

## A VISIT WITH DR. LETRIX

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*This article is dedicated to Martin Gardner.*

When I checked my e-mail that day, one address (avi@thebard.com) caught my eye, though I didn't grasp its significance right away. When I opened it, the message just said "Twelfth Night, Act I, Scene V, Clown's 13<sup>th</sup> speech, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence". I quickly pulled a copy of Shakespeare from the shelf and checked the reference, to find the admonishment

*Good my mouse of virtue, answer me.*

I grabbed the mouse and started to reply. Of course! It had to be from Avi, assistant to the famous logologist Dr. Letrix, who I hadn't seen in nearly two years. In a few minutes, I learned that Avi and the Good Doctor were taking in the sights at Crater Lake in southern Oregon, after an extended visit to the nearby Ashland Shakespeare Festival. They had been there as part of a promotional tour for Dr. Letrix' new book: *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare: A Logological Study*. Since we were only a four-hour drive away from each other, a meeting was quickly arranged. We met at a Denny's restaurant about halfway between Salem and Ashland.

I was doubly excited – not just to see my good friend Dr. Letrix again, but because I had always possessed a love for the works of The Bard.

"This reminds me of the last time I was in one of these places – with Penn and Teller," Dr. Letrix remarked.

"What a circle of friends you have!" I exclaimed.

"Funny you should say that," Dr. Letrix began. "One of the remarkable discoveries I made in my Shakespearean studies relates to the circle. Oh, sure, I cover all the old chestnuts in my book – the TITANIA acrostic, the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm, and the rest – but for the first time I also propound a new theory – that old Master Will was a closet mathematician! He seems to have had a special fondness for the number pi (or, as it's usually written,  $\pi$ ), so closely related to the circle. Did you know that?"

I confessed that I didn't. Dr. Letrix opened the book to the sonnets, and showed me the text of number 107:

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul,  
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,  
Can yet the lease of my true love control,