

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 own'd,
 He with a secret Passion burn'd.
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 arm'd,
 She shuns the lovely Swain she charm'd;
 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: 55
 Ah! cease to claim my charming Prize;
Amanda, to the Fair replies,
 Could I, *Clarissa*, could 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'll the happy Fair unfold, 65
 The Sequel must remain untold.

NOTES:

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.

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).

19 Moneses Here a masculine pastoral name, the object of Amanda and Clarissa'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