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Finally, although this book is dedicated to my husband as a way of thanking him in part for his support over a number of years, it was written for my colleagues and students; it is, in fact, the kind of book I thought I needed when I first began to read Shakespeare's plays. In it I specifically attempt to clarify the more or less obvious situatedness—in the intellectual traditions and historical settings of Jacobean England—of the plays we know as the romances. I have been less concerned to argue for an interpretation of any particular romance than to supply commentary that would establish and clarify what might be called the interpretative coordinates of the romances as a group of plays. Inevitably, some references, texts, and topics will appear more relevant and to the point than others. But it is my hope that in general the information, analyses, and observations this book provides will prove useful for readers who see in these plays not only images of conflict between authoritative agents and subordinated subjects as it was known to Shakespeare, but also, with suggestive differences, elements of the contested political cultures of the present day.

CONSTANCE JORDAN

Claremont, California

Shakespeare's Monarchies