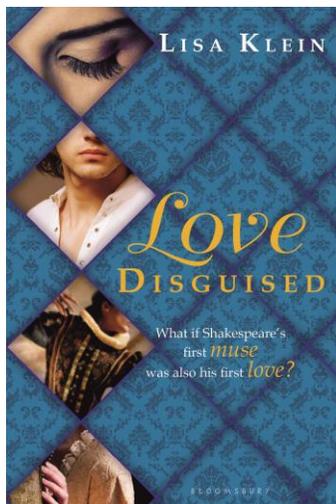


A CLASSROOM GUIDE

Love Disguised

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Part One: Summary.

Chapter 1. Her father dies in prison and her mother murders a lecherous priest, then commits suicide, leaving Meg McDougall an orphan.

Chapter 2. Will Shakespeare clashes with his father, a glovemaker with legal troubles.

Chapter 3. Meg disguises herself as a boy, Mack, and joins thieves Davy Dapper and Peter Flick. Fleeing from a robbery, they leave her behind.

Chapter 4. Meg forces Nick Grabwill to steal women's clothing for her and goes to the Boar's Head Inn to start a new life.

Chapter 5. Will is attracted to Catherine Hathaway, while her older sister, Anne, is attracted to Will. Will writes and acts in a local pageant, angering his father.

Chapter 6. Will arranges a nighttime rendezvous with Catherine, but it is Anne who meets him instead. Not recognizing her, he vows his love. The next day his father sends him to London with 25 crowns to settle a debt owed to William Burbage. When he goes to tell Catherine, he learns of Anne's deceit and flees from her and the furious Catherine.

Chapter 7. Meg, working as a tavern maid for Gwin and Master Overby, rues her increasing height, and take measures to stop growing.

Chapter 8. Fleeing from her father and Thomas Valentine, her betrothed, Violetta arrives at the Boar's Head and is hired as a maid.

Chapter 9. Meg teases the naïve Violetta and is astonished when Davy and Peter show up at the Boar's Head in the company of a young man from Stratford.

Chapter 10. Will arrives in London and makes two new friends who take him drinking at the Boar's Head, where Meg throws them out. Will stays to watch a bad play, then discovers he's been robbed.

Chapter 11. Meg tells Will that Mack, her twin brother, was betrayed by Davy and Peter. Will, now penniless, stays at the Boar's Head to write a play. Violetta falls in love with him.

Chapter 12. Meg offers her brother's services to help Will find the villains who robbed him.

Chapter 13 Meg buys a suit of man's clothing. When Violetta discovers it, Meg buys her silence by promising to woo Will on Violetta's behalf.

Chapter 14. Meg (as Mack) leads the nervous Will to a thieves' lair, which is empty except for a starving child.

Chapter 15. Roger Ruffneck, Davy, and Peter secretly follow Mack and Will, trying to remember Will's last name and deciding Long Meg is a man in disguise.

Chapter 16. Mack leaves Will and returns to the Boar's Head, becomes Long Meg again and fends off Violetta's questions.

Chapter 17. A young doctor, Thomas Valentine, finds Will unconscious in a puddle and tends to his injuries. Will relates how he was attacked and his sword taken from him.

Chapter 18. At the Boar's Head, Will tells a tall tale of his fight. Meg knows the culprit is Roger Ruffneck. Violetta is upset to hear that Valentine is nearby. Meg and Will banter.

Chapter 19. Again Mack and Will explore London, their friendship deepening. Mack makes half-hearted attempts to praise Violetta, but Will is not interested.

Chapter 20. Meg exults that she has stopped growing. Will has been procrastinating while the court date approaches. Mack goes with him to find Thomas Greene, the lawyer, whose fee Will can't pay. He steals a handbook and begs Mack to study it and play the lawyer. Mortified, Mack confesses that he can't read.

Chapter 21. Will offers to help Mack memorize the parts. Secretly Meg is afraid Will could die in prison like her father.

Chapter 22. In Shottery, Anne Hathaway reflects on her deceit, her past love, and her desire to escape her stepmother's household.

Chapter 23. Mack and Will visit the "bawdy court" where they see Roger Ruffneck divorcing his wife Jane, using Davy and Peter as false witnesses. Mack robs Ruffneck and his lawyer.

Chapter 24. Davy and Peter run away, with Will in pursuit. The villains topple a dung cart. Will's pistol goes off. He demands money from Davy and Peter, which the carter promptly steals from him.

Chapter 25. Mack gives Jane Ruffneck her rightful riches and takes her to the Boar's Head for safety. Will returns with a merry tale of his pursuit. Violetta is full of conflicting emotions.

Chapter 26. Will tries to rehearse a performance of a new play, *Cleopatra*, with the inn's ragtag employees. Overby mentions that a man named James Burbage owns a playhouse in Shoreditch.

Chapter 27. Will, Meg, Violetta, and Overby go to the playhouse. Will is intrigued by a womanish man in the audience, and Meg is afraid he can see through Mack's disguise. The silly play moves Meg, as does Will sitting by her side.

Chapter 28. Will and Meg find James Burbage, whose brother turns out to be William. Will asks for a job to work off the debt, but William Burbage wants the full amount in court. Meg recites some of Will's new verses, astonishing James Burbage—and Will.

Chapter 29. Meg and Will return to the Boar's Head to find Gwin upset because a frightening man came looking for someone named Mack.

Chapter 30. A nervous Mack, dressed as a lawyer, and Will go to Westminster, where a heedless judge sentences Will to Bridewell prison.

Chapter 31. Mack begs James Burbage to pay Will's debt and free him from prison. In turn they will join Burbage's company. No sooner is Will freed than Mack is arrested for the assault on Roger Ruffneck.

Chapter 32. Thomas Valentine, seeking his beloved Olivia, runs into Will and agrees to testify against Roger Ruffneck in order to help free Mack.

Chapter 33. In prison, Mack finds Nick Grabwill's son, also a victim of Roger Ruffneck. When old Grabwill brings his son bread, Mack/Meg asks for his help to turn the tables on Ruffneck in court.

Chapter 34. Justice Littlewit is befuddled by the proceedings in his own court. Will plays a lawyer, the witnesses Davy and Peter are discredited and arrested, and Jane Ruffneck is a surprise witness who testifies that Roger killed a priest. At this, Mack faints.

Chapter 35. Valentine rushes forward to treat Mack. Violetta embraces him. Meg's identity is revealed, depriving the court of the defendant, Mack. The trial dissolves in celebration.

Chapter 36. Violetta/Olivia and Valentine are reconciled. Meg's revelation has unsettled Will, confusing his feelings about Mack/Meg. He writes to his father that the debt is settled.

Chapter 37. Meg leaves the Boar's Head to make a living on the stage in Shoreditch.

Chapter 38. Will catches up to her on the road, and Meg struggles to make him understand that she is both Mack, his friend, and Meg, a woman.

Chapter 39. Meg plays Cleopatra to Will's Antony, and rumors that a woman is acting bring in bigger audiences. The Earl of Leicester wants Will to write a play for the queen. With Will's help, Meg is teaching herself to read and write.

Chapter 40. Will has writer's block. In the night he goes to his muse, Meg, for assistance. A messenger summons Will to Stratford. He asks Meg to accompany him (in disguise) but she refuses. They almost kiss.

Chapter 41. In Stratford, Anne knows she is pregnant and contemplates her loneliness.

Chapter 42. John Shakespeare confronts Will and demands that he marry Anne.

Chapter 43. Will goes to see Anne. She will not force him to marry her. He leaves, but the thought of Meg's reaction at his abandonment of Anne and their child causes him to turn back and tell Anne he will marry her.

Chapter 44. Burbage is desperate for his play. Meg finds Will's unfinished work, a play called *Love Disguised*, and a pair of left-behind gloves. Slipping them on, she starts writing.

Part Two. Cross-curricular Topics for Discussion, Writing, and Research

I. Literature. Exploring Themes: Disguise and Early Modern Identity

Objectives: To develop skills of close reading. To apply inductive reasoning to reach a definition. To identify themes and their significance not only within the work but in the wider culture.

This activity could begin as a class discussion about disguise, using both *Love Disguised* and one or more of Shakespeare's comedies (*As You Like It*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Merchant of Venice*). Discussion questions can evolve into a writing topics.

Disguise is an important feature of Elizabethan comedy. Keep in mind the simplest definition of comedy as a play ending happily (i.e. in marriage.) In comedies, conflicts are overcome, blocking figures kicked aside, and misunderstandings cleared up. Marriage is a symbol of concord.

- A. Begin by making a list of all the characters in *Love Disguised* who disguise themselves in any way, whether it's by changing clothes or pretending to be something or someone else. Based on your examples, define "disguise." What is the motivation of each character in assuming his or her disguise? Does the disguise succeed in its purpose? Is it convincing—to the other characters and/or to you, the reader?
- B. Why is disguise such an important feature of comedy? How does it relate to the humor we expect in a comedy? How does it add to the conflict? What does it have to do with marriage?
- C. Discuss how the prohibition against women onstage relates to the popularity of disguise in plays.
- D. "Disguise adds realism while at the same time emphasizing the artifice of drama." Do you agree? Why or why not.
- E. Why is disguise most often used by female characters? Discuss how disguise affects gender roles, especially in a patriarchal society. What other social norms are challenged by characters in disguise? Use a Shakespearean comedy as a comparison to *Love Disguised*. Consider, too, that disguise is always abandoned eventually.

- F. Considering the many uses of disguise, what can you infer about the concept of identity in early modern England? Is it fixed or flexible? Today, what forms of disguise do we employ in our own culture, and for what purposes?
- G. Watch the movie *Tootsie* (1982). Compare and contrast the use of disguise by Dustin Hoffman's character to its use by Meg. What does each character learn about gender roles and human nature while in disguise?

II. Literature: The Structure of a Novel.

Objectives: To analyze the structure of a complex novel by examining its parts. To acknowledge students' differing learning styles. To recognize the essential elements in a piece of writing and present them in comprehensible order.

- A. Write a 200-250 word plot summary of *Love Disguised*. Focus on the main action between Will and Long Meg, but include the subplots: Ann Hathaway's predicament, Violetta's escape and return to Thomas Valentine, the deceits of Davy Dapper and the thieves. Show how the main characters change over the course of the novel.
- B. Create a visual summary of the action of *Love Disguised*. It can be a map, a diagram, a timeline, a series of circles. Use images, signs, colored pencils. Find a way to represent the subplots as they relate to the main action, the Meg and Will story.

Discuss:

Which exercise is easier for you? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each approach? What did you leave out of your summary and why? Which kind of summary (written or visual) helps *you* to better understand this novel in particular and/or the shape of novels in general? What do the exercises teach you about your learning style? As you present your results to the class, or listen to a presentation, note the effects on you and the other students.

(Students might work individually or in groups. Half might be assigned the written summary and half the visual one and the results compared.)

Also try:

- C. "Plot = Character + Action. That is, plot is not something a writer plans; it is character IN action." What are the main character traits of Meg and Will? How do these traits bring about the action of the story? Or disagree with the formula and make your own argument about how character, action, and plot are related. Use specific examples from your reading.

III. Literature: Fiction vs. Drama

Objective: To engage students actively and creatively in discerning how a novelist and a playwright work differently to achieve a desired effect on the reader/audience.

- A. Do a visual or verbal summary of a Shakespeare play. Discuss how the structure of the play differs from that of a novel. How do novelists and playwrights differ in their strategies for developing character and showing action? How does the fact that Shakespeare's plays are entirely dialogue affect your reading experience and your grasp of character and action?
- B. Compare Long Meg to one or more of Shakespeare's comic heroines: Rosalind in *As you Like It*; Viola in *Twelfth Night*; Helena in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, or Portia in *Merchant of Venice*. How do you think the practice of boys playing women's parts affected the roles Shakespeare wrote for women? How might his plays be different if he were writing with female actors in mind?
- C. Choose a scene from *Love Disguised* and rewrite it as a short dramatic scene. Leave out stage directions. Does this make the scene harder or easier to write? Do you have to make any changes to the dialogue to help explain the action or setting? What other changes did you make to change the novel format into drama? Perform your scene for the class and discuss your choices afterward. Did your audience respond the way you expected them to?

Suggested scenes:

Will, Anne, Catherine, last three pages of chapter 6.

Meg, Violetta, Gwin. First 3 pages of chapter 9.

Davy, Peter, Will, Meg. Chapter 10, tavern scene.

Will, Meg, Richard Burbage, William Burbage. Last 3 pages of chapter 29.

Meg, Grabwill Junior, Grabwill. Last 3 pages of chapter 33.

Will and Meg. Middle 3 pages of chapter 39.

Will and Meg. Last 3 pages of chapter 40.

Will and Anne, chapter 43.

(Note: students should not be guided to make their scene completely faithful to the novel.

Marks of individuality that result will lead to an interesting discussion about how every author, director or actor revises the work of his or her predecessors.)

IV. Humanities: Inductive Reasoning/Informative Writing.

Objective: To draw from concrete examples the general principles governing a subject and organize them into an informative essay with a particular audience in mind.

- A. It is the 1580s and the popularity of plays is starting to take off in England. The experience of going to a public, secular play, rather than an old-fashioned morality play, is new to everyone. Audiences delight in disguise, trickery and deceit, love triangles, and mistaken identity. Playwrights, playgoers, and theater owners are trying to keep up with the demand of this rapidly changing medium. Your task is to write **A Handbook of the Drama** for their use and edification. If you wish, imagine young Will Shakespeare as your reader. Or you may write for your fellow students, providing them a guide to accompany their reading of Shakespeare.

Using *Love Disguised* as your primary resource, describe the state of the drama in the 1580s. What kinds of plays and themes did audiences enjoy? What were some of the conventions in popular plays? How was the situation in towns compared to London? What were the laws and social attitudes governing players and performances? Describe the spaces in which plays were performed and how a play was rehearsed by an acting company. Give your handbook a table of contents, an introduction, and a conclusion. From what you know about London at the time, what made it an ideal place for the drama to flourish?

(Note: Though *Love Disguised* is fiction, its depiction of the theatrical scene is historically accurate, drawing on primary and secondary sources. Students wishing to check their conclusions or needing further information might consult Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* or Russ McDonald, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*. This would also make a good group project.)

V. Humanities: the Law

Objective: To move from textual representation of a legal problem to its real-world solution. To recognize sameness and difference in the law and its contexts over time.

In Shakespeare's day, the practice of law and legal education were becoming institutionalized in London's Inns of Court. But there were plenty of people—like Will—using the system without any specialized legal training, even bringing cases without lawyers. (See the Author's Note at the end of *Love Disguised*.) Review Will's experience with the law as depicted in the novel as preparation for your own research. To spark interest, perhaps compare the punishments for certain crimes in Shakespeare's day to those issued today.

- A. Imagine your friend owes you \$1000 for work you did on her house. You have both signed a contract, but she is refusing to pay and you decide to sue. How do you begin a lawsuit and where? What court has jurisdiction? What costs are involved? Do you need a lawyer? Research how such a case would proceed through the court system in your city, county, or state. If possible, attend a court hearing and/or interview (by phone or in person) a legal professional such as a court bailiff, lawyer, or a prosecutor. Present your findings in essay form or as a diagram/chart.

Reflect on how your process of researching and solving a legal problem differs from Will's. What are the resources available to you in the 21st century, and do they make the legal system more or less navigable by ordinary people?

VI. Economics: Coinage, Prices, and Wages

Objective: To gain a fuller picture of economic activity and opportunity in the early modern world as compared to today.

- A. Shakespeare's father owed William Burbage ten pounds, a considerable sum at the time, while admission to a play cost one penny. Begin by making a list of sums of money and prices you find in *Love Disguised*. Then research the money of Elizabethan England. What were the relative values of an angel, a crown, a shilling, and a pound? Who printed the money, and from what substance? What were the prices of some everyday goods? How much did workingmen earn? How do those wages and prices compare to today's? What was the welfare system for the poor such as Meg and her family?

Discuss: Was economic inequality greater then than now? In the depiction of London in *Love Disguised*, is there evidence of entrepreneurship and social mobility? Have cultural attitudes toward wealth and poverty and "getting ahead" changed since Shakespeare's time?

VII. History: Mapping Early Modern London

Objectives: To give visual learners an alternate way into a written text and to assist all students in visualizing the past. To introduce students to the use of primary sources available online.

- A. Two marvelous resources, used together, provide the novelist or historian a vivid portrayal of London in Shakespeare's day. One is the Agas Map of London, dating from 1560. The other is John Stow's *Survey of London* (1603), a quirky and fascinating description of the city and its history. In this step-by-step whole-class project, students will map the events of the novel directly and delve further into historical locations. The result of both A and B will be a sort of almanac of Shakespeare's London.
1. Go online to www.mapoflondon.uvic.ca. (Both the map and Stow are available here.) Print out each section of the map and assemble on posterboard.
 2. Have students comb *Love Disguised* and make a list of the London sites and streets named.
 3. Using the website's search function, locate the sites of key scenes from the novel and label them on the map.
 4. Using a highlighter, mark Will's movements through the city.
 5. Have students individually or in small groups choose a particular location. (e.g. Westminster, St. Paul's Church, Cheapside, Shoreditch, Tower of London, Southwark). Searching under "locations," find out a little more about a particular place. Click on the reference for a fuller citation from Stow's *Survey*. Write a further description of the site and its importance to the city. Some sites will also appear in a search under "literary references."

(Note: the search function can be tricky. Instead of "St. Paul's Church," simply type "Pauls." The map is also available as *The A to Z of Elizabethan London*, compiled by Adrian Prokter and Robert Taylor (1979), although it is very expensive.)

- B. Have students select different chapters from Stow's *Survey of London* and report to the class new information that sheds light on Shakespeare's London. The entire text of Stow is available at www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=593.

Resources:

Gurr, Andrew. *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*. Cambridge University Press, 1987.

McDonald, Russ. *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents*. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2001.

Picard, Liza. *Elizabeth's London*. New York: St Martin's, 2003.

www.shakespeare.mit.edu. Complete works of Shakespeare.

www.shakespeare.palomar.edu. Comprehensive Shakespeare website.

www.folger.edu. Wonderful digital image library.

www.mapoflondon.uvic.ca

www.british-history.ac.uk

Also see Author's Note and suggestions for further reading at the end of *Love Disguised*.