



# Shakespeare's Legal Maxims

*William Lowes Rushton*

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## **Shakespeare's Legal Maxims** William Lowes Rushton

Rushton, William Lowes.

Shakespeare's Legal Maxims.

Liverpool: Henry Young & Sons, 1907. 61 pp. Reprinted 2008 by The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd. Hardcover. New.

\* Rushton, a barrister of Gray's Inn, was one of the first to argue that Shakespeare was trained as a lawyer, a claim he advanced in *Shakespeare a Lawyer* (1858), *Shakespeare's Testamentary Language* (1869) and *Shakespeare's Legal Maxims* (1859). *Maxims* demonstrates "the poet's correct use of law terms, and intimate acquaintance with legal customs and tenures, and the *lex scripta*, than by his extensive and profound knowledge of the maxims of the English law" (13-14). Rushton reviews these maxims, by which he means fundamental points, and illustrates each with a quotation from Shakespeare. Each example is paired with a statement by Coke, Littleton, or other eminent jurist that was either a direct source or proof that Shakespeare was expressing a contemporary legal principal. Whether or not you accept Rushton's thesis, his book offers an excellent selection of quotations on the primary topics of the common law.

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