

friends take an oath to devote themselves to scholarship and avoid women for a period of three years. He decrees that no woman will come near his court. Soon after the princess of France arrives, along with three ladies from her retinue, to discuss whether France owes money to the kingdom of Navarre. The French delegation is granted an audience with Ferdinand, who immediately becomes smitten with the princess. Each of his attendants, as well, have been captivated by different ladies accompanying the princess. One by one, the men let slip their love for the women; they agree to break their vow and pursue their respective love interests. The men visit the princess and her attendants in disguise but are recognized by the women who tease them. The men return out of costume and declare their love. After a lavish pageant, word arrives at the court that the king of France is dead; the princess declares she will not consider Ferdinand's suit before a year of mourning has elapsed. Her attendants do likewise with their suitors and they return to France.

This quarto is bound in stone-marbled paper wrappers with a plain paper spine and hand-written label with "Loves Labors Lost by | Shakespeare 1598." A note by Heber on the front pastedown reads "Bindley's Sale Pt. III n. 2041. Feb. 1819." The stamp "BIBLIOTHECA | HEBERIANA" appears on the front flyleaf.

Now at the British Library, this first quarto of *Love's Labours Lost* was once owned by James Bindley (1737–1818), British Commissioner of Stamp Duties (1765–1818) and a book collector specializing in early English literature. His collection was sold in five sales over a two-year period, at which Richard Heber, whose acquisitions included this quarto, was the



was then acquired by the booksellers William Boone (1795–1870) and his brother Thomas Boone (1790–1873); they sold it in 1864.

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