

Charlotte Lennox, "The Rival Nymphs. A Tale"

Description

[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 â€” 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 owns,
He with a secret Passion burns.

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 arms,
She shuns the lovely Swain she charms;
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,
Could I, *Clarissa*, I boast,
The Hearts that to thy Charms are lost,
With Joy I would them all resign,
To keep my lovely *Moneses* mine. 60

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

NOTES:

Â 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.

Â 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).

Â **19** *Moneses* Here a masculine pastoral name, the object of Amanda and Clarissaâ€™s desire.

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

54 *loves* Corrected from â€œloveâ€™s,â€• a printerâ€™s error.

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

Â Edited by Sydney Brunner