Charlotte Lennox, â??The Rival Nymphs. A Taleâ?•

Description

[CHARLOTTE LENNOX]

â??The Rival Nymphs. A Tale.â?•

Clarissa blest with evâ??ry Grace,
A Shape divine, and charming Face,
Had triumphâ??d long oâ??er many a Swain,
And oftâ?? been wooâ??d, but wooâ??d in vain;
Not so *Amanda*, blooming Youth,
Soft Innocence, and artless Truth,
Were all the Beauties she couâ??d boast,
Not formâ??d by Nature for a Toast;
Yet some there were, who in her Mind
A thousand nameless Charms couâ??d find:
She lovâ??d not Visits, Park, or Play,
But mopâ??d, and read her Time away;
Insensible to a Degree,
Her Heart was all her own, and free;
Yet oft of Loveâ??s soft pleasing Pains,
The Nymph wouâ??d write in melting Strains.
The lambent Flame that warmâ??d her Breast,
Each tender flowing Line confessâ??d;
Moneses, whose enchanting Form
Was one continuâ??d endless Charm:
To whom indulgent Heavâ??n had joinâ??d,
All that couâ??d beautify a Mind;
Had often ownâ??d bright Beautyâ??s Power,
Had sighâ??d and lovâ??d â?? for half an Hour.
But yet the lovely Youth confessâ??d,
Whoeâ??er could wound his destinâ??d Breast,
Her Charms must over Time prevail,
Her Wit must please when Beauty failâ??d;
Yet since he couâ??d not hope to find,
One blest with all those Charms of Mind;
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

His false, but well dissembled Love.
But while Clarissaâ??s Charms he ownâ??d,
He with a secret Passion burnâ??d.
Amanda found the Way to win
His Heart, and let her Image in;
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,
She heard and felt an equal Flame;
But still with native Shyness armâ??d,
She shuns the lovely Swain she charmâ??d;
His Looks, his Sighs, his Actions move,
And in soft Language plead for Love.

Clarissa still exults, and cries,
Heâ??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;
Amanda, to the Fair replies,
Couâ??d I, *Clarissa*, couâ??d I boast,
The Hearts that to thy Charms are lost,
With Joy I wouâ??d them all resign,
To keep my lovâ??d *Moneses* mine.

In vain the Nymph declares her Flame,
Clarissa still asserts her Claim;
And â??till the lovâ??d *Moneses* owns,
The conquâ??ring Maid for whom he burns;
â??Till heâ??ll the happy Fair unfold,
The Sequel must remain untold.

NOTES:

Title *Nymphs* â??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 godâ?• (*OED)*.

3 *Swain* In pastoral poetry, synonymous with a young shepherd.

17 *lambent* â??Of a flame (fire, light): playing lightly upon or gliding over a surface without burning it, like a â??tongue of fireâ??; shining with a soft clear light and without fierce heatâ?• *(OED)*.

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??loveâ??s,â?• a printerâ??s error.

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

Edited by Sydney Brunner