



The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Comedies (Cambridge Introductions to Literature)

Penny Gay

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Why did theatre audiences laugh in Shakespeare's day? Why do they still laugh now? What did Shakespeare do with the conventions of comedy that he inherited, so that his plays continue to amuse and move audiences? What do his comedies have to say about love, sex, gender, power, family, community, and class? What place have pain, cruelty, and even death in a comedy? Why all those puns? In a survey that travels from Shakespeare's earliest experiments in farce and courtly love-stories to the great romantic comedies of his middle years and the mould-breaking experiments of his last decade's work, this book addresses these vital questions. Organised thematically, and covering all Shakespeare's comedies from the beginning to the end of his career, it provides readers with a map of the playwright's comic styles, showing how he built on comedic conventions as he further enriched the possibilities of the genre.

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