

Anne Finch, “The Cautious Lovers”

Description

ANNE FINCH

“The Cautious Lovers”

1

Silvia, let us from the Crowd retire;

For, What to you and me

(Who but each other do desire)

Is all that here we see?

Apart we'll live, though not alone; 5

For, who *alone* can call

Those, who in Deserts live with One,

If in that One they've All?

The World a vast *Meander* is,

Where Hearts confusedly stray; 10

10

Where Few do hit, whilst Thousands miss

The happy mutual Way:

Where Hands are by stern Parents ty'd

Who oft, in *Cupid's* Scorn,

Do for the widow'd State provide, 15

Before that Love is born:

Where some too soon themselves misplace;

Then in Another find

The only Temper, Wit, or Face,

That could affect their Mind. 20

20

Others (but oh! avert that Fate!)

A well-chosen Object change:

Fly, *Silvia*, fly, ere 'tis too late;

Fall'n Nature's prone to range.

And, though in heat of Love we swear 25

Â Â Â 25

More than perform we can;
No Goddess You, but Woman are,
And I no more than Man.

Thâ€™TM impatient Silvia heard thus long;

Then with a Smile replyâ€™TMd: Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â 30

Those Bands couâ€™TMd neâ€™TMer be very strong,
Which Accidents divide.

Who eâ€™TMer was movâ€™TMd yet to go down,

By such oâ€™TMer-cautious Fear;
Or for one Lover left the Town, Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â 35

Who might have Numbers here?

Your Heart, â€™tis true, is worth them all,

And still preferrâ€™TMd the first;
But since confessâ€™TMd so apt to fall,
'Tis good to fear the worst. Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â 40

In ancient History we meet

A flying Nymph betrayâ€™TMd
Who, had she kept in fruitful Crete,
New Conquest might have made.

And sure, as on the Beach she stood, Â
Â Â 45

To view the parting Sails;
She cursâ€™TMd her self, more than the Flood,
Or the conspiring Gales.

False Theseus, since thy Vows are broke,

May following Nymphs beware: Â
Â Â 50

Methinks I hear how thus she spoke,
And will not trust too far.

In Love, in Play, in Trade, in War

*They best themselves acquit,
Who, thoâ€™TM their Intâ€™TMrests shipwreckt are, Â
Â Â Â Â 55*

Keep unprovâ€™TMd their Wit.

NOTES:

9 *Meander* – A winding course, like a labyrinth (QED).

42 *Nymph* Poetical for woman in this context; an allusion to Ariadne, daughter of Minos and princess of Crete (*Britannica*).

43 *Crete* The largest island in Greece. Inhabited by the Minoans, a Bronze Age civilization, ruled by King Minos (*Britannica*).

45 *Beach* Refers to the shores of Naxos, the island where Ariadne was abandoned by her lover Theseus (*Ancient History Encyclopedia*).

48 *Gales* – A wind of considerable strength (QED).

49 *Theseus* Athenian hero noteworthy for slaying the minotaur in the Cretan labyrinth with the help of Ariadne, who provided a yarn ball as aid for navigating the labyrinth (*Ancient History Encyclopedia*).

56 *unreprov'd* – Uncensured (QED).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London 1714), pp. 118-122. [*Google Books*]

^ Edited by Roland Shepherd