

THE DUBUQUE SHAKESPEARE PROJECT

at the Carnegie Stout Library, Dubuque, IA

Fall 2024

BECOMING THE BARD

Love's Labor's Lost

Synopsis: A college comedy with four pairs of lovers and a delightful sendup of pedantry. The King of Navarre and his three friends take an oath to devote themselves to studies and forswear women. The Princess of France and her three friends arrive soon after setting up a raucous farce that is also one of his subtlest explorations of language itself.

Discussion Topics:

- As the title implies, love and endless ruminations on it dominate the play. Berowne's long speech (the longest in all of Shakespeare) is devoted to his surprise at falling in love. How does Shakespeare present love in different forms and offer commentary?
- The ending of the play is a sudden turn towards melancholy after a series of expert farcical scenes. What thematic purpose does the ending signify?
- The play is a 'feast of languages' where language is both exalted and ridiculed. Shakespeare even coined his longest word (which was also the longest word in the English language for a long time) and has a comic character use it. At the same time, Shakespeare examines different modes of intelligence. How does Shakespeare portray the intersection between language and intelligence?

Folger Text Links: <https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/loves-labors-lost/>

Kanopy Film link: <https://www.kanopy.com/en/dubuque/video/789005>

Other resources to consider:

Love's Labor's Lost, 2000 movie by Kenneth Branagh

Shakespeare in Kabul, 2012 book by Landrigan & Omar about the staging of Love's Labor's Lost in liberated Afghanistan.

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Carnegie-Stout Public Library 360 W 11th Street, Dubuque, IA