William Hayley, â??A Charm for Ennui: A Matrimonial Balladâ?•

Description

[WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.]

â??A CHARM FOR ENNUI: *A Matrimonial Balladâ?•*

Ye couples, who meet under Loveâ??s smiling star,
Too gentle to skirmish, too soft eâ??er to jar,
Thoâ?? coverâ??d with roses from joyâ??s richest tree,
Near the couch of delight lurks the daemon *Ennui*.

Let the Musesâ?? gay lyre, like Ithurielâ??s bright spear,
Keep this fiend, ye sweet brides, from approaching your ear;
Since you know the squat toadâ??s infernal *esprit,*
Never listen, like Eve, to the devil *Ennui.*

Let no gloom of your hall, no shade of your bower,
Make you think you behold this malevolent power;
Like a child in the dark, what you fear you will see;
Take courage, away flies the phantom *Ennui*.

O trust me, the powers both of person and mind
To defeat this sly foe full sufficient youâ??ll find;
Should your eyes fail to kill him, with keen repartee
You can sink the flat boat of thâ??invader *Ennui.*

If a cool *non-chalance* oâ??er your *sposo* should spread,
For vapours will rise eâ??en on Jupiterâ??s head,
O ever believe it, from jealousy free,
A thin passing cloud, not the fog of *Ennui.*

Of tender complainings though love be the theme,
O beware, my sweet friends, â??tis a dangerous scheme;
And thoâ?? often â??tis tryâ??d, mark the *pauvre mari*
Thus by kindness inclosâ??d in the coop of *Ennui.*

Let confidence, rising such meanness above,
Drown the discord of doubt in the music of love;
Your *duette* shall thus charm in the natural key,
No sharps from vexation, no flats from *Ennui.*

But to you, happy husbands, in matters more nice,
The Muse, thoâ?? a maiden, now offers advice;
O drink not too keenly your bumper of glee,

Evâ??n ecstasyâ??s cup has some dregs of *Ennui.*

Though Love for your lips fill with nectar his bowl,
Though his warm bath of blessings inspirit your soul,
O swim not too far on raptureâ??s high sea,
Lest you sink unawares in the gulph of *Ennui.*

Impatient of law, Passion oft will reply,
â??Against limitations Iâ??ll plead till I die;â?•
But Chief Justice Nature rejects the vain plea,
And such culprits are doomâ??d to the gaol of *Ennui.*

When husband and wife are of honey too fond,
Theyâ??re like poisonâ??d carp at the top of a pond,
Together they gape oâ??er a cold dish of tea,
Two muddy sick fish in the net of *Ennui.*

Of indolence most ye mild couples beware,
For the myrtles of Love often hide her soft snare;
The fond doves in their net from his pounce cannot flee,
But the lark in the morn â??scapes the daemon *Ennui.*

Let chearful good-humour, that sun-shine of life,
With smiles in the maiden, illumine the wife,
And mutual attention, in equal degree,
Keep Hymenâ??s bright chain from the rust of *Ennui.*

To the Graces together O fail not to bend,
And both to the voice of the Muses attend,
So Minerva for you shall with Cupid agree,
And preserve your chaste flame from the smoke of *Ennui.*

NOTES:

5 *Ithurielâ??s bright spear* From John Miltonâ??s *Paradise Lost* (1667). The Angel Ithuriel touches Satan (disguised as a toad) with his spear â??which â??no falsehood can endure,'â?• and his true form thus revealed, Satan is cast out of the Garden of Eden *(Oxford Dictionary of Reference and Allusion).*

7 *esprit* Spirit.

17 *sposo* Spouse.

18 *Jupiter* Roman god of sky and thunder. Leader of the Roman gods.

23 *pauvre mari* Poor husband. *(Oxford French-English Dictionary).*

27 *duette* Duet.

40 *gaol* Jail.

52 *Hymen* Greek god of marriage.

55 *Minerva* Roman goddess of wisdom.

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Edited by Megan Kwong