



# AS YOU LIKE IT

or, Love in a Forest

by William Shakespeare  
and Charles Johnson





Based on *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare  
and *Love In A Forest* by Charles Johnson  
with additional text from *Rosalynde* by Thomas Lodge

Adapted and Directed by Cassie Greer

July 12 - 29, 2018  
The Vault Theater

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## INTRODUCTION

Adventure. Mistaken Identity. Romance. Rivalry. Comedy. Love. Written at the end of the 16th century, *As You Like It* was potentially the first of Shakespeare's plays to be performed at the new Globe Theatre, as it opened on the south bank of the Thames in 1599. After 1603, however (and despite a warm reception from audiences), the play disappeared from records of public performances until the 18th century, when Charles Johnson presented a new adaptation of the text entitled *Love In A Forest* at the Drury Lane Theater in London. True to playwrights of the Restoration and post-Restoration era, Johnson streamlined Shakespeare's original, trimming potentially-confusing subplots, focusing the action of the central characters, and more closely examining the remaining relationships playing out on stage.



Arianne Jacques and Amber Bogdewiecz play Celia and Rosalind in Bag&Baggage's *As You Like It* or, *Love In A Forest*. Photo by Casey Campbell

B&B's new adaptation of *As You Like It* takes its inspiration from Johnson's *Love In A Forest* — both in terms of streamlining the text, centralizing our focus on the themes of love, exile, community, and transformation; and in the use of the Johnson text itself. Shakespeare aficionados will be delighted to discover little "easter eggs" from the Bard hidden in the play, which includes lines from *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Richard II*. And audiences expecting to watch the same old Rosalind-Orlando love story play out will be charmed by the inclusion of a second unexpected relationship that blossoms between Celia and Jaques. With love even more firmly fixed at the center of the play, B&B's *As You Like It* or, *Love In A Forest* promises to bring audiences an examination of romance and its ability to redeem even the most dire of human experiences.

## AS YOU LIKE IT (in 3 Panels)



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# AS YOU LIKE IT

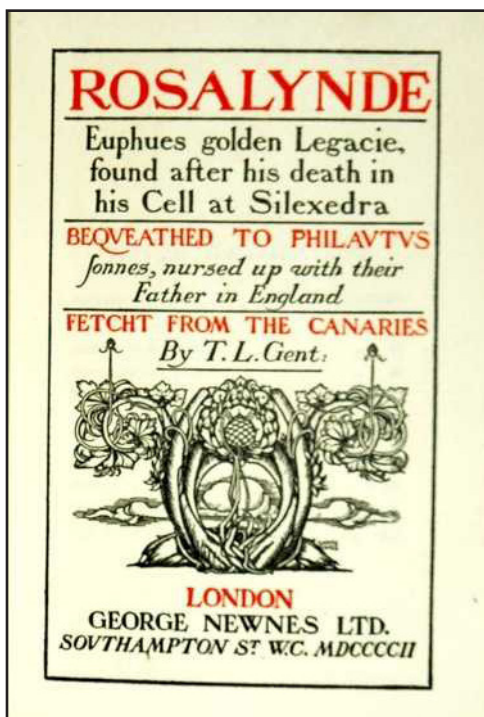
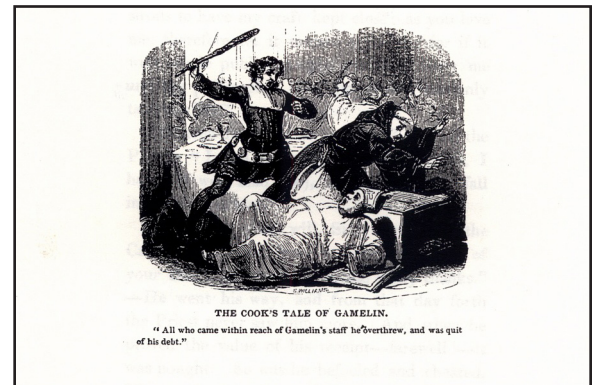
or, Love in a Forest



## HISTORY: ORIGINS & INFLUENCES OF AS YOU LIKE IT

Shakespeare may be regarded as the greatest dramatist of the English language — and rightfully so — but very few of his plays contained stories that were entirely of his own creation. *As You Like It* has two main pieces of source material: *The Tale of Gamelyn* and *Rosalynde*, both written by other Englishmen in the years leading up to Shakespeare. From these sources, Shakespeare took the basic plot, setting, and conflicts of *As You Like It*, infusing these elements with his own special touch of poetry and humor.

*The Tale of Gamelyn* is a 900-line poetic romance written around 1350 and wrongly attributed to Chaucer and included in *The Canterbury Tales*. The basic story follows a young man as he overcomes a series of obstacles in order to retrieve his rightful inheritance, including a vengeful older brother, a wrestling match, exile in a forest setting, and a loyal servant named Adam — all elements that show up in Shakespeare's play. *The Tale of Gamelyn* is part-adventure story, part-social critique, confronting the corruption of the law, and illuminating a lack of moral and political consistency.



In 1590, English physician and author Thomas Lodge borrowed many of these elements as he composed his prose romance *Rosalynde*, while on a sailing expedition to the Canary Islands. Lodge added to the wrongly-ousted-younger-brother storyline by giving him a love interest, and including a whole bunch of poetry, some fun verbal trickery, and distinctly literary banter. The Lodge plot — all the way down to many of the character names — provided the backbone for Shakespeare's play which, in historians' best guesses, was written around 1599.

Shakespeare's play was potentially the first piece staged at the new Globe Theater in 1599, though there is no solid record of its performance during Shakespeare's lifetime (aside from a 1603 staging for King James at Wilton House, where he was visiting during the bubonic plague). Contemporary audiences appreciated *As You Like It* for its spirit, its music (it contains more songs than any other Shakespeare play), and its focus on pastoral love. It was later performed in 1669 under a royal warrant by the King's Company in London, but its appearance on English stages was relatively sparse.

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British playwright and tavern-keeper Charles Johnson revisited the text in 1723, with an adaptation entitled *Love In A Forest*. Johnson claimed to be trained in the law (though there is no documented evidence of this), and was fairly politically savvy — a point that is only noteworthy because his political climate was very concerned with the use of forests and forest-dwellers. Johnson was writing at the end of the Restoration Era — a period ripe with theatrical entertainment, appealing to audiences of all classes with broad physical comedy, complicated bustling plots, and the introduction of women on stage for the first time.

Johnson was also an early proponent of Sentimental Comedy, which became the favored form of drama in the mid-to-late 18th century. Sentimental Comedy was a reaction to perceived moral corruption of the early Restoration, with its bawdy sexuality and embracing of vices depicted on stage. Playwrights of this style believed that what had started out as drama ridiculing vice ended up instead highlighting and supporting vice among the general population, and they instead sought to arouse the enthusiasm of their audiences with virtue, not with immorality. It was also during the end of the Restoration that Shakespeare was rising to prominence as a symbol of British nationalism, in part due to the earlier Restoration adaptations of many of Shakespeare's plays keeping his name in the cultural spotlight.



18th century forest "poachers"

Amid these new late-Restoration developments, one remaining element of the early Restoration was the value of up-to-the-minute topical writing to engage audiences on a more personal level, and comment upon relevant social and political issues at the theater. Choosing to adapt this forest-based Shakespeare play, the politically-minded Charles Johnson was not-so-subtly referencing the Black Act of 1723, a draconian piece of legislation that made it illegal to hunt or fish in the forest, criminalized any type of "disguise-wearing" while in the forest, and ultimately introduced the death penalty for over 50 more-or-less mundane acts — most of which were perpetrated by the lowest classes of society who made the forests their home. Critics argued that all the Black Act really did was criminalize poverty and suppress legitimate protest, while enabling the rich to profit off of land in new ways.

Johnson, as a member of the Whig Party, thought the Black Act was a good idea. And while *As You Like It* provides an extremely socially and politically relevant setting for 1723 audiences who were hyper-concerned with forest land use, it's a bit puzzling that he — true to the Shakespeare — paints so sympathetic a picture of the characters who are exiled to live there. He does play up Duke Senior's laments about killing deer and Jaques' "moralizing" on the way nature sometimes reflects the ills of society, but aside from that, he uses a newly-composed prologue and epilogue to point out that people really shouldn't be living in the forest, and that urban areas are better for expanding the intellect and living a good life. He also included text from a number of other noteworthy Shakespeare plays: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Twelfth Night*.

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## OUR PRODUCTION

Shakespeare's play is one of the most frequently-produced around the world, and for good reason: the story isn't over-complicated, the plot isn't too heavy, the character of Rosalind is one of the best female roles in the entire Shakespeare canon, and the script contains some of the Bard's most famous verses, including Jaques' "all the world's a stage" speech. It is charming and witty, a great example of porto-feminist writing — as Rosalind, a young woman, is afforded the opportunity to educate her lover — and succeeds at being intelligent as well as entertaining.



A scene from *As You Like It*: Rosalind, Celia and Jaques in the Forest of Arden by John Edmund Buckley (1864)

Our production at Bag&Baggage takes the Shakespeare and combines it with Charles Johnson's adapted text (in addition to incorporating a bit from Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*), streamlining the narrative, trimming some sub-plots, and working to highlight the ways that different characters approach the concept of "love" in all its forms. *As You Like It or, Love In A Forest* is a romantic comedy that aims at finding the best in humanity, and because of this, we think this play has some pretty significant things to say to our audiences.



A Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh

If you look at its history, the *As You Like It* narrative — all the way from its roots in *The Tale of Gamelyn* — has a pedigree of social commentary and political engagement. And really, when we look at the elements of the story, contemporary issues for our 21st century world are not too far off. This play, at its heart, is the story of a group of people who have been exiled from their country, exploring what it means to build community in the face of rejection, and discovering how the ability to choose who and how you love can help transform our assumptions about how social interactions and groups "should" look. Even if this is a romantic comedy at the end of the day, we cannot ignore the fact that the backdrop is a little weightier than we often give it credit for, and that this play might, in fact, have some pretty important stuff to say.

With the overarching circumstance of exile, we are reminded of the global refugee crisis; of the ongoing immigration debate in this country, and the separation of "illegal" children from their parents; of the protections offered by Sanctuary Cities, and the protests that have arisen in the face of this hotly-contested issue. These are stories that surround us daily, but for most of us, these are not our stories to tell. In the same way that the "banished" in *As You Like It* come from a pedigree of privilege, we too have the luxury of being observers of these conflicts. You will see echoes of these themes in *As You Like It or, Love In A Forest*, and that is no accident, but we do not presume to know anything about what it truly means to be exiled from one's land. What we do know is that now, more than ever before, it is so crucial that we consider what building these walls — both literal and metaphorical — does to our communities, and how we can, in the face of these realities, continue to figure out how to come together and love each other. For of all the elements that make us uniquely human, love is among the most powerful.

This is the conversation we hope to have with *As You Like It or, Love In A Forest*; please join us at the theater and explore these important issues with us!



## THEMES

### Love

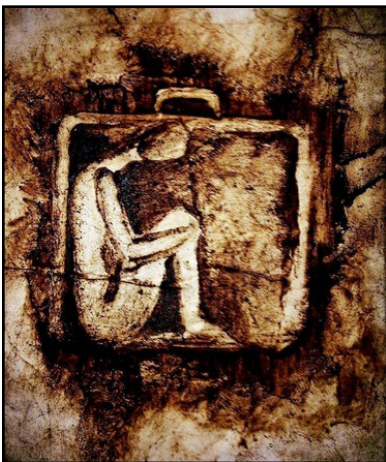
What is love? Miriam Webster lists 14 different definitions of this word; the Urban Dictionary, at this time of referencing, has 1,514 entries; the ancient Greeks used 7 different words to describe their identified 7 different states or modes of love. This is a tricky word to try to pin down. Regardless of how much we seek to define love and its different facets, and regardless of how much it continually defies definition, most of us can agree to identify “love” as a force of nature, as well as one of the major underpinnings of our existence as human beings. In taking on a play nominally about “love”, we are taking on an exploration of one of the central things that makes us human: our ability to experience this illusive force in all its many forms — as well as the experience of its absence.



Shakespeare scholar Edith Holding writes “...each facet of love is a reflection of a common nature which Shakespeare intentionally explores. His creation is an enigmatical world of human beings who can employ their natural intelligence in re-assessing the effects of Fortune, reinterpreting adversity if necessary; in other words, ‘translating’ it into a system of values to which they can be reconciled.”

So what does it mean each time the word “love” is used in this play? How is Phebe’s definition different from Jaques’ definition, different from Rosalind’s definition, different from Orlando’s definition? What are the traits that each of these definitions share? And what exactly does the absence of love do to us?

### Exile



Punishment. Banishment. Expulsion. Absence. Displacement.

The poet Ovid regarded exile as a “living death”, and an imposed venture into the Unknown. Exile comes with a certain amount of fear, a certain lack of resources, and a requisite sense of harshness and separation. And it is the status of the majority of characters we encounter in *As You Like It* or, *Love In A Forest*. The 21st century resonances with the concept of Exile are unavoidable: the current global political debates surrounding refugees, immigrants, border detentions, and sanctuary cities are central to the way we understand the idea of “banishment” in our world.

Who makes the rules about those who are exiled and those who are allowed to remain, and why? Is exile ever an appropriate political or social action? How are our cultures affected by the practices of exile and exclusion?



## Community

Like love, there are an overwhelming number of ways to try to define the concept of “community”. Megan Garber’s piece in The Atlantic last summer — “What Does ‘Community’ Mean” — does a great job of capturing the perspective we’re taking in this show:



*For much of the 20th century, if you asked someone to define “community,” they’d very likely give you an answer that involved a physical location. One’s community derived from one’s place—one’s literal place—in the world: one’s school, one’s neighborhood, one’s town. In the 21st century, though, that primary notion of “community” has changed. The word as used today tends to involve something at once farther from and more intimate than one’s home: one’s identity... Community, in this sense, is not merely something that one fits into; it is also something one chooses for oneself, through a process of self-discovery... It speaks to the rise of the individual as a guiding force in culture; it speaks as well to the declining power of institutions to offer that guidance.*

Garber concludes her piece by pointing out: “‘Community,’ after all, the OED notes, is rooted in the Middle French communauté. The word may have come to suggest a ‘body of people who live in the same place,’ but, initially, it meant something much simpler and much more powerful: ‘joint ownership.’” Joint ownership; the individual as the guiding force in culture; the declining power of institutions: these concepts are all at play in *As You Like It* or, *Love In A Forest*, as we see how the exiled, out of necessity at first, build community with each other.

What does it mean to explore yourself as an individual as a way of exploring yourself in relationship to the rest of the world? How does community in the forest look different from the community of court, and what elements of forest community make their way out of Arden back to court at the end of the play?

## Transformation

Any good piece of theatre takes both characters and audiences on a journey of change, and *As You Like It* or, *Love In A Forest* is up there with the best of them. This play features a plethora of transformations: Jaques’ transformation from the melancholy and skeptical philosopher into the unintentional lover; Orlando’s transformation from the lovesick boy into the love-able young man; Rosalind and Celia into Ganymede and Aliena, and back again; Duke Senior’s transformation from the head of the government to the usurped and deposed forest-dweller, and back again; each character has their own example, even in the most subtle of ways.

What is the change — the maturing, the growth, the learning — that happens in each instance? For those whose transformations feature the “and back again” component, what is different about the return to something that was once hyper-familiar? And most importantly, how does this group of characters transform as a community?



## LANGUAGE & SHAKESPEARE

**Meter:** a unit of rhythm in poetry, the pattern of the beats. Each pattern of beats is also called a **foot**. Each foot contains a certain number of syllables, and the different meters are determined by which syllables are accented and unaccented.

**Iamb:** a type of poetic foot in which the first syllable is unaccented, and the second is accented.

**Iambic Pentameter:** a line of poetry containing five iambs. In other words, using ten syllables per a line of verse in unstressed and stressed pairs.

Most of Shakespeare's plays are written using iambic pentameter as the poetic meter. Here are some examples from *As You Like It* or, *Love In A Forest*:

ROSALIND:           Come shep-herd to your cot-tage lead us on;  
We bet-ter fare by rest than words of love.  
and

JAUQUES:           They have their ex-its and their en-tran-ces  
And one man in his time plays ma-ny parts.

Deviations from the iambic pentameter pattern can be used for emotional effect:

DUKE SENIOR:       Why, how now, mon-sieur! What a life is this...  
and

ADAM:               Brief I re-cov-ered him, bound up his wound...

Sometimes characters share a line of verse, this helps elevate tension and pick up pace:

ORLANDO:           I will not touch a bit.  
DUKE SENIOR:       Go find him out,  
and we will no-thing waste till you re-turn.  
and

SILVIUS:           Sweet Phe-be  
PHEBE:             Ha, what say'st thou Sil-vi-us?

**Prose:** ordinary speech with no regular pattern of accentual rhythm. Lines of text do not all have the same number of syllables nor is there any discernible pattern of stresses. Shakespeare generally uses prose in more informal moments; much of *As You Like It* is written in prose, denoting the relaxed nature in which most of the characters speak to each other.



**Rhetoric:** the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques. Here are some of the different figures of speech used in *As You Like It or, Love In A Forest*:

**Alliteration:** repetition of initial or medial consonants in two or more adjacent words.

ROSALIND: *I would try, if I could cry 'hem' and have him...*

**Assonance:** a figure of repetition in which different words with the same or similar vowel sounds occur successively in words with different consonants; you can also think of assonance as two or more words with similar vowel sounds sandwiched between different consonants. Here's an example containing two instances of assonance:

CELIA: *...devise the fittest time and safest way  
to hide our flight...*

**Asteismus:** a figure of reply in which the answerer catches a certain word and throws it back to the first speaker with an unexpected twist or unlooked for meaning.

JAQUES: *I do not like her name.*  
ORLANDO: *There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened.*  
JAQUES: *What stature is she of?*  
ORLANDO: *Just as high as my heart.*

**Parallelism:** a figure of balance identified by a similarity in the syntactical structure of a set of words in successive phrases, clauses, sentences; successive words, phrases, clauses with the same or very similar grammatical structure.

ROSALIND: *I'll have no father, if you be not he;  
I'll have no husband, if you be not he;  
Nor ne'er wed woman, if you be not she.*

**Antithesis:** a rhetorical device in which two opposite ideas are put together in a sentence to achieve a contrasting effect.

SILVIUS: *Wherever sorrow is, relief would be.  
If you do sorrow at my grief in love,  
by giving love, your sorrow and my grief  
were both exterminated...*

**Anaphora:** the deliberate repetition of the first part of the sentence in order to achieve an artistic effect.

PHEBE: *And so am I for Ganymede.*  
ORLANDO: *And so am I for Rosalind.*  
ROSALIND: *And so am I for no woman.*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & WRITING ACTIVITIES

### Before you see the show:

1. Imagine that you are tasked with writing the dictionary entry for “love”. How would you define the word?
2. Consider your group of friends as its own community.
  - a. How did you come to be a community?
  - b. What are the shared values of this community of friends?
  - c. How are these values demonstrated?
  - d. How do these values reflect or counter the values of the broader community in which you live?
3. Discuss a time in your life when you have experienced some kind of transformation — be it in attitude, appearance, understanding, etc. What did it take on your part in order for this transformation to happen, and how were you influenced by the people and environment surrounding you?

### After you see the show:

4. *As You Like It or, Love In A Forest* is structured to juxtapose different characters, attitudes, and settings. Discuss three specific examples of juxtaposition in the play, and what this structure made you consider about these characters/attitudes/settings.
5. Consider the three romantic relationships we see in the wedding at the end of this play: Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Jaques, Phebe and Silvius. Do you think each of these relationships is destined to last? Why or why not?
6. True to the style of Elizabethan and Restoration theatre, *As You Like It or, Love In A Forest* has both a prologue and an epilogue. (Text of both of these is included on the following page for reference.)
  - a. How do these pieces shape or change the way you watch or perceive the play?
  - b. Consider the themes you found most important in *As You Like It or, Love In A Forest* and then compose your own prologue or epilogue bringing the audience’s attention and focus to these themes.
  - c. Consider which character(s) you would have deliver your prologue/epilogue and explain your choice(s).
7. Orlando expresses his love for Rosalind by writing poetry on trees. Find an artistic way to declare your love for some other person, thing, or concept: poetry, visual art, music, dance, etc. Keep in mind the many definitions of love, and which type of love you are declaring in your creative expression.
8. Critics of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* say that the play lacks substance and high artistry, failing to challenge the audience either thematically or intellectually. While Bag&Baggage’s production attempts to provide a bit more of a challenge, the basic plot (rich, privileged people sent into the woods, where they then have fun exploring love) remains the same. Do you agree with the critics of Shakespeare’s play? Does Bag&Baggage succeed in saying something deeper? Why or why not?
9. What are the primary elements you noticed in Duke Frederick’s court? What are the elements you noticed in Duke Senior’s community in the forest? How do you imagine the court will look with Duke Senior restored to power? Is it really possible for a leader to have that much influence over the individual lives of citizens?



## PROLOGUE

JAQUES

Gentlemen, and ladies too, look not here to find any sprigs of Pallas' bay tree, nor to hear the humour of any amorous laureate, nor the pleasing vein of any eloquent Orator — they be matters above our capacity. Here you may perhaps find some leaves of Venus' myrtle, but hewn down by a soldier with his curtal-axe, not bought with the allurements of a filed tongue. It is a simple tale of wit and love; of malice and fraternity; of exile and return — and living each, how newly we may perceive. If you like it, so: and yet I will be yours in duty, if you be mine in favour. Here may you see that virtue is the king of labours, opinion the mistress of fools; that unity is the pride of nature, and contention the overthrow of families. Therefore, see; censure with favour, and fare you well.

*Exeunt*

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## EPILOGUE

CELIA

We thank you, friends, and patience beg once more.  
Now that we have dispatched our tale of joy,  
We ask you to give ear to weightier words:  
Know you: there is not one among us here  
Who truly knows what banishment entails:

ROSALIND

To be an exile, to be forced to flee,  
Plodding to ports and coasts for transportation.

ORLANDO

While here we sit as kings in our desires,  
Still thousands wait, without hope of such promise.

JAQUES

Theirs is not our story, nor our story to tell.  
Our lives are safe: no threat of riot or wrong  
Will break upon our heads. We need never fear  
The swift stroke of the clamorous hand of hate.

DUKE SENIOR

Friends, grant us this: in your mind's eye, imagine  
How insolence and strong hand prevail oft,  
That wretched strangers, babies at their backs,  
With their poor luggage flee for their lives.

SILVIUS

Yet must they needs be strangers? May we not  
Then welcome them with kindness and with care?

PHEBE

Can we not pour our bounty forth again,  
As easily we laughed and reveled here?

AMIENS

Here, for a silent breath, let us forsake  
All mirth — good reason why — and give salute  
To heav'n that we need never fear such banishment.  
Our birth has made it so, so blessed we be.

CELIA

Pass, then, the failures of our simple tale,  
As all we know for sure's that we must love —  
Not just in forests, but in all the world  
To forge and to transform communities.  
For if, by any joy you here are moved,  
be this, your noble pleasure, best approved.

*Exeunt*



## SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

### **As You Like It or, Love In A Forest Source Material**

**The Tale of Gamelyn:** <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/tale-of-gamelyn>

**Rosalynde by Thomas Lodge:** <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17181>

**As You Like It by William Shakespeare:** <http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/html/AYL.html>

**Love in a Forest by Charles Johnson:** Eighteenth Century Collections Online Print Edition, ISBN 1170644082

Signe Larsen and TS McCormick play Charles/Lord/Phebe >  
and Duke Frederick/Duke Senior in Bag&Baggage's  
production of As You Like It or, Love In A Forest.  
Photo by Casey Campbell



### **Articles and Essays**

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**“Early Georgian Politics and Shakespeare: The Black Act and Charles Johnson’s *Love In A Forest* (1723)”**  
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<https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521632250>