



The Vavasour Macbeth

by Bart Casey
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BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Manuscripts from the Tudor tomb of Anne Vavasour and Sir Henry Lee reveal buried links between the Elizabethan lovers and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. *New York, NY USA.* Post Hill Press and author Bart Casey announce the May 2019 publication of the new thriller novel *The Vavasour Macbeth* in Hardcover, Audiobook, and eBook editions.

“There are two things I really like about this book,” said publisher Anthony Ziccardi. “First, the strong women, Elizabethan Anne Vavasour and her modern-day descendant Margaret Hamilton; and second, the history, which made me see how much we really know and don’t know about Shakespeare and his famous play *Macbeth*.”

The women: teenager Anne Vavasour was the Monica Lewinsky of her age, a precocious young girl ruined by a powerful sexual predator. But she came back to become the royal confidante she was born to be in the Stuart court of King James. And her descendant, Margaret Hamilton, has the same spirit.

The history: We all know Shakespeare -- from when we first met his plays in school, to when we realized his characters made the universal human experience come alive. But who was he really, and how did he work? We still don’t have those answers. *The Vavasour Macbeth* separates more of what is fact and fiction about him and his beloved play *Macbeth*.

"Casey peppers his imaginative novel with tidbits on the development of writing in the Elizabethan era. Each of the central protagonists is a well-drawn character. And the author's prose is elegant, with evocative imagery. An engaging read with a plethora of captivating literary and historical details wrapped in a contemporary whodunit."
-- Kirkus Reviews

"Bart Casey 'discovered' the 'Monica Lewinsky' of Queen Elizabeth's court – and turned her remarkable story into a dual time line mystery which combines a contemporary love story with fascinating historical detail... Bart talks about this – and much more, in the Joys of Binge Reading podcast. <https://bit.ly/2WjH6pO>
-- Jenny Wheeler

About the Author (shown at left in London with the armour of Sir Henry Lee)

Bart Casey grew up in London, studied Literature at Harvard, and spent many years living in England amidst the settings for *The Vavasour Macbeth*.

His previous book, *The Double Life of Laurence Oliphant*, a biography of a little-known British eccentric and Zionist, was featured by Kirkus in its *Best Books of 2016*.



THE VAVASOUR MACBETH

About the Book

Buried Shakespearean treasure brings a disillusioned BBC reporter home to solve her father's murder and restart her life with the man who has always loved her.

When Margaret Hamilton's father rescues old manuscripts from a flooded tomb, he asks his daughter's former fiancé Stephen to help decipher them, bringing the couple back together again.

At first, the documents only seem to resurrect **Anne Vavasour's** remarkable true story: how she came to Queen Elizabeth's court as a sixteen-year-old Maid of Honour; was seduced by the Earl of Oxford; delivered a babe at court in the attending maidens' chamber; was sent to the Tower; yet later flourished for twenty years as the mistress of the wealthy widower **Sir Henry Lee**, Elizabeth's champion at the joust (and rumored half-brother).

But when Margaret and Stephen uncover links between the buried papers and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, ruthless art and antiquities thieves try to take the priceless papers at any cost.



Anne Vavasour



Sir Henry Lee

SOME OTHER CHARACTERS AND HISTORY IN THE STORY



Edward de Vere,
17th Earl of Oxford



Queen Elizabeth I
from *The Ditchley Portrait*



William Shakespeare
(Possibly an image of him)



Jumbled up depositions in
Anne Vavasour's legal files

Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was an English aristocrat who inherited his title and estates at age 12. He grew up as a Royal ward in Lord Burghley's care, along with many other young worthies. Very young, he developed a reputation for bad temper, killing an undercook with his sword for fun while a teenager. Later he married Burghley's daughter, but he soon left her for other amusements. In his 30s, he seduced young Anne Vavasour, age about 17. Later he sold his lands off one by one, and spent all his money. Eventually, the Queen ordered him to reconcile with his wife, and gave him a pension to keep up appearances. He died a broken man in 1604. Although he did have an acting company, he was no Shakespeare.

Queen Elizabeth's image above is from *The Ditchley Portrait*, commissioned by Sir Henry Lee to commemorate her 1592 visit and entertainment at Sir Henry's home over two lavish days. Many believe she gave her tacit approval at that time for Sir Henry's scandalous living arrangements with Anne Vavasour, his *de facto* wife.

William Shakespeare *may* be the subject of this portrait – at least the National Portrait Gallery in London thought so in 1856 – because it was the first picture they ever acquired. Papers possibly written in his handwriting are among the treasures discovered in Anne Vavasour's tomb in this novel, including a lost version of *Macbeth*. No doubt many new secrets about him may be uncovered among the millions of unread documents from that period awaiting attention.

Meanwhile, **Anne Vavasour's legal files** sit jumbled up in well preserved boxes in the UK's National Archives in Kew. Files from regular courts about land and rents are in English, but were written in the hard-to-read 'secretary hand.' Worse, files about Anne's marriage are from church courts and written in Elizabethan Latin (not the same as what the Romans spoke). Translating that jargon is a real challenge.

*The Vavasour Macbeth, now on-sale
now wherever good books are sold*

*Also read Anne Vavasour and Sir Henry Lee, the
new non-fiction ebook, at the Amazon Kindle Store*

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