

Matthew Prior, "To a Gentleman in Love. A Tale"

Description

MATTHEW PRIOR

"To a Young Gentleman *in* Love. A Tale"

From publick Noise and factious Strife,
From all the busie Ills of Life,
Take me, My CELIA, to Thy Breast;
And lull my wearied Soul to Rest:
For ever, in this humble Cell,
Let Thee and I, my Fair One, dwell;
None enter else, but LOVE and He
Shall bar the Door, and keep the Key.

5

To painted Roofs, and shining Spires
(Uneasie Seats of high Desires)
Let the unthinking Many croud,
That dare be Covetous and Proud:
In golden Bondage let Them wait,
And barter Happiness for State:
But Oh! My CELIA, when Thy Swain
Desires to see a Court again;
May Heaven around This destined Head
The choicest of its Curses shed:
To sum up all the Rage of Fate,
In the Two Things I dread and hate;
May'st Thou be False, and I be Great.

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Thus, on his CELIA's panting Breast,
Fond CELADON his Soul exprest;
While with Delight the lovely Maid
Received the Vows, She thus repaid:

25

Hope of my Age, Joy of my Youth,
Blest Miracle of Love and Truth!
All that could ever be counted Mine,
My Love and Life long since are Thine:
A real Joy I never knew;
Till I believed Thy Passion true:
A real Grief I never can find;
Till Thou prov'st Perjur'd or Unkind.

30

Contempt, and Poverty, and Care, All we abhor, and all we fear, Blest with Thy Presence, I can bear. Thro' Waters, and thro' Flames I'll go, Suff'rer and Solace of Thy Woe: Trace Me some yet unheard-of Way, That I Thy Ardour may repay; And make My constant Passion known, By more than Woman yet has done.	35 40
Had I a Wish that did not bear The Stamp and Image of my Dear; I'd pierce my Heart thro' every Vein, And Die to let it out again. No: VENUS shall my Witness be, (If VENUS ever lov'd like Me) That for one Hour I wou'd not quit My Shepherd's Arms, and this Retreat, To be the PERSIAN Monarch's Bride, Partner of all his Power and Pride; Or Rule in Regal State above, Mother of Gods, and Wife of JOVE.	45 50
<i>O happy these of Human Race!</i> But soon, alas! our Pleasures pass. He thank'd her on his bended Knee; Then drank a Quart of Milk and Tea; And leaving her ador'd Embrace, Hasten'd to Court, to beg a Place. While She, his Absence to bemoan, The very Moment He was gone, Call'd THYRSIS from beneath the Bed; Where all this time He had been hid.	55 60
<i>MORAL</i>	
WHILE Men have these Ambitious Fancies; And wanton Wenches read Romances; Our Sex will answer What? Out with it. Lye; And Theirs in equal Strains reply. The Moral of the Tale I sing (A Posy for a Wedding Ring) In this short Verse will be confin'd: Love is a Jest; and Vows are Wind.	65 70

NOTES:

15 Swain A shepherd, here figured as a young lover or suitor.

23 CELADON A pastoral name for a shepherd.

33 *provâ??st* Have proved to be; *Perjurâ??d* â??A person that has committed or is guilty of perjury; that has deliberately broken an oath, promise, etc.â?• (OED).

47 VENUS â??The ancient Roman goddess of beauty and loveâ?• (OED).

54 *Wife of JOVE* â??Jove, a poetical equivalent of Jupiter, name of the highest deity of the ancient Romans; Joveâ??s wife is Juno, a woman of stately beautyâ?• (OED).

63 THYRSIS A pastoral name for a shepherd; used by Virgil in his Seventh Eclogue.

70 *Posy* â??A small bunch of flowersâ?|a nosegay or small bouquetâ?• (OED).

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1718), p. 99-101. [Google Books]

Edited by Kaori Okamoto