



Lover's Vows

Elizabeth Inchbald (Adaptor) , August von Kotzebue

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Lover's Vows (1798) was featured by Jane Austen in her novel Mansfield Park, is one of at least four adaptations of August von Kotzebue's *Das Kind der Liebe* (1780). Inchbald's version is the only one to have been performed. Dealing as it does with sex before marriage and illegitimate birth, Inchbald in the Preface to the published version declares herself to have been highly sensitive to the task of adapting the original German text for "an English audience."

Lover's Vows Details

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From Reader Review Lover's Vows for online ebook

Leslie says

This 1798 adaptation by Elizabeth Inchbald of the German play *Das Kind der Liebe* by August von Kotzebue was a surprisingly quick and easy read. The play, about an unwed mother and her illegitimate son, is in some aspects a typical melodrama but the morality advocated isn't of the Victorian variety.

I downloaded this from Project Gutenberg because I am rereading *Mansfield Park* and this is the play that Tom Bertram and the others decide to put on. Jane Austin's contemporary readers would have been familiar with the play but the scene in which Maria and Julia argue about who will play Agatha was a bit unclear to me. So glad I decided to take the time to read this!

Keith says

I read this play out of curiosity after reading *Mansfield Park* to understand how Austen used it in her novel, but this sentimental play also has merits of its own that make reading it enjoyable. The plot is a bit simple and most of the characters are largely stereotypical, but some of them are still interesting -- for instance, the Count is a memorable fool and scoundrel. Much of the dialogue is well-written and even witty in places, as in the scene between Amelia and Anhalt. Inchbald's satire on bad poetry is hilarious.

McLean says

This story is a fairly paint-by-numbers standard melodrama. And yet I found it surprisingly more clever and funny than I was expecting. Definitely worth the read, and something I anticipate revisiting in the future.

Georgiana 1792 says

Perché Jane Austen scelse questa commedia per *Mansfield Park*? Cosa avevano da obiettare Fanny e, in un primo momento, Edmund alla scelta di questa commedia?

Diciamo che già sul titolo tedesco dell'opera da cui è stata tratta questa piece teatrale, *Das Kind der Liebe* (*Il figlio dell'amore*), ci sarebbe da obiettare. L'opera infatti doveva essere rappresentata a Mansfield Park da numerose signorine nubili, e non era bene che venissero messe in contatto con una situazione che all'epoca sarebbe stata considerata piuttosto delicata. Un conto era andarla a vedere a teatro, un altro conto recitarla.

Tanto più che una di loro doveva interpretare la parte della donna sedotta e abbandonata. Maria, nell'imporsi per la parte di Agatha, trova come giustificazione il suo essere fidanzata, al contrario della più giovane e "ingenua" Julia. In realtà lei vuole fortemente quel ruolo per poter stringere ripetutamente al seno Henry Crawford/Frederick, il figlio dell'amore.

Riguardo agli altri ruoli, credo che Anhalt sia perfetto per Edmund e il Conte Cassel per Rushworth; c'è

quasi una corrispondenza.

Anche Mary Crawford come Amelia è perfetta, sebbene il personaggio della commedia non si faccia scrupoli a scegliere un umile precettore/ecclesiastico per amore, senza pretendere da lui che abbia ambizioni che ne migliorino il valore sociale. È evidente che Amelia sia innamorata del suo Anhalt, mentre di Mary Crawford continuo a nutrire i miei dubbi.

Tutti i commenti al GdL sul Diario delle Lizzies/Old Friends & New Fancies

<http://ildiariodellelizzies.blogspot....>

Dan says

Rereading Mansfield Park, and stopped along with Fanny to read the play this time. Poor Edmund, not quite knowing the source of his own distaste.

Now, with the family reunited and the utterly superfluous Count (with his 2-and-40 lines) disposed of, back to Mansfield Park.

Tallon Kennedy says

P cool. Amelia is great.

Christopher (Donut) says

A short play, adapted from Kotzebue by Mrs. Inchbald, who explains in a preface that she worked from a literal translation from the German, modifying it for the English stage.

Of course, it is worth reading, if only to understand what the characters in MANSFIELD PARK are on about:

"... Simplicity, indeed, is beyond the reach of almost every actress by profession. It requires a delicacy of feeling which they have not. It requires a gentlewoman—a Julia Bertram. You will undertake it, I hope?" turning to her with a look of anxious entreaty, which softened her a little; but while she hesitated what to say, her brother again interposed with Miss Crawford's better claim. "No, no, Julia must not be Amelia. It is not at all the part for her. She would not like it. She would not do well. She is too tall and robust. Amelia should be a small, light, girlish, skipping figure. It is fit for Miss Crawford, and Miss Crawford only. She looks the part, and I am persuaded will do it admirably."

Tom Bertram began again— "Miss Crawford must be Amelia. She will be an excellent Amelia."

"Do not be afraid of my wanting the character," cried Julia, with angry quickness: "I am not to be Agatha, and I am sure I will do nothing else; and as to Amelia, it is of all parts in the world the most disgusting to me. I quite detest her. An odious, little, pert, unnatural, impudent girl. I have always protested against comedy, and this is comedy in its worst form." And so saying, she walked hastily out of the room, leaving awkward feelings to more than one...

The part of Agatha, which the Miss Bertrams both covet, did not strike me as the preferable role- she is Frederick's mother.. but I suppose such a downcast heroine was the ideal showcase role for a 'real actress' in the age of JANE SHORE. I read 18th C. plays all the time, and it was NOT a golden age for drama. I agree with Tom Bertram that Mary Crawford was perfect for Amelia.

I tried to write a plot summary, but it was actually more tedious than the play itself, which is melodramatic, but brisk.

Lawrence says

What a fantastically compelling play!! Possibly my favourite thing I've discovered during fields. Well-paced, well-plotted, and full of delightful quips and moving monologues. Made me want to re-read Mansfield Park just to admire how perfect it is for that novel, and made me want to see it staged.

Duckpondwithoutducks says

This play, first published a couple of hundred years ago, raises some interesting moral questions, but is really only known today for being the play that they plan to act out in Mansfield Park. And that's the only reason why I read it! It was neat to see the real story behind Agatha and Amelia and Anhalt that is talked about in Jane Austen's novel - now I have to go back and reread MP!

Barbara Ruuska says

I'm re-reading "Mansfield Park." I decided to read the play at the same time as Fanny. I think we were both shocked at the choice of this play for a "home" theater production. It's a total piece of trash, but fun to be able to quickly read and follow the plot line of the novel.

Cynda says

3 Stars. Read to satisfy my curiosity: How does this play inform the reading of the novel Mansfield Park by Jane Austen? This play would have been known by many of Austen's readers as it was a German play translated into English and enacted in Covenant Garden where it was a notable success. Other readers, like me, would read the play after reading the novel and delight in the parallels.

For more information about the play:
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lovers%20in%20Mansfield>

I read this play online at an University of Pennsylvannia educational site within copyright law:
<https://digital.library.upenn.edu/wom...>

This website includes the Mansfield Cast so I did not have find it through my bookcase, dig through the

novel to determine the cast members and their characters. Thank you.

This play deepened my appreciation of the various characters, particularly the clown Mr Rushmore who plays a similar enough character himself that it makes me more freely smirk at Mr Rushmore.

The play-within-a-novel has sexual overtones, which fortunately are not realized in the play Inchbald translated from the German.

I will leave readers of Mansfield Park and Lovers' Vows to make other connections.

Extra Note: I do agree with Fanny Price: This might not be the best play to enact at the mansion.
(view spoiler)

Stephanie Jane (Literary Flits) says

See more of my book reviews on my blog, Literary Flits

In her Preface, Mrs Inchbald relates the changes and cuts she made to von Kotzebue's original *Das Kind der Liebe* which is why I have reviewed *Lovers' Vows* in her name rather than as a translation of his work. I understand that much of the essential narrative is the same, but deep multi-page German speeches were condensed to just three or four English lines and the ending was changed so I suspect that reading *Lovers' Vows* is much like watching a film version of a great novel - this is the drastically abridged version!

Lovers' Vows is now most famous I think for being the play rehearsed by characters in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. My copy of that novel had the text of *Lovers' Vows* as an addition and I found reading it interesting as it gave a more rounded understanding of relevant *Mansfield Park* scenes. As a play in its own right though, it is pretty dire! Taken in its historical context I suppose this tale of pre-marital sex, illegitimate children and daylight robbery must have been thrillingly shocking to its audiences, but it is such a short work that, to modern eyes at least, so much overwrought angst from shallow undeveloped characters is laughable. I also frequently cringed at the 'humour' spoken by the patronised commonfolk characters and at the butler's terrible poetry. As a historical curiosity or alongside a group reading of *Mansfield Park*, I think the play might be fun to perform and perhaps even to watch, but otherwise I would be happy never to revisit it again!

Nicole D. says

Today this play is most famous for being put on in Jane Austen's novel *Mansfield Park*. It is about a woman named Agatha who was seduced by the future baron of the village and he didn't marry her and it's many years later and the child they had is grown, the baron married someone and she died and he is a widower with

a daughter and has come back to the village, and Agatha is poor and her son has just come back and wants his birth certificate and finds out who his father is.

It is a quick nice little read and you understand even more why there is such a fuss about it being suitable to act in Mansfield Park. I enjoyed seeing more about the characters each person in Mansfield Park would have played and understand the play scene in Mansfield Park better for reading the play. If you are a Jane Austen fan and always wanted to know what was said in Lover's Vows I recommend this book. It is very short only 70+pages and I read it in one sitting.

Ana Rînceanu says

This could have been a great drama / genuine redemption story, if the author had not tried to make it a comedy and give us such a forced ending.

Gemma says

Loved it. I've come to love all things Inchbald. She was such an incredible woman and a crucial intellectual in the radical Jacobin scenario; her story is so fascinating and her plays are engaging and modern (adore her feminist views).

Will slowly catch up on other comedies of hers.
