

## Charlotte Lennox, "The Rival Nymphs. A Tale"

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[CHARLOTTE LENNOX]

“The Rival Nymphs. A Tale.”

*Clarissa* blest with ev'ry Grace,  
A Shape divine, and charming Face,  
Had triumph'd long o'er many a Swain,  
And oft' been woo'd, but woo'd in vain;  
Not so *Amanda*, blooming Youth, 5  
Soft Innocence, and artless Truth,  
Were all the Beauties she cou'd boast,  
Not form'd by Nature for a Toast;  
Yet some there were, who in her Mind  
A thousand nameless Charms cou'd find: 10  
She lov'd not Visits, Park, or Play,  
But mop'd, and read her Time away;  
Insensible to a Degree,  
Her Heart was all her own, and free;  
Yet oft of Love's soft pleasing Pains, 15  
The Nymph wou'd write in melting Strains.  
The lambent Flame that warm'd her Breast,  
Each tender flowing Line confess'd;  
*Moneses*, whose enchanting Form  
Was one continu'd endless Charm: 20  
To whom indulgent Heav'n had join'd,  
All that cou'd beautify a Mind;  
Had often own'd bright Beauty's Power,  
Had sigh'd and lov'd — for half an Hour.  
But yet the lovely Youth confess'd, 25  
Whoe'er could wound his destin'd Breast,  
Her Charms must over Time prevail,  
Her Wit must please when Beauty fail'd;  
Yet since he cou'd not hope to find,  
One blest with all those Charms of Mind; 30  
He thought *Clarissa* worth his Care,  
And all the Hours he had to spare;  
Soft Vows, and tender speaking Eyes,

Pleading Looks, and melting Sighs;  
Make the believing Maid approve 35  
His false, but well dissembled Love.  
But while Clarissa's Charms he own'd,  
He with a secret Passion burn'd.  
*Amanda* found the Way to win  
His Heart, and let her Image in; 40  
His Pain the lovely Youth conceals,  
All but what his Eyes reveals:  
His Eyes, that all his Passion tell,  
And speak the Love he felt so well.

*Amanda* heard the Youth complain, 45  
She heard and felt an equal Flame;  
But still with native Shyness arm'd,  
She shuns the lovely Swain she charm'd;  
His Looks, his Sighs, his Actions move,  
And in soft Language plead for Love. 50

*Clarissa* still exults, and cries,  
He's yet a Victim to my Eyes;  
He neither will, nor can be free;  
Me he still loves, and only Me:  
Ah! cease to claim my charming Prize; 55  
*Amanda*, to the Fair replies,  
Cou'd I, *Clarissa*, cou'd I boast,  
The Hearts that to thy Charms are lost,  
With Joy I wou'd them all resign,  
To keep my lov'd *Moneses* mine. 60

In vain the Nymph declares her Flame,  
*Clarissa* still asserts her Claim;  
And 'till the lov'd *Moneses* owns,  
The conqu'ring Maid for whom he burns;  
'Till he'll the happy Fair unfold, 65  
The Sequel must remain untold.

## NOTES:

**Title** *Nymphs* "Any of a class of semi-divine spirits, imagined as taking the form of a maiden inhabiting the sea, rivers, mountains, woods, trees, etc., and often portrayed in poetry as attendants on a particular god" (*OED*).

**3** *Swain* In pastoral poetry, synonymous with a young shepherd.

**17** *lambent* "Of a flame (fire, light): playing lightly upon or gliding over a surface without burning it, like

a 'tongue of fire'; shining with a soft clear light and without fierce heat" (*OED*).

**19** *Moneses* Here a masculine pastoral name, the object of Amanda and Clarissa's desire.

**35** *Maid* A virgin (*OED*).

**54** *loves* Corrected from "love's," a printer's error.

**Source:** *Poems on Several Occasions. Written by a Young Lady* (London, 1747), pp. 7-11. [*Google Books*]

*Edited by Sydney Brunner*