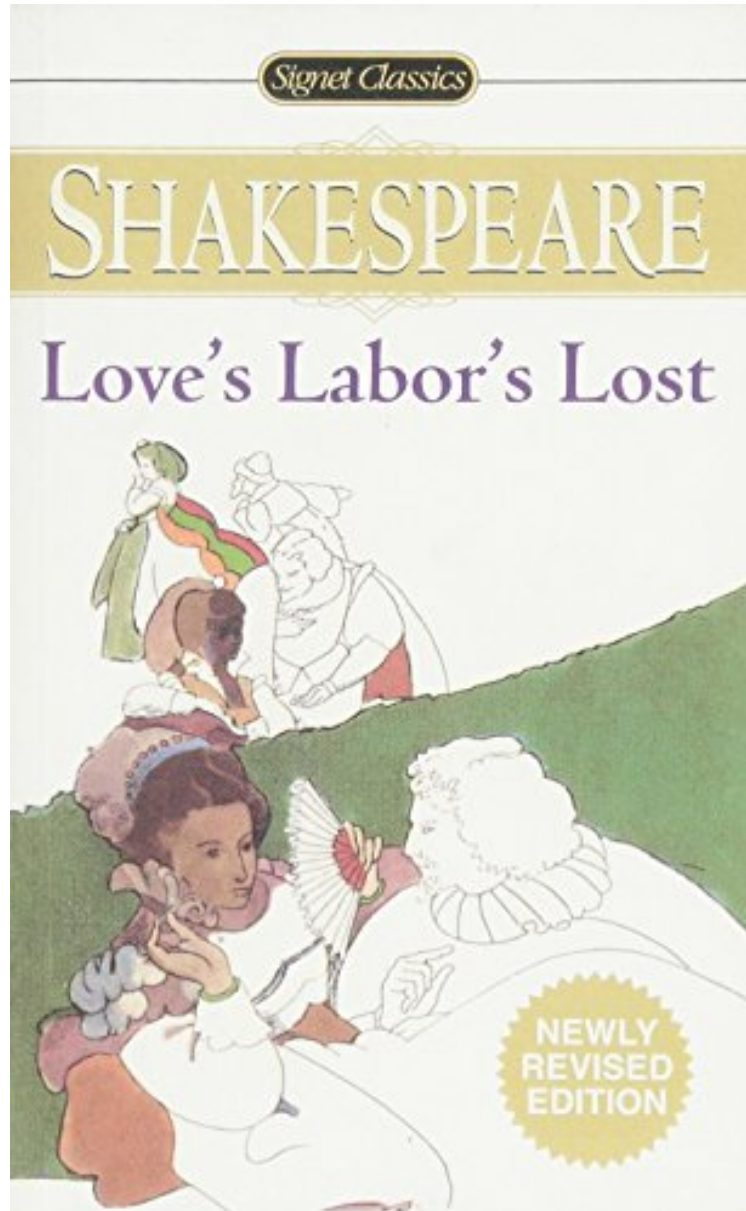


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Love's Labor's Lost (Signet Classic Shakespeare)

William Shakespeare

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#424226 in Books Signet Classics 2004-09-07 2004-09-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 6.61 x .68 x 4.19l, .35 Binding: Mass Market Paperback256 pagesGreat product! | File size: 31.Mb

William Shakespeare : Love's Labor's Lost (Signet Classic Shakespeare) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Love's Labor's Lost (Signet Classic Shakespeare):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Watch it firstBy Lynn FlehartyNo his easiest to understand due to the puns that the people of his times understood but may be harder or lost on us. And theres lots of them. But there is

an engaging story here and gems of language. Also, the female characters are very strong. I suggest you rent a movie and watch it first, it will help you follow along as you read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Pick Signet Classics By Dr. Warren Gage Signet Classics has good footnotes and also a useful introduction. Much better than other publishers that are available out there. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Head-Shaking Shakespeare By Bill Slocum I know reading Shakespeare isn't supposed to be easy, but this was ridiculous. Dense Elizabethan wordplay, obscure classical references (many in Latin), a small cast of largely indistinguishable characters, and a thin plot that ends with unfunny historical-comic soliloquies and a left-field bolt of sadness, "Love's Labour's Lost" presents more labor than love, and left me lost. In medieval Navarre, King Ferdinand and three of his lords take a vow to self-improvement for three years, through study, fasting, and the avoidance of sleep and especially women. Just then a princess from France arrives with three ladies-in-waiting. Upon learning of the king's vow, the women opt to lay waste to the men's plans by making them fall in love and abandon their vow. Hijinks become more pronounced as the men undertake to hide their feelings from each other. The Signet Classics edition includes an introduction by John Arthos calling this "one of Shakespeare's earliest and happiest comedies." I get the earliest part, as it apparently was written between 1588 and 1594 and preceded only by "A Comedy Of Errors" in the output of the young Bard. But "happiest"? It's not just a downbeat ending, but the stubborn obscurity and sense of Shakespeare as a young man showing off his dexterity with verbiage rather than involving himself more viscerally in the situations of his characters. It's hard not to concur with that famous Shakespearean scholar, Roger Ebert, who in reviewing a rare film adaptation back in 2000, called this "probably the weakest of Shakespeare's plays" and concluded: "It's not about anything." More friendly scholars have noted a revue-show quality to the way the play works, its various scenes designed chiefly to amuse like Saturday Night Live blackout sketches while kicking the can of the plot a few feet further. This could be okay; the dense rhyme schemes and pleasant scene-setting offer brilliance in composition if not in structure. There are wonderful lines, like when one of the lords, Berowne, extemporizes on love late in Act IV to bring his comrades to their collective senses. "It is religion to be thus forsworn/For charity itself fulfils the law./And who can sever love from charity?" Alas, what follows in the next act makes a hash of all the good that came before. Act V, taking up nearly half the entire play, is basically where Shakespeare spins his wheels and tortures all the good will he developed, with a lot of silly word play, role reversals, and a sudden tonal shift that leads to a surprising downbeat ending where the women decide to put off the men for a year and a day to test their worthiness as mates. As one character puts it, breaking the fourth wall: "That's too long for a play!" Especially when it's now Act V, scene ii. Shakespeare wasn't always at his best in the final act; arguably *The Tempest* presents the biggest such letdown in his canon. This time it's hard to be so put out given how uninteresting the storylines are. Except for Berowne and a Spanish lord Armado who makes for the butt of some good jokes early on, none of these characters make an impression. The women serve no driving purpose other than infecting their would-be mates with desire and then leaving them flat. The whole point of romantic comedy, at least this time around, seems to be giving Shakespeare excuse for bawdy jokes largely obscured by the mists of time and some high-toned ruminations about mortality that feel more labored than heartfelt, especially when used as an excuse to deny the audience a happy ending. I get that some people find this play compelling, though more for subtext than what's on the page directly. The problem is the business on the page repels all but the most ardent student from giving it the kind of chance it needs to get that subtext across. This is one play of Shakespeare's that seems unlikely to have reached us had another writer's name been on the title page.

Known as a "feast of language," this is one of the bard's earliest comedies, in which four bachelors who have dedicated themselves to chastity and scholarly pursuits soon encounter the women of their dreams.

About the Author William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was a poet, playwright, and actor who is widely regarded as one of the most influential writers in the history of the English language. Often referred to as the Bard of Avon, Shakespeare's vast body of work includes comedic, tragic, and historical plays; poems; and 154 sonnets. His dramatic works have been translated into every major language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.