Jonathan Swift, â??Apollo Outwittedâ?•

Description

JONATHAN SWIFT

â??Apollo Outwittedâ?•

To the Honourable Mrs. FINCH, *under her Name of* Ardelia.
Written, 1709.

PHOEBUS now shortning every Shade,
Up to the Northern *Tropick* came,
And thence Beheld a Lovely Maid
Attending on a Royal Dame.

THE God laid down his Feeble Rays,
Then lighted from his Glittâ??ring Coach,
But fencâ??d his Head with his own Bays
Before he durst the Nymph approach.

UNDER those Sacred Leaves, Secure
From common Lightning of the Skies,
He fondly thought he might endure
The Flashes of *Ardelia*â??s Eyes.

THE Nymph who oft had read in Books,
Of that Bright God whom Bards invoke,
Soon knew *Apollo* by his looks,
And Guest his Business eâ??er he Spoke.

HE in the old Celestial Cant,
Confest his Flame, and Swore by *Styx*,
What eâ??er she would desire, to Grant,
But Wise *Ardelia* knew his Tricks.

OVID had warnâ??d her to beware,
Of Stroling Gods, whose usual Trade is,
Under pretence of Taking Air,
To Pick up Sublunary Ladies.

HOWEâ??ER she gave no flat Denial,
As having Malice in her Heart,
And was resolvâ??d upon a Tryal,
To Cheat the God in his own Art.

HEAR my Request the Virgin said
Let which I please of all the Nine
Attend when eâ??er I want their Aid,
Obey my Call, and only mine.

BY Vow Obligâ??d, By Passion led,
The God could not refuse her Prayer;
He wavâ??d his Wreath Thrice oâ??er her Head,
Thrice mutterâ??d something to the Air.

AND now he thought to Seize his due,
But she the Charm already tryâ??d,
Thalia heard the Call and Flew
To wait at Bright *Ardeliaâ??s* Side.

ON sight of this Celestial *Prude*,
Apollo thought it vain to stay,
Nor in her Presence durst be Rude,
But made his Leg and went away.

HE hopâ??d to find some lucky Hour,
When on their Queen the Muses wait;
But *Pallas* owns *Ardelia*â??s Power,
For Vows Divine are kept by Fate.

THEN full of Rage *Apollo* Spoke,
Deceitful Nymph I see thy Art,
And thoâ?? I canâ??t my gift revoke,
Iâ??ll disappoint its Nobler Part.

LET Stubborn Pride Possess thee long,
And be thou Negligent of Fame,
With evâ??ry Muse to Grace thy Song,
Mayâ??st thou despise a Poets Name.

OF Modest Poets thou be first,
To silent Shades repeat thy Verse,
Till *Fame* and *Eccho* almost burst,
Yet hardly dare one Line Rehearse.

AND last, my Vengeance to Compleat,
May you Descend to take Renown,
Prevailâ??d on by the Thing you hate,
A [Whig] and one that wears a Gown.

NOTES:

Dedication *Ardelia* Anne Finchâ??s poetical name for herself.

1 *PHOEBUS* â??[Ancient Greek name of Apollo] god of light, poetry and musicâ?• (*OED*).

2 *Northern Tropick* â??Tropic of Cancer,â?• which includes Britain (*Britannica*).

4 *Royal Dame* Finch was appointed Maid of Honour to Mary of Modena in 1682. Mary became queen in 1685 when her husband ascended the throne as James II, though Finch had resigned her court position in 1684 after marrying.

7 *Bays* â??Leaves or sprigs of this tree, esp. as woven into a wreath or garland to reward a conqueror or poet; hence figurative the fame and repute attained by theseâ?• (*OED*).

14 *Bards* â??A lyric or epic poet, a â??singerâ??; a poet generallyâ?• (*OED*).

18 *Styx* â??A river of the lower world or Hades, over which the shades of the departed were ferried by Charon, and by which the gods swore their most solemn oathsâ?• (*OED*).

21 *OVID* Roman poet (43BC-17AD), famous for *Metamorphoses*.

30 *all the Nine* The muses.

39 *Thalia* â??The eighth of the muses, presiding over comedy and idyllic poetryâ?• (*OED*).

47 *Pallas* Epithet for Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom and war.

64 [*Whig*] â??A person who supported the exclusion of James, Duke of York (later James II), from the succession to the thrones of England, Scotland, and Ireland on account of his Roman Catholicism during the late 1670s and 1680sâ?• (*OED*); added in later printings of the poem; *one that wears a Gown* Swift himself.

SOURCE: ***Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*** **(London, 1711), pp. 399â??403. [Google Books]**

Edited by Jake Araiza