

## Shakespeare — Sweetheart

each other's eyes the new-born love which was to live forever, to the time when he left me for a while, five years ago; nay, even until now, I am Shakespeare's sweetheart. And so it is my right, as it is also my pride and delight, to tell the story of our love for the great multitudes who held Will dear, for the shadowy, unborn multitudes who shall pay homage to his memory in years to come. Truly, the story is sacred to me; but he is not mine alone; he is also the world's, the world that loved him, that he loved.

After all, however, Master Ben Jonson is responsible for my trying to tell this tale of mine. For yesterday, with a great noise and bustle, as is his wont, he rode up to the gates of New Place and called loudly for me. I was sitting in the garden, sewing, and the instant after he had bellowed forth my name he beheld me.

"Good-morrow, Mistress Shakespeare," he cried, waving his hand to me. "Thou art the very dame I wish to see. Art weary, art busy? If so, I will leave my errand until later. This sorry nag of mine must be stabled at the inn;" and he gave a vicious dig at the poor beast he bestrode. Master Jonson is not at his best on horseback.

