



Widows and Suitors in Early Modern English Comedy

Jennifer Panek

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The courtship and remarriage of a rich widow was a popular motif in early modern comic theatre. Jennifer Panek brings together a variety of texts, from ballads and jest-books to sermons and court records, to examine this staple of comic theatre in its cultural context. She persuasively challenges the stereotype of the lusty widow as a tactic to dissuade women from second marriages, arguing instead that it was deployed to enable her suitors to regain their masculinity, under threat from the dominant, wealthier widow.

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