

The first Booke or Acte of the  
Countess of PEMBROOKES  
ARCADIA.

**A**RCADIA among all the Provinces of Greece was  
and other notable benefite: But, principally, for the moderate and temperate  
minds of the people, who, standing howe free a Constitution ye gotten by follow-  
ing the Course of Nature. And howe the shining Title of glory somewhat effec-  
ted by other Nations, dothe in adde helpe little to the happiness of life: were the  
only people, who by their Justice and prudence, gave worth to their cause, nor  
hope to their Neighbourhood to annoy them, so were they not stirred with false  
prayer, to trouble others quiett. Thinking yt a small Reward for y<sup>e</sup> working  
of their own labors in rearing, that their posterity should live after them,  
they had done so: Euen the Muses seemed to approve their good deter-  
mination, by the way that Venerie as those choicest repairing plants, and by  
bestowing thence perfection so largely there, that the very Sheperdes them-  
selves had thence fauours opened to so hygh Honoure (as the most learned  
of other nations had bene longe tyme since content) both to borrow their names,  
and imitate their coming. In this place some tyme there dwelt a myghty  
Duke named Basilus, a prince of sufficient skill, to governe so quiett a  
Countie, where the good manners of the former Princes had left diverse good  
Laws, and the well bringing up of the people did serve as a most firme Bodge  
to keepe them: His married Gynetta, the daughter of the King of  
Cyprus, a Lady worthy enough to have had her Name in continual Re-  
membrance, if her latter tyme had not blotted her well gotten Countie:  
Although she would faine more to her own Coniugency, then to the knowledge  
of the world, for shee some thinge supplying her want of vertue. Of her  
the Duke had three faire Daughters, the eldest Pamela, the youngest  
Philosoea, both so excellent in all those y<sup>e</sup>tted, as one should be to reasonable  
Expectations, as they seemed to be borne for a sufficient proof that Nature y<sup>e</sup>  
Stepmother is that Sexe: For muche further the Euyde disposition of  
some men shew willed onely in evil speaking, have sought to disgrace  
them. And thus greene they on, in the good increase, till Pamela a  
younge dore, when Philosoea came to the thirtieth of her years of  
age: At w<sup>ch</sup> tyme, the Duke Basilus, not so muche stirred w<sup>th</sup> the

Sidney, Philip. *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. ca. 1585. Folger MS H.b.1

This c. 1585 manuscript of the prose romance *Arcadia* by Sir Philip Sidney is a scribal transcript of the original, unrevised version. *Arcadia* was based on the Italian epic *Orlando Furioso* and composed for his sister, Lady Mary Sidney. After her brother's death in 1586, Mary Sidney completed the work. Known in its printed form as *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, it was published in 1593. Book II of *Arcadia* is a possible source for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

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