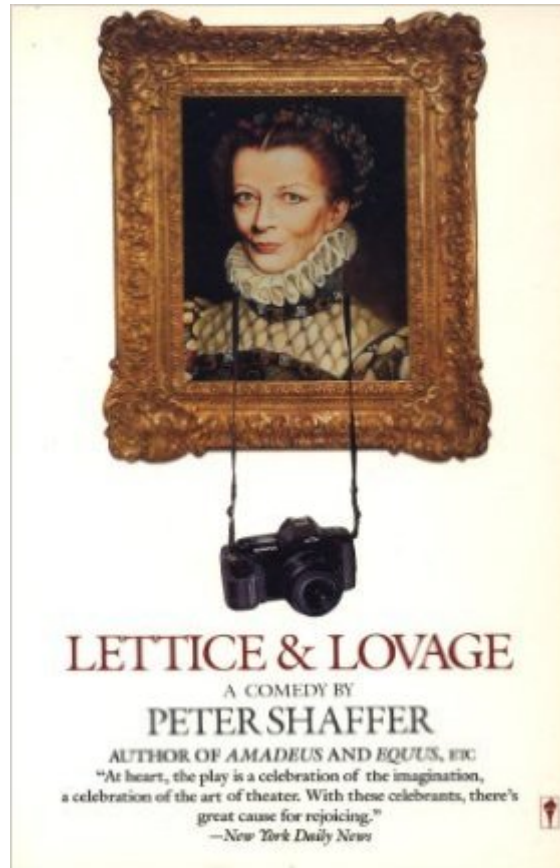


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# Lettice And Lovage: A Comedy



## Synopsis

Lettice Duffet, an expert on Elizabethan cuisine and medieval weaponry, is an indefatigable but daffy enthusiast of history and the theatre. As a tour guide at Fustian House, one of the least stately of London's stately homes, she theatrically embellishes its historical past, ultimately coming up on the radar of Lotte Schon, an inspector from the Preservation Trust. Neither impressed or entertained by Lettice's freewheeling history lessons, Schon fires her. Not one however, to go without a fight, Lettice engages the stoic, conventional Lotte in battle to the death of all that is sacred to the Empire and the crown. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It's pretty much hard to do anything really good through the limited opportunities stage performance provides. That's why great theatre is so rare. But a quick read of this 90 page delight will convince any reader that Peter Shaffer (of Amadeus and Equus fame) has produced a rightful equal to Arsenic and Old Lace not to mention Odd Couple. In this story we meet Lettice or Letitia a very creative tour guide who's improvisational skills at informing visitors about the "true story" of the historical locations she exhibits serves her well in other areas of her life. Like all theatre of the absurd, where crazy characters are permitted to run riot, we are delighted and uplifted by Lettice's stories and her very being. For readers and theatre goers who've heretofore stopped their Shaffer appreciation with Amadeus and Equus, I highly suggest this wonderful masterpiece.

If you are a fan of the ever witty and clever British humor, then this is the perfect read for you. If you are considering a play for community theatre, look no further. *Lettice and Lovage* is a beautiful bit of work by author Peter Shaffer using only four characters, who may also play the few minor roles. The play centers around a somewhat eccentric middle-aged woman whose vivid imagination makes an otherwise mind numbing job as a tour guide in an old British 16th century Hall become a tour de force presentation. The longer she fulfills this job, the more extravagant the lifestyle details of the deceased owners of the old home become. Then you throw in a gloomy, regimented boss in need of some light-hearted moments in her dreary existence, include a mousy secretary, a confused lawyer, and the fun just escalates. All leading to a very unexpected conclusion! I highly recommend this play as a great escape, some good laughs, and an author taking a few tongue in cheek swipes at some very old British institutions. It's brilliant and marvelous!

*Lettice and Lovage* is a very pleasant and mildly subversive comedy, very literate and easy to read. Shaffer is a great writer and proves intelligent and enjoyable. Mostly a two-hander, Lettice is a somewhat eccentric lady who guides Preservation Trust homes and sites, ever enjoyable with a sense of the grandiose, embellishing to the point of distraction. Lotte is her boss and agitated at her flippant use of the tour guide soapbox, a woman trapped in a staid job. They prove to be fast friends, and ultimately come together only to be driven apart for reasons I won't mention here. The point is, *Lettice and Lovage* is a smart, enjoyable read. It's subversive nature speaks to the death of culture, the end of English greatness and beauty for the sake of beauty, not to mention the power of the theatre and arts to be advantageous and educational in otherwise un-artistic places.

Writing good comedy is difficult, and writing of this caliber is exceptionally rare. While many of the best dramas are punctuated with humor, this play is a fine example of a comedy punctuated with moments of arresting drama and poignant pathos. I was fortunate enough to see this performed on Broadway by the inimitable Maggie Smith, and I have to believe that Peter Shaffer wrote it with her in mind. Too bad there is no video record of this stage production. Some plays are slices of life; this one is a slice of cake! Bon appetit.

Peter Shaffer hit a home run with this marvelously witty play. I saw it on Broadway before reading it and thought it was truly worthy of Maggie Smith's talent. In reading the play I have found a greater appreciation for the piece. A great tribute to comedic leading ladies!

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