Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
CHAPTER I Once upon a Time	3
CHAPTER II The Age of Marriageability	17
CHAPTER III The Social Status of Prospective Partners	39
CHAPTER IV Parental Authority and Personal Affection	69
CHAPTER V Agents and Go-Betweens	104
CHAPTER VI Dowries and Jointures	120
CHAPTER VII Formal Proposals, Public Contracts, and Proper Weddings	151
CHAPTER VIII Secret Promises and Elopements, Broken Contracts and Divorces	185
CHAPTER IX Courtship and Politics	234
CHAPTER X Happily Ever After?	260
Appendixes Age at First Marriage List of Play Titles and Abbreviations	265 267
Index	269