Anonymous, â??Verses occasionâ??d by a Horseâ??s biting a Ladyâ??s Breastâ?•

Description

ANONYMOUS

â??Verses occasionâ??d by a Horseâ??s biting a Ladyâ??s Breastâ?•

See how unlimited is Beautyâ??s Sway!
An *Ass once spoke (as antient Records say)*
Charmâ??d with an *Angel* offerâ??d to his View,
The Storyâ??s strange, but we must *swear* â??tis trueâ??
â??I deal in Wonders of a merrier Kind,
Not done by Angels, but by Woman-kind.
Nothing *unnatural* shall here accrue,
The Storyâ??s strange, but not more strange than true,
â??A *Horse* (descended from a long-told Race
Of well-bred Hunters, whom no Vice disgrace)
For Beauty famâ??d, in Speed out stripâ??d by none,
A Creature fit to mount a *Goddess* on;
This *Horse* a mighty Favourite became
To a most *Noble, Puissant, Princely Dame*,
Illustrious for her *Titles, Beauty, Fame*;
Pleasâ??d oft sheâ??d tell his well-descended Race,
Smooth his fine Neck, his Main in Ringlets trace,
Nor lies the Muse who sings she *kissâ??d* his Face.
He by those dear repeated Favours firâ??d,
By the warm *Stroaks* of her soft Hand inspirâ??d,
Conceivâ??d (strange of a *Horse* to tell) a Flame
For his fond Ladyâ??and who dare him blame,
Or who so *kindly usâ??d*, but must have had the *same*â??
â??His Love unable longer to suppress,
He *furiously* the charming Dâ??â??s pressâ??d,
And markâ??d his *Kisses* on her bleeding breastâ??
â??She frightenâ??d at the Creatureâ??s rude Embrace,
Screamâ??d out for Aid, and fled the dangerous Placeâ??
Away the disappointed Horse was led,
He neighâ??d aloud, and wanton turnâ??d his Headâ??
â??The Dâ??â??s sighâ??d, and went *alone* to Bedâ??
Which *Taleâ??s* most *natâ??ral*, which most hits your *Taste*,
Which does in *Beauty*, which in *Sense* surpass,
Bâ??â??â??â??d the *Angel*, or the *Horse* the *Ass*?

NOTES:

2-3 *An Ass once spoke . . . View* These lines allude to a portion of a biblical story in Numbers 22. Balaam, riding his donkey, is blocked three times by an angel as he tries to follow the princes of Moab. Balaam cannot see the angel, and beats his donkey when she balks. Finally, she is given the ability to speak and asks what she has done to deserve the three beatings. He threatens to kill her, but the angel reveals himself, and rebukes Balaam (Numbers 22: 21-34).

10 *Hunters* Horses trained to be used for foxhunting.

14 *Puissant* â??Possessed of or wielding power; having great authority or influenceâ?• (*OED*).

17 *Main* Variant spelling of â??maneâ?•: the hair flowing from a horseâ??s crest, or top of the neck.

25 *Dâ??â??s* Probably â??Duchessâ?• (see note to line 34 below).

34 *Bâ??â??â??d* Possibly a reference to Diana Russell (nee Spencer) (1710-1735). She was known for her beauty in this period, but did not become Duchess of Bedford until October 1732. The poet may be taking the liberty of referring to her future title knowing that her husband was the sole heir to the Bedford dukedom (Massey, *The First Lady Diana*).

SOURCE: *Gentlemanâ??s Magazine* (vol. 2, March 1732), p. 672. [Google Books]

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