

Love's Labours Lost

SYNOPSIS

Love's Labour's Lost

Ferdinand, the King of Navarre, and three of his lords, Berowne, Longaville and Dumaine, form a little 'academe'. They make a solemn agreement to study there for three years without any contact with women. However, the Princess of France and three of her ladies arrive on a diplomatic visit, throwing the men's plan into confusion as soon as the agreement is made.

The men from Navarre try to get the better of each other in reading aloud their (bad) love poems, and are overheard by the women. The women then outwit the men in a scene involving Russian disguise. The men's opinions seem to be changing to a belief that love is more important than study.

A comic sub-plot concerns a Spaniard who speaks extravagantly, his clever page, a country fool and a pregnant dairymaid, with contributions from a preacher and a pedantic schoolmaster, Holofernes, leading up to a pageant of classical and biblical figures, the 'Nine Worthies'.

Halfway through this show a messenger, Marcadé, arrives from the French court to announce the death of the Princess' father. The mood becomes more serious, and the women give the men the task of performing a year's penance or community service before they are prepared to marry them.

Media:

DVD:

Love's Labours Lost (BBC TV Shakespeare 1985), dir. Elijah Moshinsky

Love's Labours Lost (2000), dir. Kenneth Branagh

Love's Labours Lost (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre production 2009)

CD Audio:

Love's Labours Lost (Arkangel Complete Shakespeare)

[Michael Mitchell]