



# A Lover's Complaint: A Narrative Poem (William Shakespeare Classics)

*William Shakespeare*

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*A Narrative Poem*

*Classic Shakespeare*

## **A Lover's Complaint**

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"A Lover's Complaint" is a narrative poem published as an appendix to the original edition of Shakespeare's Sonnets. It is given the title "A Lover's Complaint" in the book, which was published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609.

Although published as Shakespeare's work, the poem's authorship has become a matter of critical debate. The majority opinion is that it is by Shakespeare, though of inferior quality to his other works.

The poem consists of forty-seven seven-line stanzas written in the rhyme royal (with the rhyme scheme ababbcc), a metre and structure identical to that of Shakespeare's poem The Rape of Lucrece. After a scene-setting introduction, the poem takes the form of a lengthy speech by an abandoned young woman, including a speech within her speech, as she recounts the words by which she was seduced.

The poem begins with the speaker describing seeing a young woman weeping at the edge of a river, into which she throws torn-up letters, rings, and other tokens of love. An old man nearby approaches the woman and asks the reason for her sorrow. She responds by telling him of a former lover who pursued, seduced, and finally abandoned her.

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