



# **Lelia's Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy (Toronto Italian Studies)**

*Laura Giannetti*

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*Levia's Kiss* analyzes gender roles, sexuality, and marriage in the Italian Renaissance through the lens of a large number of comedies from the period, ranging well beyond the traditional canon. Focusing on the social and cultural scripts found within these comedies, Laura Giannetti offers a new perspective on the way gender and marriage were portrayed, imagined, and critiqued on stage during the Italian Renaissance.

Giannetti argues that these Renaissance plays created an often humorous dialogue with the presuppositions of their day, engaging with contemporary social norms, expectations and desires. The actions and choices of cross-dressing female and male characters challenged standard discourse and illustrated how masculinity and femininity was socially and culturally constructed. By examining representations of gender and marriage onstage, *Levia's Kiss* demonstrates that Renaissance comedies not only reflected and commented on the everyday life of the time, but also interacted with it, exercising playful humour and revealing insight.

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