

# PLAYING FOR THE QUEEN

*THE CURTAIN THEATER. The performance of Romeo and Juliet has just ended, with William Shakespeare (WILL) in the title role. There is a silence and then enthusiastic applause. VIOLA has been playing the role of Juliet, under the name of Kent, in violation of the law which prohibits women from acting in public. Although her father married her against her will to Lord WESSEX, she is in love with WILL and he is in love with her. The NURSE is her companion. BURBAGE is the director of the theatre. The Admiral's Men and the Chamberlain's Men are two companies of actors. TILNEY supervises the morality of the plays being given in London. The QUEEN has secretly been attending the performance.*

**TILNEY** (*shouts triumphantly*). – I arrest you in the name of Queen Elizabeth!  
*The audience goes quiet. Burbage jumps out of the audience onto the stage.*

**BURBAGE**. – Arrest who, Mr. Tilney?

5 **TILNEY**. – Everybody!, The Admiral's Men, The Chamberlain's Men and every one of you ne'er-do-wells<sup>1</sup> that stands in contempt<sup>2</sup> of the authority invested in me by her Majesty.

**BURBAGE**. – Contempt? You closed the Rose<sup>3</sup> – I have not opened it. [...]

**TILNEY** (*He points a "J'accuse" finger at Viola*). – That woman is a woman!  
*The entire audience and the actors recoil and gasp<sup>4</sup>. The nurse crosses herself.*

10 **ALLEYN**. – What?! A woman?! You mean that goat<sup>5</sup>?!  
*He points at Viola. [...]*

**TILNEY**. – I'll see you all in the clink<sup>6</sup>! In the name of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth – [...]

**VOICE**. – Mr. Tilney...!

*It is Queen Elisabeth herself, descending now, her hood and cloak<sup>7</sup> thrown back. [...]*

15 **QUEEN**. – Have a care with my name, you will wear it out<sup>8</sup>.

*(People back off and bow as Queen Elisabeth takes the limelight<sup>9</sup>.)*

The Queen of England does not attend exhibitions of public lewdness<sup>10</sup> so something is out of joint<sup>11</sup>.  
Come here, Master Kent. Let me look at you.

*Viola comes forward, and is about to curtsy when she catches the Queen's eye and she makes a bow instead.*

20 Yes, the illusion is remarkable and your error, Mr. Tilney, is easily forgiven. I know something of a woman in a man's profession, yes, by God, I do know about that. That is enough from you, Master Kent. If only Lord Wessex were here!

**VOICE**. – He is, Ma'am.

*The voice belongs to a young boy who points to Wessex, who is trying to hide in the audience.*

25 **WESSEX** (*weakly*). – Your Majesty...

**QUEEN**. – There was a wager<sup>12</sup>, I remember... as to whether a play can show the very truth and nature of love. I think you lost it today. (*Turning to the boy.*) You are an eager<sup>13</sup> boy. Did you like the play?

**BOY**. – I liked it when she stabbed herself<sup>14</sup>, your Majesty.

*The queen looks at Shakespeare.*

30 **QUEEN**. – Master Shakespeare. Next time you come to Greenwich, come as yourself and we will speak some more.

*Will bows deeply. The Queen leaves the theatre.*

Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*, 1999

<sup>1</sup> Ne'er-do-wells: *vauriens*

<sup>2</sup> ...stands in contempt of: *ceci est contraire à*

<sup>3</sup> the Rose: another theatre in London owned by Burbage and closed by Tilney

<sup>4</sup> recoil and gasp: *ont un mouvement de stupéfaction*

<sup>5</sup> goat: *chèvre*

<sup>6</sup> in the clink: slang for prison

<sup>7</sup> hood and cloak: *capuchon et cape*

<sup>8</sup> to wear out: *user*

<sup>9</sup> take the limelight: *arrive sur le devant de la scène*

<sup>10</sup> lewdness: *obscénité*

<sup>11</sup> is out of joint: *est détraqué*

<sup>12</sup> wager: *pari*

<sup>13</sup> eager: *vif*

<sup>14</sup> to stab oneself: *se poignarder*

# SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE

## MAKING SENSE

### ➤ Background:

1. Watch the film and recognize the various people mentioned in the introduction (*The Curtain Theater*, p. 1).
2. How many characters of the play are mentioned?
3. Did the audience like the play? Who played women characters on stage at the time?
4. Viola is in trouble for two reasons. What are they?
5. Burbage is in trouble too. For what reason?
6. What is the secret that none of the people involved know about?

### ➤ Lines 1 to 11: the play

7. Why is Tilney arresting the actors?
8. What is Burbage's response? What message does he try to get across?
9. How do people respond to the accusations that there was a real woman on stage playing a woman's role? Do they find it funny or shocking? A sacrilege?
10. Can you finish Tilney's sentence line 11?

### ➤ Lines 12 to 22: The Queen

11. What does Queen Elizabeth do to reveal who she is?
12. What marks of respect does the audience show her?
13. How does Viola show her respect to the Queen? (lines 18 to 19)
14. Is the Queen treating her like a woman or like a young boy?
15. What words does the Queen use to show that Tilney is mistaken?

### ➤ Line 23 to the end: Lord Wessex

16. What was the wager between them? Why did Wessex lose his wager in your view?

## GRAMMAR

### 1. Prétérit et *present perfect* (forme HAVE + V-EN)

S'adressant à Tilney qui a fait fermer son théâtre, Burbage dit: *You closed the Rose, I have not opened it* (1. 6). Pourquoi deux formes verbales différentes?

Avec le ....., la fermeture du théâtre est vue comme un événement qui appartient au passé, un événement historique, inscrit dans une chronologie. On pourrait ajouter *some time* ..... Au contraire, en employant le ..... dans ....., Burbage ne situe pas ce qu'il a fait ou n'a pas fait dans le passé – il est d'ailleurs impossible d'ajouter une date avec un ..... Il dit qu'au moment où il parle, le théâtre n'est toujours pas .....

### 2. Deux valeurs du prétérit

Étudiez la différence entre le prétérit dans *You closed the Rose* et dans *If only Lord Wessex were here*.

En disant ....., Burbage dit que l'initiative prise par Tilney est située dans le passé : c'est la valeur temporelle du ..... Au contraire, quand la Reine dit regretter l'absence de Lord Wessex, nous sommes dans le présent. On pourrait fort bien ajouter un adverbe de temps comme ..... La Reine pense que Lord Wessex n'est pas là au moment où elle parle: *If only Lord Wessex were here now* (sous entendu *but* ..... ). C'est cette partie de la phrase que contredit le gamin quand il dit, au ..... : *He is, ma'am*. Nous avons là la valeur modale du.....

Valeur ..... et valeur ..... ont toutefois un point commun: la chose n'est pas vraie dans le présent, soit parce qu'elle n'est vraie que dans le passé, soit parce qu'elle est donnée comme fausse ou irréal. Il existe une différence morphologique entre les deux valeurs du prétérit. Dans un style soigné comme ici, on a au prétérit ....., ..... à toutes les personnes et non *was*.

# SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE

## 3. Les verbes performatifs

Les verbes performatifs sont des verbes qui accomplissent (*to perform*) l'action qu'ils énoncent. En disant *I arrest you in the name of Queen Elizabeth* (l. 1), Tilney ne se contente pas de décrire ce qu'il fait, il le fait: investi par la reine de l'autorité de police, il arrête effectivement les comédiens du fait même qu'il dit qu'il les arrête.

Parmi les énoncés suivants, lesquels sont performatifs?

- a) *I declare the meeting closed.*
- b) *I'll see you soon.*
- c) *I promise to behave.*
- d) *I have promised to behave.*
- e) *No smoking.*
- f) *I don't smoke.*
- g) *He speaks English.*
- h) *I play squash.*

Pour décrire ce qui se passe dans le théâtre, un témoin pourrait dire: *Tilney ..... the comedians*. Ce faisant, il utiliserait le verbe *arrest* à la forme ..... Seule la forme ..... peut avoir une force performative.

## 4. Present perfect simple et present perfect progressif

Exemples du texte: 1. *The QUEEN has secretly been attending the performance.*  
2. *I have not opened it.*

Mettez le verbe à la forme qui convient. Lorsque plusieurs réponses sont possibles, donnez-les toutes.

- a) *What (do) you this afternoon?*
- b) *Tom is reading a book. He (read) ten pages so far.*
- c) *Tom is reading a book. He (read) for one hour.*
- d) *I (study) English for ten years.*
- e) *The car is clean: Bill (wash) it.*
- f) *His hands are very dirty: he (wash) the car.*
- g) *How many books (write) you?*
- h) *How long (write) you?*
- i) *I (send) her two e-mails today.*
- j) *I (write) letters today.*

## 5. Verbe- + préposition + V-ING.

Exemple du texte: ... *the law which prohibits women from acting in public.*

Complétez les phrases suivantes à l'aide de la préposition qui convient et du verbe entre parenthèses à la forme appropriée.

- a) *John thanked me ..... him. (help)*
- b) *The teacher was accused ..... properly. (not + behave)*
- c) *I am looking forward ..... from you. (hear)*
- d) *I don't feel ..... today. (study)*
- e) *We eventually succeeded ..... what we wanted. (find)*
- f) *I wonder what prevents him..... . (come)*
- g) *She apologised ..... so rude. (be)*
- h) *I hope you'll forgive me ..... before. (not + write)*
- i) *He insisted ..... . (pay)*
- j) *They blamed him ..... that he was leaving. (not + tell)*

## TALKING POINTS

1. What does the boy's answer tell you about the tastes of the people at the time?
2. What does the Queen mean when she says "the Queen of England does not attend exhibitions of public lewdness"? What is her purpose? Is she fooled by Viola? Can you imagine why she likes going to the play?
3. Look up the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* and report to the class. Why does the play show "the very truth and nature of love"?
4. What does the Queen mean by her "profession"? What events in her life might have inspired the remark she makes in the play?