABOUT SHAKESPEARE

Because Shakespeare is acknowledged to be the greatest dramatist and poet in the English language, a natural and burning curiosity has fired critics, scholars, and artists from the time of his death to the present day. The complete facts of his life have eluded them all because actors and playwrights of that age were not held in high esteem, and the writing of letters and the keeping of journals were not common practice.

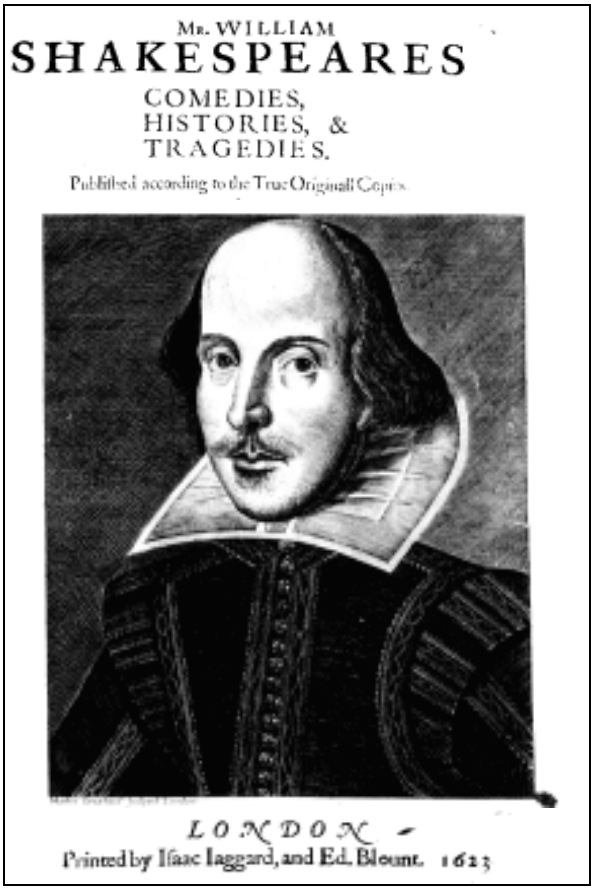
What can be pieced together of that life has been arrived at by painstaking detective work and educated guesses. The sources of information are scanty at best, mostly drawn from four areas: 1) documents and records of the period, such as birth and marriage certificates, deeds, legal depositions, and account books; 2) traditions, anecdotes, and recollections passed down through the years, some of very dubious validity; 3) literary references by other authors; and finally 4) conclusions that might be drawn from Shakespeare's writings themselves.

We can be relatively sure that Shakespeare was born about three days before his April 26, 1564, baptism to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden Shakespeare in Stratford-on-Avon, a market town of about 2,000 people in Warwickshire. We know that the playwright was the third child after two daughters died in infancy and that five more children followed. John Shakespeare was a wool dealer and glovemaker in Stratford who became a prominent borough official and civic leader until about 1577, when he experienced financial difficulties and dropped out of public life.

There is no secure information about Shakespeare's schooling—a sore point with many snobbish critics who cannot conceive of a person who has not gone to college writing as elegantly and knowledgeably as Shakespeare did. It is assumed that he went through the Stratford grammar school from the age of six until his sixteenth year. Days were long at school, from five or six o'clock in the morning until five in the evening, six days a week. Latin and Greek were certainly taught, and there Shakespeare must have come into early contact with the Roman plays of Seneca, Plautus, and Terence which found their way into his own works as did the poetry of Ovid, Virgil, and Horace and the histories of Caesar and Livy. By any contemporaneous or modern estimation, Shakespeare must have been an educated man. As Dryden observed, "He was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacle of Books to read Nature; he looked inwards and found her there."

The first real concrete record of Shakespeare's activities does not surface until 1582 when he was 18, at which time a marriage license was issued to him and Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years his senior from a tiny neighboring village. Five months after they were married, their first child Susannah was born, followed in 1585 by the birth of twins, Hamnet who died at the age of eleven, and Judith who died in 1662, eight years before the death of Shakespeare's last descendant.

Seven years after the birth of the twins, Shakespeare's name occurs in connection with the first of his plays produced in London. It is reckoned that he left Stratford around 1587, but what he did in those years is pure conjecture. Some legends say he was a schoolmaster; others claim he got into an altercation with a local squire for poaching deer and had to flee; still others maintain that he went off to join a touring company of players. We shall never know.



Title page of the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare's plays with the famous Martin Droeshout engraving, 1623.

In 1592, however, in a dying warning to fellow playwrights, Robert Greene attacked Shakespeare as "an upstart crow" and firmly established him as the successful author of the three history plays, *Henry VI, Parts One, Two,* and *Three.* By then it was assumed that Shakespeare had already also written and had seen productions of *The Comedy of Errors, Richard III, The Taming of the Shrew, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Love's Labour's Lost,* and the bloody but popular tragedy of *Titus Andronicus.*

Between 1592 and 1594 the theatres were closed on account of plague, and Shakespeare turned to poetry, composing *Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece,* and probably the 154 sonnets.

When the theatres reopened, Shakespeare had become a stockholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, so called because it was under the patronage of England's Lord Chamberlain. It was one of London's two major theatre companies. Four years later the theatre moved to the other side of the Thames and opened the Globe, where ultimately most of the great tragedies were presented.

During the period 1594 to 1600, with the production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Romeo and Juliet,* as well as the two parts of *Henry IV,* among others, the theatre company prospered and Shakespeare became a man of means. He lived in a fine home in London and purchased the largest house in Stratford. He

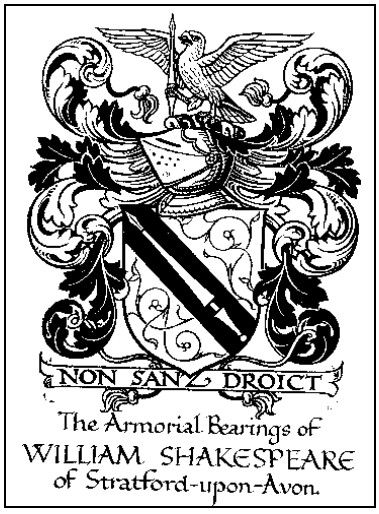
was granted a coat of arms acknowledging him as a "gentleman," an honor coveted but never achieved by his father because of money problems.

By the turn of the century Shakespeare had written his major romantic comedies: *As You Like It, Much Ado About Nothing,* and *Twelfth Night*; and with the accession of James to the English throne after the death of Elizabeth in 1603, the Lord Chamberlain's Men were taken under the monarch's wing, calling themselves thereafter the King's Men. Many of the plays were then performed at Court, and in 1608 the company was able to open a second theatre, the Blackfriars, indoors and mainly for the upper classes, which allowed Shakespeare to turn to more subtle themes and pastoral romances, including *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest.*

Shakespeare's reputation as a fashionable writer by then, however, was perhaps beginning to wane, or he lost enthusiasm for the bustle of London life. In 1611 he retired to Stratford returning pen to paper only to compose *Henry VIII*, a pageant, which by stage accident occasioned the burning of the Globe in 1613 at its premiere performance. He is also reputed to have collaborated in the writing of a minor play titled *Two Noble Kinsmen*—to be presented by Hofstra, fall 1999.

Apparently he died on his birthday in 1616, some say as the result of contracting a "fever" after drinking with some of his playwright friends. His grave is marked by a stern and ominous warning, supposedly composed by the Bard himself, adding to the mystery surrounding his life but perhaps merely posted to keep his remains from being moved as was often done:

> Good frends for Iesus (Jesus') sake forbeare
> To dig the dust encloased heare!
> Blest be ye (the) man yt (that) spares thes stones,
> And curst be he yt moves my bones.



An elaborate version of Shakespeare's coat of arms.
The motto means "Not Without Right."

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

It is generally acknowledged that Shakespeare's writing for the theatre falls largely into four main periods:

l) The Early Period (about 1590-1595). The plays that fall into this group reflect Shakespeare's youthful vitality and energy, both in conception and verse. Plays from this period include *Romeo and Juliet, The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *Richard III.*

2) The Middle Period (about 1595-1600). The plays emanating from this time betray a developing dark attitude about human nature, even cynicism at times. This is characterized by *Much Ado About Nothing, The Merchant of Venice, Julius Caesar,* and *Troilus and Cressida.*

3) The Mature Years (about 1600-1607). During this period Shakespeare produced his greatest work: *Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello,* and such comedies as *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure.*

4) The Late Period (about 1608-1613). This era is marked by the playwright's concern with more mystical matters often set in pastoral surroundings. The difficult plays of this group include *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale,* and *The Tempest.*

According to Shakespearean scholar G.B. Harrison, the complete list of the plays with their approximate dates is as follows:

1591
Henry VI, Parts One, Two, and *Three*
Richard III
Titus Andronicus
Love's Labour's Lost
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
The Comedy of Errors
The Taming of the Shrew

1594
Romeo and Juliet
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Richard II
King John
The Merchant of Venice

1597
Henry IV, Parts One and *Two*
Much Ado About Nothing
Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Julius Caesar
Henry V
Troilus and Cressida

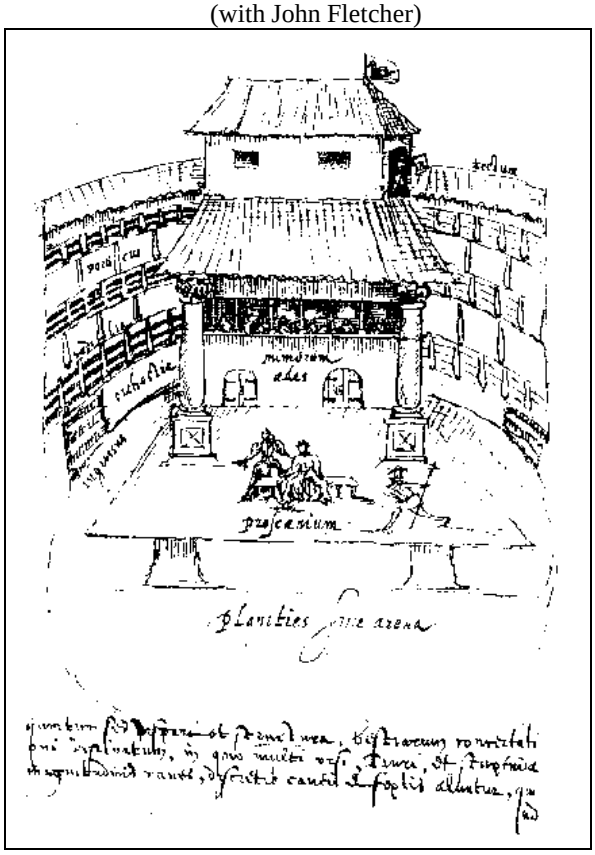
1601
Hamlet
Twelfth Night
Measure for Measure
All's Well That Ends Well
Othello

1606
King Lear
Macbeth
Timon of Athens
Antony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus

1609
Pericles

1611
Cymbeline

The Winter's Tale
The Tempest
Henry VIII
The Two Noble Kinsmen
(with John Fletcher)



A drawing of the Swan theatre by Johannes de Witt, now in the university library at Utrecht, Holland

SHAKESPEARE'S THEATRE

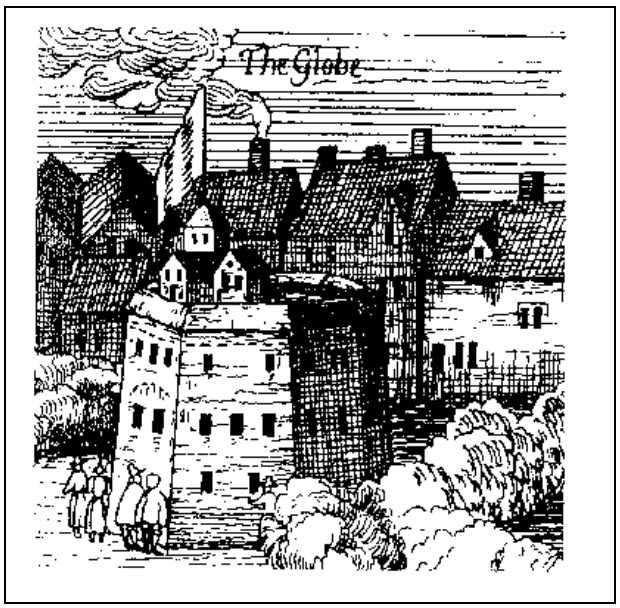
With our contemporary exposure to modern theatre, television, and film, with their capacity for reproducing everyday reality so precisely and astounding us with amazing special effects, it is perhaps difficult to envision the kind of productions and the quality of imagination that Elizabethan audiences experienced when they attended a performance of *Macbeth*.

Our information about the playhouses of that time is very sketchy, derived as it is from one or two drawings, scanty stage directions, a few building specifications, contracts, and prop lists. It is clear, though, that the major plays were presented out of doors in open theatres in daylight. When nighttime scenes were called for, a few words sufficed to set the hour and the mood. Locations were also clarified by the actors' speeches. We can, therefore, assume that only the barest, most essential pieces of furniture and scenery were set—a chair, a bush, or a throne. The plays were done without intermission—many of the audience members stood throughout—and, therefore, the production had to move quickly from scene to scene in an almost cinematic way in order to achieve, as the Chorus in *Romeo and Juliet* calls for, "the two hours' traffic of our stage."

To accommodate tombs, beds, and balconies and to allow "dead bodies" to exit without being carried off, some device was needed to permit them to be hidden or to give them some elevation from the stage level. It is therefore conjectured that there was a curtained area somewhere on the back wall of the stage area, both on the platform level and above it. Since actors often had to traverse the playing area from one side to the other, it is likely that there were entranceways or doors on either side of the stage which also served to clarify opposing forces in a play—Montagues and Capulets, French and English armies, or rebels and loyalists. The rest of the play was performed on a large square or rectangular (we cannot be sure) area which extended out into the audience, surrounded on three sides by the spectators.

Usually stage directions in many of the texts were added later by the editors, but an early edition of *Romeo and Juliet* gives us some clues about the theatres. After Juliet drinks the potion, the script indicates, "She falls upon her bed within the curtains," and then one assumes they are closed. After discovering and lamenting Juliet's supposed death, "They all but the Nurse go forth, casting rosemary on her and shutting the curtains." Suggestions such as these are all that historians have to go on in determining how the plays were staged.

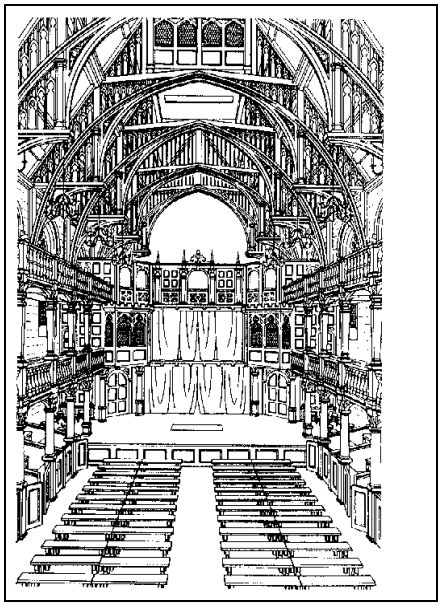
It is thought that the architecture of the playhouses was developed from touring companies who set up and performed at innyards against one wall of the building. Audiences could stand at ground level or watch from balconies and galleries on three sides. These galleries found their way into the structure of theatres built for the purpose of productions.



Enlarged detail of the Globe playhouse on the south bank of the Thames from a map of London published about 1625

Behind the stage was the "tiring" area (coming from the word "attiring") where the actors could change costumes (they played more than one role because the companies were small, the casts large), where props were stored (many plays were kept in the repertory during the season and the life of the theatre), and from where music and special effects might emanate (it was a cannon explosion which started the fire that destroyed the Globe Theatre in 1613).

The stage itself was pitted with several openings (or traps) from which ghosts could emerge, in which graves could be "dug," or characters descend. One critic suggests that the witches in their first meeting with Macbeth "vanish" through such a trap, and the apparitions in Act IV, Scene 1, appear and exit through a trap. Later in the development of the company Shakespeare worked for, an indoor theatre, the Blackfriars, was purchased. This catered to a more elite clientele, permitted performances in all sorts of weather, perhaps allowed some rudimentary lighting effects, but, above all, acoustically gave Shakespeare the opportunity to write more subtle dialogue with more complex imagery and ideas than the direct, open, heroic speeches required by playing out of doors.



The Second Blackfriars theatre as reconstructed by Irwin Smith in *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse: Its History and Design.* (New York: New York University Press, 1964).

The act and scene divisions in the plays were later textual additions, but an audience usually knew when a major section had ended by the rhymed couplet which summarized or rounded out a series of dramatic events. For example, Act III of *Love's Labour's Lost* ends with Berowne on stage alone. He has just broken his oath to forswear love and concentrate on study, and has sent a love letter to Rosaline. He concludes a soliloquy about what love has done to him and exits on the following lines:

> Well, I must love, write, sigh, pray, sue, and groan,
> Some men must love my lady, and some Joan.

Shakespeare wrote for the company of actors who made up the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later the King's Men. Heroic roles were fashioned around the talents of their leading actor, Richard Burbage. As he grew older, the roles conceived for him also matured so that early in his career Burbage played Romeo and Hamlet, then later he assayed King Lear, Macbeth, and Othello. Will Kemp played the lower, broader, comic roles like Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*. He apparently broke off with the theatre and was replaced by the more ethereal singer and dancer, Robert Armin. For him Shakespeare conceived a totally different sort of comic role more appropriate to his talents and temperament. He played Feste in *Twelfth Night*, Touchstone in *As You Like It*, the Drunken Porter in *Macbeth*, and perhaps the Fool in *King Lear.*

The women in Shakespeare's plays were all played by boys, and they must have developed great acting skills to portray such complex personalities as Juliet, Lady Macbeth, and Cleopatra. Their careers, however, were short-lived since it would have stretched believability too far to have kept them in such parts after their voices had changed in about their fourteenth year.

Shakespeare himself acted in the company, his most famous role being that of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, but his influence as a shareholder was obviously due to the enormous popularity of the plays he supplied rather than from his distinction as a performer. Tradition holds that Shakespeare played the role of Adam in *As You Like It*. It is thought by some critics that he may have performed the role of Duncan in *Macbeth*.

The demise of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre occurred when violence, sex, and spectacle were substituted for an identifiable humanity in the plays, and sentimentality replaced true feeling. The acting quality no doubt also deteriorated when companies of children became fashionable; and the death knell of the most vital theatre in world history sounded when the Puritans took over the State and closed the theatres in 1642.

A SUMMARY OF THE STORY

King Ferdinand of Navarre and his gentlemen, instead of following the customary round of court functions and frivolities, resolve to make Navarre a little academy of learning, and enter into a compact for three years, under severe penalty, to live a life of seclusion in which food and sleep are to be placed under precise regulation and women's society is positively prohibited. The only recreation that is provided is the conversation of Costard, a natural clown, and Don Armado, a pompous, fantastical Spaniard. When it comes to signing the articles of their agreement, Berowne, though declaring his readiness to take the oath, is more doubtful than his two madcap companions, Longaville and Dumaine, who ordinarily are much given to wit and mockery. With malicious promptness, he points out to the King the imminent necessity of breaking their vows because of the visit to the court of the Princess of France which the King had completely overlooked.

When the Princess arrives on the mission of diplomacy she has undertaken for her old bedridden father, the King is unable because of his recent vows to entertain her in his palace, and he is compelled to house both her and her train in tents in the park outside his gates. During the conduct of their business, the King is greatly attracted to the Princess, and his lords manifest a lively interest in renewing their previous acquaintances with her vivacious ladies, Rosaline, Maria and Katherine.

Meanwhile the first violation of the edict of retirement is made when the clown, Costard, is found in the company of Jaquenetta, a country girl to whom Don Armado, also smitten, secretly writes love verses. Costard, for punishment, is placed in the Spaniard's custody for a week's fasting on bran and water, but he is released from jail to deliver a love-letter of Armado's to Jaquenetta. At the

same time Berowne gives Costard a note to Rosaline, and the clown gets the letters mixed, so that Armado's absurd effusion is placed in Rosaline's hands, causing the ladies great amusement, while Berowne's poetry reaches Jaquenetta who, unable to read it, seeks the aid of the village schoolmaster, Holofernes.

Love, however, has gradually turned all the votaries of wisdom to the furtive occupation of sonnet-writing. Berowne, with his own verses, hides in a tree as the King passes reading aloud some lines to the Princess; both overhear Longaville reading a sonnet to Maria; and the three listen to Dumaine's ode to Katherine. One by one, they reveal themselves, Longaville reproving Dumaine, and the King, Longaville, with Berowne finally accusing all his companions of inconstancy and broken vows. Just then Costard and Jaquenetta arrive with Berowne's letter which the schoolmaster had dispatched to the King, recognizing it as, the composition of one of the court lords. Confessing his guilt, Berowne staunchly argues that since love gives knowledge, it is one of the many means besides study to gain power to live more abundantly, and the King, agreeing, unites with his gentlemen in promoting revels, masques and dances wherewith to woo their loves. They send favors and love verses to their sweethearts, and set out, disguised as Russians, to visit the Princess and her suite, one of whom, however, has overheard and reported their plans to the ladies, who mask and exchange presents, so that each is wooed by the wrong gentleman. Unmercifully taunted, the lords admit the joke when they return in their usual apparel.

The schoolmaster and the curate now ask permission to present a pageant of the Nine Worthies which they have prepared in honor of the Princess with the assistance of Costard, Armado and his page Moth, and a riot of merriment is provided to the sophisticated ladies and courtiers over the successive appearance of Pompey, Alexander, Judas, Hercules and Hector.

In the midst of the jesting and laughter, news is brought to the Princess that her father is dead and she is obliged to return home with all possible speed. This sudden turn of events induces the King and his lords to make open avowals of their love, but the Princess declares the time is too short for a marriage contract, and each lady assigns a suitable penance to her forsworn lover for breaking his vow, while postponing their answers for a year and a day.

THE SOURCES OF THE STORY

Shakespeare's genius did not usually extend to the invention of new material to accompany his rich characterizations and relationships, his clearly devised and exciting plot and structure, and his soaring poetry. He drew his ideas from Roman, Greek, and English history and mythology, other plays, and translations of continental novellas. Often he combined different tales into a new creation.

Love's Labour's Lost is an exception to this pattern. H.R. Woudhuysen observes that "*Love's Labour's Lost* may well be the earliest of Shakespeare's plays for which no primary source is known; the others are *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*." Geoffrey Bullough has also pointed out that "no one story has been found to cover the plot" and that the play's plot is "thin." Bullough does, however, find several sources that offer analogous situations to *Love's Labour's Lost*. For example, he sees the possible influence on Shakespeare of his contemporary, John Lyly, who in a prose work, *Euphues*, placed great stress on language, balance, and symmetry—qualities which *Love's Labour's Lost* also exhibits. As a playwright, Lyly was also noted for "the witty teasing of women," "scholastic humor" of pedants, and "the comic use of logic, rhetoric, and grammar," though Bullough notes that Shakespeare "developed his own euphemistic style" and that the "situation and tone are different" in *Love's Labour's Lost* when compared to the work of Lyly.

Various scholars point to some fragments that may have contributed to the construction of the play. One is *Academic Française* by P. de la Primaudaye. This was a French ethical treatise, available in English translation after 1586, and its opening pages "show that the idea of a studious withdrawal of young men from the world of affairs was not new." Another influence may have been the Christmas Revels at Gray's Inn in 1594-95 in which a musical entertainment included the entrance of young lords disguised as Muscovites.

Contemporary political affairs may also have played a minor role in shaping the play, or at least providing Shakespeare with the names of some of his characters. Its setting is France and a number of its characters would have reminded its original audience of real figures, including Henri of Navarre (Ferdinand, King of Navarre, in the play), the Duc de Mayenne (Dumaine), the Duc de Longueville (Longaville), and the Duc de Biron (Berowne). There is not, however, any evidence of a systematic plan behind the use of these names since several of these men were enemies of each other, and most would not have been viewed sympathetically by an English, Protestant audience since they were French-Catholic enemies. Henri of Navarre had been a Huguenot Protestant, and did fight against the Spanish, but he had converted to Catholicism in 1593 in order to solidify his claim to the French throne which he held as King Henry IV from 1589 to 1610. He is famous for explaining his conversion as being justified because it allowed him to enter Paris as the accepted King of France ("Paris is well worth a Mass.") Its is difficult to see how these matters of French politics and religion were of much use to Shakespeare in constructing his play.

One final theory held by a few scholars is that the play is a satirical commentary on various literary, political, and philosophical currents in late 16th-century English society. These commentators see references in the play to English intellectual circles, including Sir Walter Raleigh and the group of writers, thinkers, and scientists that were said to meet in a so-called "School of the Night" to raise questions about the solar system and the existence of God.

None of these bits and pieces of analogous situations,however, has provided a satisfactory answer as to where Shakespeare found the idea for this play.

THE DATE OF COMPOSITION

The earliest record of *Love's Labour's Lost* is its appearance in a quarto edition in 1598. The title page describes it as "a pleasant conceited comedie" and indicates that "it was presented before her Highnes this last Christmas." The title page also indicates that the play is newly "corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare,"

though Bullough notes many errors and repetitions in the text.

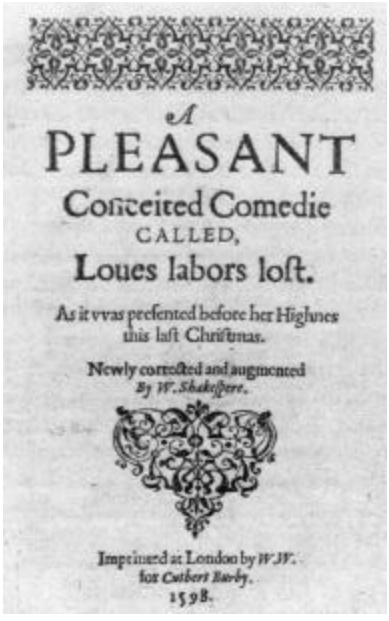
Woudhuysen notes three other important references to the play—all also occurring in 1598:

1. Poet, Robert Tofte, refers to the play in *Alba: The Month's Mind of a Melancholy Lover,* a poem published in 1598. The passage is lengthy and seems to suggest that Tofte had seen the play performed. It begins:

> LOVES LABOR LOST, I once did see a Play
> Ycleped so. . . .

2. Also in 1598, a pamphlet titled, *A Health to the Gentlemanly Profession of Servingmen,* included a lengthy reference to Costard's joke regarding the monetary tips he receives from Don Armado ("remuneration" 3.1.29-43) and from Berowne ("guerdon/gardon" 3.1.170-174) for the service of delivering their letters.

3. Finally, *Love's Labour's Lost* is mentioned by Francis Meres (in *Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury*) in his famous list of Shakespeare's plays. Also included in this list are five other early comedies of Shakespeare *Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Comedy of Errors, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice,* and ***Love's Labour's Won***—the last title a play that seems to have been a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost* and a work that apparently has not survived. At one time it was thought the *Love's Labour's Won* was merely a different title for Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, which is indeed about love "won." In 1953, however, a stationer's list from 1603 was discovered that seems to represent a bookseller's list of books by quantity and title on hand for sale. The list includes *The Taming of the Shrew* and both *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won*.


A
PLEASANT
Conceited Comedie
CALLED,
Loues labors loſt.
As it vvas preſented before her Highnes this laſt Chriſtmas.
Newly corrected and augmented
By W. Shakeſpere.
Imprinted at London by W.W.
for Cuthert Burby.
1598.

Title Page of First Quarto, 1598.

The appearance of so many references to the play in 1598 as well as the claims of earlier performances of the play suggests an earlier date for the actual composition. Various scholars have placed the date of composition from as early as 1588 to 1604-1605; recent scholarship seems to have settled on 1504 as the likeliest date, making it one of Shakespeare's earliest comedies. Because the play lacks a demonstrable source, and because there is little internal evidence, most scholars date the play by pointing to stylistic factors and place the play in relationship to the other richly poetic plays Shakespeare wrote in the early 1590s, *Romeo and Juliet, Richard II*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

A FEW CRITICAL COMMENTS

Gently but firmly, the men are sent away to learn something that the women have known all along: how to accommodate speech to facts and to emotional realities, as opposed to using it as a means of evasion, idle amusement, or unthinking cruelty.

—Anne Barton

While the delayed ending may seem unreasonable for a romantic comedy, one can sympathize with the women in their difficulty in knowing whether the men are sincere or not. Having broken the vows of abstinence they made in the opening scene they have turned immediately into highly conventional lovers, writing sonnets and swearing extravagant oaths according to the fashion. Their problem is to reject taffeta phrases and silken terms for russet yeas and honest kersey noes before their love can seem convincing. This concern with language itself pervades all levels of the play.

—Levi Fox

"What is the end of study?" asks Biron in the opening scene of the play, and from then on the drama is dedicated to answering that question. The answers are mainly negative and consist simply of sorry specimens of what human nature can be perverted into when either or both of those central urges of life toward love and truth go awry, the implication being that, whatever else the end of study may be, it is at any rate not the production of such deformities and sterilities as these.

—Harold C. Goddard

Drama, as Shakespeare will come to write it, is, first and last, the projection of character in action; and devices for doing this, simple and complex, must make up three-quarters of its artistry. We can watch his early discovery that dialogue is waste matter unless it works to this end; that wit, epigram, sentiment are like paper and sticks in a fireplace, the flaring and crackling counting for nothing if the fire itself won't light, if these creatures in whose mouths the wit is sounded won't "come alive." To the last he kept his youthful delight in a pun; and he would write an occasional passage of word-music with a minimum of meaning to it (but of maximum emotional value, it will be found, to the character that has to speak it). His development of verse to dramatic use is a study in itself. He never ceased to develop it, but for a while the dramatist had a hard time with the lyric poet. The early plays abound, besides, in elaborate embroidery of language done for its own sake. This was a fashionable literary exercise and Shakespeare was an adept at it. To many young poets of the time their language was a new-found wonder; its very handling gave them pleasure. The amazing things it could be made to do! He had to discover that they

were not much to his purpose; but it is not easy to stop doing what you do so well.

—Harley Granville-Barker

The originality of *Love's Labour's Lost* lies in the transformation of the slippery power of language into the dialectical comic theme itself. Word-play and wit-work, jest and earnest, reciprocally test, define and illuminate each other during the comic progress of the play, itself an extravagant display of verbal exuberance; and it is the learned fools, Armado and Holofernes, who, direct our perception to this. They owe their origin no doubt to the unprecedented language explosion of the Elizabethan period.

—Ruth Nevo

The final joke is that in the end "Love" does not arrive, despite the lords' preparations for a triumphal welcome. That the play should end without the usual marriages is exactly right, in view of what it is that is released by its festivities. Of course what the lords give way to is, in a general sense, the impulse to love; but the particular form that it takes for them is a particular sort of folly—what one could call the folly of amorous masquerade, whether in clothes, gestures, or words. It is the folly of acting love and talking love, without being in love. For the festivity releases, not the delights of love, but the delights of expression which the prospect of love engenders—though those involved are not clear about the distinction until it is forced on them; the clarification achieved by release is this recognition that love is not wooing games or love talk. And yet these sports are not written off or ruled out; on the contrary the play offers their delights for our enjoyment, while humorously putting them in their place.

—C.L. Barber

Love's Labour's has a multiple focus: the village people comprise not a subplot to a main action, but fragments of a world which are gradually integrated into a whole through the interweaving structure of Shakespearean comedy. In the conclusion, Holofernes becomes simple and dignified, Costard and Armado obliquely and surprisingly profound; and the Princess is gracious, as usual. But the pompous verse of the pageant and the cruel and brisk heckling of the lords provide the discordant note found in any group of humans. . . . . .

The abuses in this world are abuses against the feminine principle, with its anarchic or at least democratic insistence on the validity of all things. The lords' treatment of their social inferiors is not courteous, as the masculine principle properly handled would enjoin. Berowne expresses considerable misogyny; he is arrogant with Costard in III, i, calling him slave, knave, and villain. Armado's conception of himself as King Cophetua and Jaquenetta as the beggar is also arrogant and pompous. Both the schoolmaster and the curate make disdainful remarks. All of these involve setting oneself up as superior to others—hierarchy—and they foreshadow the cruelty and scorn which ruin the pageant. All the legitimate males abuse their privilege; all suffer as a result of this general tendency, this mode of thought and behavior in male circles.

—Marilyn French

As well as sending up the vanity and pomposity of these know-alls, Shakespeare no doubt enjoyed parodying such writers as John Lyly who was the begetter of the euphuism. This was a language of alliteration, antithesis and simile. Yet throughout this play Shakespeare enjoys being better at doing what he sends up. Two can play at that game. The courtly pairs are well versed in the rules of rhetoric, the finer points of debate, the turning of an argument and the 'odiferous flowers of Fancy'. The appetite of Shakespeare's audience is as keen on the meringue-wit of the courtiers as it is on the lardy-cake talk of their hangers-on. For this was a time when the English language was in a state of great mix, Latinate words and newly coined ones all coming in together. *Love's Labour's Lost* is like a glorious summer pudding, stirred in with puns and metaphors. It's sweetened by Arcadian rhetoric and made sickly by sheer excess.

—Emma Tennant

There should be question marks left over all these relationships at the end of the play. All through this last section of the play there is this terrible sense, caught beautifully in every line, of people being helplessly torn apart. The men come to understand that they have the opportunity to discover whether what they have been doing up to now has been love or merely infatuation. Their commitment not to see the women for a year is not so dissimilar from their decision at the beginning of the play to spend three years in an academe. It's still a rude awakening and a bit of a jolt for everyone. Nevertheless, the possibility of real love runs through this last section as well. If the play is served properly, one should see the potential for this seriousness of the playwright's purpose all the way through.

Just as we are coming to terms with this seriousness, Shakespeare brings on all the comic characters again. They have written a song to come at the end of their show and want to perform it. "The Owl and the Cuckoo" concerns the renewal of the seasons. The cycle of life, and of love as well, goes on. This song also brings together some of Shakespeare's thoughts on nature in this play. It is very much a country piece, lyrical and pastoral. Armado finishes the whole thing off with a beautifully simple parting shot: "The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo. You that way: we this way." The final act turns the play on its head and leaves one with knowledge of a much darker and more melancholic element to this play than one suspects on first reading it. And indeed the parting of the lovers at the end of the play brings us back, perhaps, to its title, *Love's Labour's Lost*.

—Kenneth Branagh

Mercade: I am sorry, madam, for the news I bring
Is heavy in my tongue. The King your father—
Princess: Dead, for my life!
Mercade : Even so; my tale is told.

There is perhaps nothing like this moment in the whole range of Elizabethan drama. In the space of four lines the entire world of the play, its delicate balance of reality and illusion, all the hilarity and overwhelming life of its last scene has been swept away and destroyed, as Death itself actually enters the park, for the first time, in the person of Mercade.

Only in one Elizabethan madrigal, Orlando Gibbons' magnificent 'What is our Life?', is there a change of harmony

and mood almost as swift and great as this one, and it occurs under precisely the same circumstances—the sudden appearance, among the images of life in Raleigh's lyric, of the inescapable and tremendous reality of Death.

—Anne Righter Barton

Now that I'm older and more experienced in life, I begin to discern beneath the music and the technical brilliance some deep human truths. In *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare seems to capture the high summer of irresponsible adolescence suddenly brought to a measured pace by an awareness that time is running out. The play is about growing up — about choosing to say things that have meaning rather than saying things that are clever.

Shakespeare is an ardent feminist in all of his comedies, but I believe that *Love's Labour's Lost* is his most staunchly feminist play. When Shakespeare's men fall in love, they go completely to pieces. They have no capacity of judgement and can keep no balance between their hearts and their heads. Shakespeare's women in love cope much better by far. The women in the comedies, and especially in this one, surpass their male counterparts in strength, balance, perspective and honour.

Love's Labour's Lost raises two fundamental questions: Are men the natural rulers and are men capable of keeping an oath? Given what takes place in the play, the women answer the first question by taking it as arrogant presumption. The second, however, is generously left undecided by the women pending a twelve-month trial.

AT LEAST <u>ONE</u> EX-BASEBALL PLAYER AND CURRENT SPORTSCASTER KNOWS *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST*!

"I also have been accused of psychobabble. In 1997, as a camera panned the dugout of the Cubs as they suffered their National Leaguerecord-breaking fourteenth straight loss opening the season, I quoted a line from Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* about how 'mirth cannot move a soul in agony.' I was attacked in one New Jersey paper for trying to wax eloquent during a baseball game. Not long after that, however, I received a touching letter from a man who said those words I quoted really hit home with him and his wife. It turned out that he headed an organization for people who have lost children to violence, and he read those words I had called to his attention at a gathering of the group. More than giving me vindication, that letter affirmed my belief that the words some people find empty touch a responsive chord in others."

—Tim McCarver, *Baseball for Brain Surgeons and Other Fans*

ABOUT THE PLAY ON THE STAGE

According to the quarto publication of 1598, *Love's Labour's Lost* has already been presented before Queen Elizabeth at court. The other references to the play that also occurred in 1598 suggest that the play had also been performed in the public theatre and was relatively well known by that date.

In the Revels Account—a record of plays that were presented at court—there is a record of the play being presented for King James I as part of the Christmas activities of 1604-1605; indeed, that season, between the first of November and 8 February the presentation of nine plays by Shakespeare are recorded at court, with *Love's Labour's Lost* listed "between New Year's and Twelfth Day." In 1623 the play was included in the First Folio of Shakespeare's works, and a second quarto edition appeared in 1631—probably derived from the text printed in the Folio—with the claim that the play was "acted at the Blackfriars and the Globe." If the assertion is accurate, this would indicate additional performances of the play after 1599 (when the Globe opened) and after 1608 (when Richard Burbage began using the indoor, Blackfriars). This is the last that is heard of *Love's Labour's Lost* until 1839.

According to Miriam Gilbert: "Between the first decade of the seventeenth century and the third decade of the nineteenth century, *Love's Labour's Lost* seems to have disappeared from the English stage. It is, conspicuously, the *only* play of Shakespeare's not performed between 1700 and 1800." The play seems to have been adapted once, under the title of *Students* in 1762. William Winter observes that "the maker of the alteration . . . has left out too much Shakespeare and put in too much of his own stuff," but there is no record of this adaptation ever having been performed.

Gilbert speculates that the disappearance of the play may be related to a variety of factors: some editors questioned whether the play was actually written by Shakespeare; others objected to the excessive bawdiness and punning; actors spurned the play because there were no major roles for men or women—the play requires an ensemble. Finally, the play is "atypical among Shakespeare's comedies—the grim presence of death as presented . . . by Marcade and the anti-comic resolution with couples parting instead of a wedding. . . . The failure to end with the four marriages which seem promised and inevitable may . . . have made the play less appealing to eighteenth-century tastes."

Ironically, according to Gilbert, it is precisely this anti-comic seriousness of purpose at the end of the play that seems to have played a major role in the revival of interest in the play in the second half of the twentieth century.

The initial revival of the play began in 1839 when Madame Vestris presented it at Covent Garden, but without much critical acclaim or commercial success. Far more successful was the next revival by Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells in 1857. Both of these productions made extensive use of tableaus, pageants and processions, and picturesque scenery; though it appears that Madame Vestris created a romantic ending in which the couples leave the stage together, while Phelps's staging is more ambiguous and perhaps closer to the non-comic ending created by Shakespeare.

These revivals, especially that by Phelps, inspired others to follow and the play was presented periodically in London (but not again until 1918, 1923, 1928), Stratford-upon Avon (1885, 1907, 1919, 1925, and 1934), and New York City (1874 and 1891). Tyrone Guthrie staged the play in London twice in the 1930s. These early productions tended to emphasize the formality of the language in the play, and the performances came off as "bright, quaint, and amusing," according to stage director , George R. Foss. Often a "happy

ending" was implied by showing the couples leaving the stage hand in hand. Most productions seem to have found difficulty in blending the comedy of the piece with the seriousness of the ending. Indeed, Augustin Daly in his two New York productions cut the announcement of the death of the King of France, and the delay of a year before marriage was "imputed to the Princess's conviction that a prudent delay would prove salutary."

William Bridges-Adams's production of
Love's Labour's Lost at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1934.
Set designed by Aubrey Hammond.

It was with the 1946 production of the play at Stratford-upon-Avon, directed by the very young and inexperienced Peter Brook, that *Love's Labour's Lost* began to reveal its particular character and specialness. In studying the play, Brook

> . . . was struck by what seemed to me to be self-evident, but which at the time seemed to be unheard of: which was, that from the moment Mercade [sic] came on, the whole play changed its tone entirely, because he came into an artificial world to announce a piece of news that was real. He came on bringing death. And as I felt intuitively that the image of the Watteau world was very close to this, I began to see that, the reason that the Watteau 'Age of Gold' is so particularly, moving is that although it's a picture of springtime, it's an autumn springtime, because every one of Watteau's pictures has an incredible melancholy. And if one looks, one sees that there is somewhere in it the presence of death, until one even sees that, in Watteau (unlike the imitators of the period, where it's all sweetness and prettiness) there is usually a dark figure somewhere, standing with his back to you, and some people say that he is Watteau himself. But there's no doubt that the dark touch gives the dimension to the whole piece. And it was through this that I brought Mercade over the rise at the back of the stage—it was evening, the lights were going down and suddenly over it came a man in black. And the man in black on a very pretty, summery stage, with everybody in pale pastel Watteau and Lancret costumes and golden light dying, and suddenly this figure coming over the skyline in black was very disturbing at once something in the whole audience was felt.

Brook, and numerous productions that followed his, emphasized the discrepancy between the world of the court and that of the clowns in the play, and stressed the artificial nature of the behavior of the court men and women until reality intruded at the end. Generally taking their cue from Brook's production, Hugh Hunt produced the play in London in 1948; Peter Hall at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1956; John Barton at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1965; and Laurence Olivier at the National Theatre of Great Britain in 1968.

Above and below: Peter Brook's Watteau-inspired
production,
Stratord-upon-Avon, 1946

Paul Scofield as Don Armado,
Stratford-upon-Avon, 1946.

Peter Hall's first production at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1956.

Hugh Hunt's production,
Old Vic Company at the New Theatre, 1949

Laurence Olivier's production,
National Theatre of Great Britain, 1968.
Derek Jacobi is Ferdinand at left of photo

Laurence Olivier's production,
National Theatre of Great Britain, 1968.
Joan Plowright as Rosaline and Jeremy Brett as Berowne.

In Stratford, Connecticut in 1968, Michael Kahn took a radically different approach to the play, presenting it as an exercise in contemporary satire. His four young men were dressed like the Beatles at the moment when they

"renounced" the world and went to study in India with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Sitars were used in the production, the women entered on motorbikes and were dressed in mod-60s style. The clown characters were presented as hippies.

Photos from Michael Kahn's "Hippie" production, Stratford, Connecticut, 1968.

Diana van der Vlis (center) as the Princess, flanked by Marian Hailey as Katherine, Carl Strano as the Fiorster, Denise Huot as Rosaline, and Kathleen Dabney as Maria, Stratford, Connecticut, 1968.

Charles Siebert as Ferdinand of Navarre, Jeff Fuller as Sitarist, and Anthony Mainionis as Dumaine, Stratford, Connecticut, 1968.

Rex Robbins as Dull, Ken Parker as Nathaniel, Stefan Gierasch as Holofernes, Stratford, Connecticut, 1968.

Lawrence Pressman as Berowne and William Hickey as Costard, Stratford, Connecticut, 1968.

1974 saw nearly simultaneous productions of the play at the Stratford Canada Shakespeare Festival, at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, and on tour by the Juilliard Acting Company.

1978 offered the next major shift of emphasis in the play in a second production directed by John Barton at Stratford-upon-Avon. This time Barton moved away from the formality and ceremonial of his previous production and presented a subtle and understated version of the play. He emphasized the humanity of both the court and the clowns, and stressed the elegiac ending of the play from the very beginning. The play began with Costard, Jaquenetta, and the Forester sweeping leaves off the playing space, and it ended with leaves falling from the surrounding trees as the men and women separate for "a twelvemonth and a day." Critic, John Peter, described Bartton's work as "one of those productions which re-draws the map of a play." Robert Cushman found it equally memorable:

> Mr. Barton directs it as a play about four young undergraduates who forsake the world because they are afraid to face it, are thrown by the arrival of four ladies, try to get the love-game together, are made ludicrous by the disclosure of their pretensions, try to put a good

face on things, think they have succeeded, and are defeated by the arrival of an unalterable reality, Death. None of this, I am aware, is news, but I have never seen it lived so thoroughly before, never heard such delight taken in the scholars' affectations, felt the mood change so palpably at the last, or known a Berowne keep so precise a balance between badinage and lyricism, sense and surrender, as Michael Pennington.

The four youg men vow to lead a simple, studious life without the company of women. From left to right: Ian Charleson as Longaville, Michael Pennington as Berowne, Paul Whitworth as Dumaine, and Richard Griffiths as Ferdinand; John Barton's production, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1978.

The women who come to visit Navarre. From left to right: Avril Carson as Katharine, Carmen Du Sautoy as the Princess, Sheridan Fitzgerald as Maria, and Jane Lapotaire as Rosaline; John Barton's production, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1978.

Zoë Caldwell as Rosaline and Joy Parker as the Princess, Stratford Canada Shakespeare Festival, 1961.

Richard Monette as Berowne, Domini Blytrhe as Rosaline, Stratford Canada Shakespeare Festival, 1979.

John Neville as Don Armado, Torquil Campbell as Moth, Stratford Canada Shakespeare Festival, 1983-84.

Kristen Bishopric as Maria, Nicholas Pennell as Boyet, Maria Ricossa as the Princess of France, Tana Hincken as

Katherine, and Sally Singal as Rosaline, Stratford Canada Shakespeare Festival, 1983-84.

The Stratford Canada Shakespeare Festival has presented the play seven times in its history, most memorably in a production in 1983 in which the melancholy of Don Armado—a character who has often been likened to Don Quixote—established the tone and mood of the entire production. Like the Barton production, this one, directed by Michael Langham, clearly established from the beginning that this was a different and unusual comedy–one in which there would be no happy ending. John Neville played Don Armado in this production.

Little mention has been made of actors in the various productions noted above. Though many fine actors have appeared in various productions, *Love's Labour's Lost* is notable for the ensemble nature of its cast. Though some parts are larger than others, there are no "star" parts comparable to Hamlet or Lear in tragedy, or Beatrice and Benedick or Kate and Petruchio in comedy. It is true that Berowne is give some moments of soliloquy and that his relationship with Rosaline resembles Beatrice and Benedick, but the part is far less prominent.

Sebastian Shaw as Boyet, Flanked by Estelle Kohler as Rosaline and Susan Fleetwood as the Princess, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1973.

Ian Richardson as Berowne and Estelle Kohler as Rosaline, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1973.

Edward Petherbridge as Don Armado, Amanda Root as Moth, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1984

Kenneth Branagh as the King of Navarre, Barry Kyle's production, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1984.

Josette Simon as Rosaline and Roger Rees as Berowne, Barry Kyle's production, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1984.

Terry Hands's 1990 production, Stratford-upon-Avon. Griffith Jones upstage center as Marcade, Caroline Loncq as Katherine, Carol Royle as the Princess, Amanda Root as Rosaline, Katrina Levon as Maria. Simon Russell Beale as Ferdinand, Ralph Fiennes as Berowne, Bernard Wright as Longaville, and Joseph Paterson as Dumaine.

In England the King of Navarre has included performances by Michael Redgrave, Charles Kay, Richard Griffiths, Kenneth Branagh, Simon Russell Beale, and Owen Teale; Berowne by Alec Clunes, Michael Redgrave, Alan Badel, Ian Richardson, Jeremy Brett, Michael Pennington, Roger Rees, Ralph Fiennes, and Jeremy Northam; the Princess by Geraldine McEwan, Glenda Jackson, Susan Fleetwood, Carole Royle, and Jenny Quayle; Rosaline by Janet Suzman, Estelle Kohler, Joan Plowright, Jane Lapotaire, Amanda Root, Josette Simon, and Abigail McKern. Memorable Don Armados have included Paul Scofield, Baliol Holloway, Tony Church, Michael Hordern, Edward Petherbridge, and John Wood.

Stratford Canada has featured Leo Ciceri, Brian Petchey, Alan Scarfe and Diego Matamoros as the King of Navarre; Joy Parker, Frances Hyland, Dawn Greenhalgh, Martha Henry, and Lucy Peacock as the Princess; Zoë Caldwell, Martha Henry, Pat Galloway, and Domini Blythe as Rosaline; John Colicos, Nicholas Pennell, Richard Monette, and Colm Feore as Berowne; Paul Scofield, William Hutt, and Peter Donaldson as Don Armado.

NOTABLE LINES

(as cited in the Bantam and Washington Square Press editions of the play)

And make us heirs of all eternity. [King 1.1.7]

. . . the huge army of the world's desires [King 1.1.10]

Fat paunches have lean pates . . . [Longaville 1.1.27]

. . . "that unlettered, small-knowing soul—" [Letter 1.1.245]

Light seeking light doth light of light beguile;
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
[Berowne 1.1.77-79]

Small have continual plodders ever won,
Save base authority from others' books.
[Berowne 1.1.88-89]

Berowne is like an envious sneaping frost
That bites the firstborn infants of the spring.
[King 1.1.104-105]

At Christmas I no more desire a rose
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows,
But like of each thing that in season grows.
[Berowne 1.1.109-11]

A man of fire-new words . . . [Berowne-1.1.182]

. . . a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman . . . [Armado 1.1.264-266]

. . . sit thee down, sorrow. [Costard 1.1.315]

Low is a familiar; love is a devil. There is no evil angel but love . . . I am for whole volumes in folio. [Armado 1.2.172-185]

A man of sovereign parts he is esteemed,
Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms.
Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.
[Maria 2.1.44-46]

This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy,
This Senior Junior, giant dwarf, Dan Cupid,
Regent of love rhymes, lord of folded arms,
Th' anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,
Liege of all loiterers and malcontents.
[Berowne 3.1.177-181]

Truth is truth. [Costard 4.1.48]

Shall I command thy love? I may. Shall I enforce thy love? I could. Shall I entreat thy love? I will. What shalt thou exchange for rags? Robes. For tittles? Titles. For thyself? Me. [Boyet 4.1.80-83]

Many can brook the weather that love not the wind.
[Nathaniel 4.2.33]

0 paradox! Black is the badge of hell,
The hue of dungeons and the school of night.
[King 4.3.250-251]

On a day—alack the day!—
Love, whose month is ever May,
Spied a blossom passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air. [Dumaine 4.3.105-108]

But love, first learnèd in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immurèd in the brain . . .
For valor, is not love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx, as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute strung with his hair.
[Berowne 4.3-321-337]

For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love.
[Berowne 4.3.351]

They have been at a great feast of languages and
stolen the scraps. [Mote 5.1.38-39]

. . . in the posteriors of this day, which the rude multitude call the afternoon. [Armado 5.1.89-90]

There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown.
[Princess 5.2.153]

The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen
As is the razor's edge invisible . . . [Boyet 5.2.281-282]

This fellow pecks up wit as pigeons peas,
And utters it again when God doth please.
He is wit's peddler, and retails his wares
At wakes and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs.
[Berowne 5.2.316-319]

Thus pour the stars down plagues for perjury.
[Berowne 5.2.395]

Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,
Figures pedantical—these summer flies
Have blown me full of maggot ostentation.
[Berowne 5.2.407-410]

Henceforth my wooing mind shall be expressed
In russet yeas and honest kersey noes.
[Berowne 5.2.413-414]

He speaks not like a man of God his making. [Princess 5.2.579]

The naked truth of it is, I have no shirt. [Armado 5.2.706]

. . . a foolish mild man, an honest man, look you, and soon dashed. He is a marvelous good neighbor, faith, and a very good bowler. [Costard 5.2.648-651]

A time, methinks, too short
To make a world-without-end bargain in.
[Princess 5.2.865-866]

[Song] When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then, on every tree
Mocks married men; for thus sings he:
Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo!
O word of fear
Unpleasing to a married ear! [Spring 5.2.884-892]

[Song] When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are plowmen's clocks,
When turtles tread and rooks and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for thus sings he:
Cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo! O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear! [Spring 5.2.883-901]

[Song] When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl:
Tu-whit, tu-whoo! A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.[Winter 5.2.902-909]

[Song] When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl.
Then nightly sings the staring owl:
Tu-whit, tu-whoo! A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot. [Winter 5.2.910-917]

The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo.
You that way, we this way. [Armado 5.2.931-932]

ABOUT THE PLAY IN OTHER FORMS

The works of Shakespeare have inspired numerous other artistic creations, including other plays, ballets, musicals, operas, and films. *Romeo and Juliet* exists as a memorable ballet, as do *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, among others. *The Boys From Syracuse*, *Kiss Me, Kate*, *West Side Story*, and *Catch My Soul* (*Othello*) have been successful musical theatre adaptations from Shakespeare. Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette*; Verdi's *Macbeth*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff*; Giannini's *Taming of the*

Shrew; Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; Thomas' *Hamlet*; and Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* are just a representative few of the hundreds of operas inspired by Shakespeare's plays. From early silent treatments to Franco Zeffirelli's wide-screen versions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, and the more recent films of *Henry V* and *Hamlet* directed by Kenneth Branagh, many of Shakespeare's plays have been given film treatment, though often in too literal or stiff a fashion for the big screen.

Love's Labour's Lost has inspired a limited number of adaptations; most specifically, six or seven operas and one extensive set of incidental music, in addition to a number of settings of the songs of Spring and Winter at the end of the play. Since the play disappeared from the stage between the early 1600s and the London revivals of 1839 and 1857, it is not surprising that all but one of the operatic adaptations have occurred in the 20th century, when interest in *Love's Labour's Lost* has revived. The exception is a French version with a book by Michel Carré and Jules Barbier, and music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart! The work, *Peines d'amour perdues*, was first presented at the Théâtre Lyrique, Paris, in 1863. The librettists, Carré and Barbier, are best known for their work on the libretti for Gounod's *Faust* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Ambroise Thomas' *Hamlet*, and Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman*. Mozart, long deceased, had his music from *Così fan tutte* adapted to a new libretto derived from Shakespeare's play. Mozart's music was much admired, but the libretto to *Così*, which told the story of two men deceiving their fiancées and being betrayed by their inconstancy, was considered too indelicate for 19th-century audiences. The similar protestations of love and a similar masquerade by the men in wooing the women in *Love's Labour's Lost* clearly suggested the use of Shakespeare's text as a replacement for Lorenzo DaPonte's original *Così* text. Doubtless, it was Carré and Barbier's general familiarity with Shakespeare that led to this adaptation as well as their later versions of *Romeo and Juliet* (1867) and *Hamlet* (1868).

Twentieth-century operas include one by Adrian Wells Beecham (1936—in English as well as French translation) that was never produced, a Czech opera by Zdenek Folprecht with a libretto by Josef and Karel Capek (first produced in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia in 1926), and other versions by Paul Ruben (1894 in French), and Paul Antonin Vidal (1911 in French).

The most significant adaptation seems to be one to an English text by W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman with music by Nicholas Nabokov. The work was commissioned by the Deutsche Oper, Berlin, and was given its first performance in Brussels in 1973. According to *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* "the music is cast in an eclectic parody style the composer called 'persiflage,' sending up *Tristan* and Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in Berowne's love aria, Weill and Eisler in the 'Discourse about Love,' American crooning in Moth's songs, Glinka and Mussorgsky for the 'Muscovite' masquerade, and catches and madrigals."

Scene from the Nabokov opera, 1973.

Elsewhere *The New Grove* notes that *Love's Labour's Lost* has attracted major composers such as Hans Werner Henze and Igor Stravinsky, both of whom expressed interest in setting it, but nothing came of either plan.

One other musical adaptation is a 27-minute suite for *Love's Labour's Lost* composed by English composer, Gerald Finzi (1901-1956). The music originated as incidental music for a 1946 BBC radio broadcast of the play. Finzi reworked it in 1952 for a concert performance. It attracted a producer's attention, and was used in a stage production of the play in 1953. Because it was produced outdoors, additional transitional music was required, and Finzi obliged. Finally, in 1955, Finzi constructed the suite which was broadcast by the London Symphony Orchestra., and which has subsequently been recorded.

The only film version of the play is that created for the BBC Shakespeare Plays, televised between 1979 and 1985. Filmed in 1984 it was the next to last play presented in that series, airing in England and the United States in 1985. The cast included Mike Gwilym (Berowne), David Warner (Don Armado), Geoffrey Burridge (Dumain), Jonathan Kent (King of Navarre), Christopher Blake (Longaville), Maureen Lipman (Princess of France), Jenny Agutter (Rosaline), John Kane (Moth), Paddy Navin (Jaquenetta), Kath Behean (Maria), Petra Markham (Katherine), and was directed by Elijah Moshinsky.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION
Before Seeing the Play

1. When we first meet King Lear does he give any evidence of his later madness?

2. What do you think Shakespeare is suggesting about the nature of the relationship between parents and children in this play?

3. *King Lear* has sometimes been described as an adult fairy tale. How does the play follow that pattern?

4. The word "Nothing" is used frequently in this play. Can you identify some of the scenes in which the word is used and why the word is significant?

5. Early in the play Lear asks "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (Act I, scene 4). Does King Lear acquire self-knowledge as the play progresses? Does he acquire an answer to his question?

6. What do you think of Shakespeare's characterization of the women in the play: Goneril, Regan, Cordelia?

7. The ending of *King Lear* has been the subject of much debate. Is the ending pessimistic ("Howl, howl, howl, howl," "Is this the promised end?", "Never, never, never, never, never.") or is there room for optimism ("This feather stirs, she lives," "Do you see this? Look on her! Look, her lips.")?

8. Discuss the ways in which clothes reveal or disguise various characters in the play.

9. Flattery and truthfulness are juxtaposed in this play. Consider which characters are prone to flattery and which to truthfulness.

After Seeing the Play

1. Did the actors portray the characters on the stage the way you imagined them when you read the play? How were they similar? How different?

2. With whom did your sympathies lie? Did those sympathies change?

3. At what point were you most involved? At what point were you least involved? Why do you think this was so?

4. Did you find the various disguisings and pretendings easy to follow?

5. What did you find new or revealing in the play after seeing the production that you did not get from a reading of the text?

6. How do you see the play in terms of what you see on TV?

7. How do you think these actors and this production dealt with the relationship between Lear and his daughters? How did this production treat the madness of Lear? How did it present the ending and what meaning did the ending suggest to you?

8. How did the production make use of music to underline action?

A SELECTED READING LIST

About Shakespeare and His Plays

Chute, Marchette. Shakespeare of London. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1949.
An easy-to-read absorbing biography.

Ribner, Irving. *William Shakespeare: An Introduction to His Life, Times, and Theatre.* Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1969.
An overview of Shakespeare. Very readable.

Schoenbaum, Samuel. *Shakespeare, the Globe and the World.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
A richly illustrated look at Shakespeare's times and his plays taken from the Folger Shakespeare Library traveling exhibit.

About Shakespeare's Theatre

Beckerman, Bernard. *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609*. New York: Macmillan, 1962.
An informative account of the staging of Shakespeare's plays in his time.

Hodges, Walter C. *The Globe Restored.* New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1954.
A well illustrated and readable attempt to reconstruct the Globe Theatre.

From a production point of view.

Shakespeare, William. *Love's Labour's Lost.*
[The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd ed., edited by H.R. Woudhuysen. London and New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1998.]
[The Oxford Shakespeare, edited by G.R. Hibbard. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1990.]
Both editions contain fine and very extensive introductory material, excellent topic and line notes. Paperback editions.

Gilbert, Miriam. *Shakespeare in Performance: Love's Labour's Lost.* Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1996.
An excellent examination of the play as produced in four key stage productions (Peter Brook, Michael Kahn, and two by John Barton), and the television version (Elijah Moshinsky).

51 Years of **Shakespeare**
1950-2000

1950	Julius Caesar
1951	Henry IV, Part I
1952	Twelfth Night
1953	Macbeth
1954	Much Ado About Nothing
1955	Othello
1956	Richard III
1957	As You Like It
1958	Hamlet
1959	The Merry Wives of Windsor
1960	Romeo and Juliet
1961	Love's Labour's Lost
1962	The Tempest
1963	A Midsummer Night's Dream
1964	Julius Caesar
1965	The Taming of the Shrew
1966	Twelfth Night
1967	Romeo and Juliet
1968	As You Like It
1969	The Comedy of Errors and The Boys from Syracuse
1970	Hamlet
1971	The Merry Wives of Windsor
1972	Richard III
1973	Measure for Measure
1974	A Midsummer Night's Dream
1975	Love's Labour's Lost
1976	Much Ado About Nothing
1977	Romeo and Juliet
1978	The Two Gentlemen of Verona
1979	The Winter's Tale
1980	Twelfth Night
1981	Macbeth
1982	The Taming of the Shrew
1983	As You Like It
1984	A Midsummer Night's Dream
1985	The Tempest
1986	Romeo and Juliet
1987	The Comedy of Errors
1988	Twelfth Night
1989	The Merchant of Venice
1990	Othello
1991	Hamlet
1992	The Merry Wives of Windsor
1993	Measure for Measure
1994	As You Like It
1995	Macbeth
1996	Pericles
1997	The Taming of the Shrew
1998	All's Well That Ends Well
1999	King Lear
2000	Love's Labour's Lost

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY'S
51st ANNUAL SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Hofstra University's Annual Shakespeare Festival began in 1950 with a production of *Julius Caesar.* Over its 50-year history the Festival has presented a varied selection of the plays of Shakespeare, lesser-known short plays from the period, musicales, and scenes from Shakespeare's plays performed by high school groups. 1999 marks the **first** time that *King Lear* has been staged, representing one of **23** plays of the Shakespearean canon presented at the Festival.

Since 1951, the second year of the Festival, plays have been performed regularly on a 5/6 life-sized replica of the Globe stage as reconstructed by John Cranford Adams, later assisted by Irwin Smith. Dr. Adams was President of Hofstra University from 1944 to 1964. The replica was built under the supervision of Donald H. Swinney, designer and technical director in the Department of Drama. The Globe was erected each spring in the Calkins Gymnasium where the Festival was presented in its early years. Since 1958 the Festival has been held in the John Cranford Adams Playhouse. In most years the replica of the Globe has been used as the setting for the Shakespeare Festival. On a number of occasions a different setting has been used, and that will be the case for this year's production of *King Lear*.

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Department of Drama and Dance