Anonymous, â??To Mr. Câ??Tâ??BYâ?•

Description

ANONYMOUS

â??To Mr. C â?? T â?? BYâ?•

Ne sit ancilla tibi amor pudori, &c.
Horace, Book II. Ode IV. Imitated

Smit with a spider-brusherâ??s face,
Think not thy passion a disgrace,
Nor look to dâ??â??d dejected;
Where is thy ancient valour fled?
Nay â?? never blush, and hang thy head,
Like Bobadil detected.

When Cupid wills his darts to fly,
From corner of a cookmaidâ??s eye,
The stoutest may be taken;
And whilst she stirs the kitchen fire,
Kindling her cheeks, and his desire,
His heart may melt like bacon.

Then blush not at thâ?? ignoble flame,
Heroes of old have done the same,
Thoâ?? great within the trenches;
Achilles, Ajax, and the Czar,
Softenâ??d the rugged brow of war
In private with their wenches.

Courage, dear boy, return once more,
Leave not Cindrilla to deplore,
Whom thy sweet air bewitches;
Her mop, her brush, neglected lieâ??
She can nor make or bake a pieâ??
Scarce see to wash her dishes.

Wilt thou no more frequent the green?
With folded arms no more be seen,
Thy own sweet person viewing?
O how she longs to see thee there,
With wrinkled boot, and turnâ??d-up hair,

Thoâ?? to her own undoing!

And then to hear thee talk so fine,
Of horses, wâ??s, and where to dine,
In neat set phrase so charmingâ??
Cindrilla swears her heart is won,
That sheâ??s resolvâ??d to be undone,
And give her mistress warning.

The misses may be pert and sneer,
But servants, thoâ?? in common geer,
Stuff gowns, and coarser jacket,
May yet conceal as fair a skin,
Be as provocative to sin,
And make not half the racket.

Besides, who knows, thy love may be
Of noble blood, in low degree,
Thoâ?? now with scarce a rag on;
Some fairy, envious of her worth,
Doomâ??d her to labour from her birth,
Sprung from renownâ??d Pendragon.

Come then to thy Cindrillaâ??s arms,
Bedizenâ??d in her Sunday charms,
No gaudy silks and sattins;
But new-starchâ??d cap, and tuckâ??d-up gown,
With red and white thatâ??s all her own,
Stuff petticoat, and pattins.

Pardon, if in these lyric lays
I trumpet forth Cindrillaâ??s praise,
Her beauty thoâ?? uncommon;
With fourscore years upon my head,
Thou hast but little cause to dread
A poor infirm old woman.

NOTES:

Title Unable to identify addressee. This poem is preceded by a letter to Mr. Urban recommending publication, dated â??Bristol, Aug. 20â?• and signed â??Z.â?•

Epigraph *Ne sit ancilla tibi amor pudori* â??Do not let love for a maidservant be your shame;â?• *Horace, Book II. Ode IV*â??To Xanthias Phoceus,â?• in which Horace consoles his friend for falling in love with his servant girl.

1 *spider-brusher* A servant.

3 *dejected* â??Depressed in spirits, downcast, disheartened, low spiritedâ?• (*OED*).

4 *valour* â??Braveryâ?• (*OED*).

6 *Bobadil* A reference to a character in Ben Jonsonâ??s play, *Every Man in his Humour* (1598); â??a blustering braggart who pretends prowessâ?• (*OED*).

16 *Achilles* â??Briseisâ?• [Authorâ??s note]. A figure in Homerâ??s *Illiad*. She was captured by Achilles during the Trojan War and became his lover; *Ajax* â??Tecmessaâ?• [Authorâ??s note]. Ajax killed Tecmessaâ??s father during the Trojan War and took her captive. Their union produced a son, Eurysaces; *Czar* â??Catherine, the wife of a Swedish serjeantâ?• [Authorâ??s note]. Czar Peter III (1728-1762) was emperor of Russia from January to July of 1762. He was overthrown by his wife, who became Catherine the Great (1729-1796), reigned from 1762-1796 (*Britannica*).

20 *Cindrilla* Variant of Cinderella; the most popular version of the Cinderella story in the eighteenth century was the English translation of Charles Perraultâ??s *Histoires ou contes du temps passe* (1697).

37 *pert* â??Impertinent, cheekyâ?• (*OED*).

38 *geer* Clothing.

48 *Pendragon* Probably a reference to Uther Pendragon, legendary King of the Britons and supposed father of King Arthur; here a reference to the theme of illegitimate conception.

50 *Bedizenâ??d* â??To dress out especially in vulgar or gaudy fashionâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *The Gentlemanâ??s Magazine*, vol. 54, part II (September 1784), p. 694. [J. Paul Leonard Library]

Edited by Jhadeeja Shahida Vaz