

A rare quarto edition of Shakespeare's *Pericles*

William Shakespeare, *Pericles*. London: Thomas Pavier, 1619. 4o, [68] pages, χ1 R–Aa4 Bb2 (–Bb2).

THE LATE, | And much admired Play, | CALLED | Pericles, Prince of | Tyre. | *With the true Relation of the whole Hi-* | story, aduentures, and fortunes of | the saide Prince. | Written by W. SHAKESPEARE. | [Heb Ddieu device] | Printed for *T. P.* 1619.

Shakespeare's quartos, so named because of their format (a single sheet folded twice, creating four leaves or eight pages), are the first printed representations of his plays and, as none of the plays survives in manuscript, of great importance to Shakespeare scholarship. Only twenty-one of Shakespeare's plays were published in quarto before the closure of the theaters and outbreak of civil war in 1642. These quartos were printed from either Shakespeare's "foul papers" (a draft with notations and changes that was given in sections to actors for their respective roles); from "fair copies" created from foul papers that presented the entire action of the play; from promptbooks, essentially fair copies annotated and expanded by the author and acting company to clarify stage directions, sound effects, etc.; or from a previously published quarto edition. The quartos were inexpensive to produce and were published for various reasons, including to secure the acting company's rights to the material and to bring in money during the plague years in London when the theaters were closed.

Narrated by Gower, the play tells the complicated story of Pericles, eventual king of Tyre. The story opens with Antiochus who is offering his daughter's hand to any suitor who can answer a riddle—failure means death. Pericles gives the correct answer, which exposes Antiochus as having an incestuous affair with his daughter. Pericles flees to Tarsus and saves the nation from famine by bringing stores of corn. He is called back to Tyre but is shipwrecked on Pentapolis, where he wins in a jousting tournament and the hand of the king's daughter Thaisa. Pericles is told that Antiochus and his daughter have been killed by a fire from heaven and he departs

Pentapolis to return to Tyre. The ship encounters a great storm and Thaisa dies in childbirth. Her body is put in a chest and washes up in Ephesus, where she is revived. Thinking that his infant daughter Marina won't survive, Pericles leaves her in Tarsus, where she is raised by the king and queen and becomes the object of jealousy. Before she can be killed, Marina is captured by pirates and sold into prostitution on Lesbos, where she cleverly retains her virtue. Pericles returns to Tarsus to find his daughter and is told she is dead. After several more adventures Pericles, now the king of Tyre, is reunited with daughter and wife; the play closes with Gower proclaiming the joys that result from living a virtuous life.

This fourth quarto of *Pericles*, now at the National Library of Scotland, is in a nineteenth-century half-leather binding: dark green straight-grained morocco spine and tips edged with gold rules, dark tan boards. Lettered in gold: "PERICLES" in the second compartment; "WM. | SHAKESPEARE" in the fourth and "1619" at the spine foot. The bookplate of John Patrick Crichton Stuart, the third Marquis of Bute is on the front pastedown; the bookplate for the Bute Collection of English Plays is on the back pastedown.

This quarto was purchased by the National Library of Scotland from Major Michael Crichton Stuart on 3 April 1956. It is part of the Bute Collection of early English plays that was initially formed by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762). It was expanded by her son-in-law John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, and further enlarged by her grandson the first Marquis of Bute, also named John Stuart (1744–1814), who notably acquired 39 Shakespeare quartos. The collection contains 1,266 English plays and includes seventeenth- and eighteenth-century adaptations of Shakespeare's plays and examples of the foremost dramatists from Elizabethan, Jacobean, Caroline, and Restoration periods; also included are a number of promptbooks.

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