

VENUS & ADONIS

... AND THE REST OF US

Overture

Only an aged lord or two

Scene 1

SHEPHERDESS: DELIA

Who do their Empire longest hold?

CUPID

Behold my arrows and my bow
And I desire my art to show:
No one bosom shall be found
Ere I have done, without a wound,
But it would be the greatest art
To shoot myself into your heart;
Thither with both my wings I move,
Pray entertain the God of Love.

CUPID

The foolish ugly and the old!
In these sweet groves love is not taught
Beauty and pleasure is not bought;
To warm desires the women nature moves
And ev'ry youthful swain by nature loves...

SHEPHERDESS: IRIS

Come, Shepherds all, let's sing and play,
Be willing, lovesome, fond and gay.

CHORUS: In these sweet groves [etc.]

CUPID

Lovers to the close shades retire,
Do what your kindest thoughts inspire.

SHEPHERD: CORIN

One who those soft hours misuses
And a begging swain refuses
When they would the time recover
May they have a feeble lover.

A SHEPHERDESS: MIRANDA

Cupid the slyest rogue alive
One day was plund'ring of a hive,
But as with too, too eager haste,
He strove the liquid sweets to taste,
A bee surpris'd the heedless boy,
Prick'd him and dash'd the expected joy.

SHEPHERDESS: DORINDA

The best of the Celestial Pow'rs
Is come to give us happy hours.

The urchin, when he felt the smart

SHEPHERD: CORIN

Oh, let him not from hence remove

Of the envenom'd, angry dart,

SHEPHERDESSES: DELIA,
MIRANDA

Till ev'ry bosom's full of love.

He kick'd, he flung, he spurn'd the ground,

He blow'd, and then he chaf'd the wound,

CUPID

Mortals, there is no faith in you,
You change as often as you can:
Each one of you continues true
But till you take another's hand.

He blow'd, and chaf'd the wound in vain,

The rubbing still increas'd the pain.

Straight to his mother's lap he hies,

With swelling cheeks and blubber'd eyes.

SHEPHERD: ROYEL

Cupid hast thou many found
Long in the same fetters bound?

Cries she, "What does my Cupid ail?"

When thus he told his mournful tale,

CUPID

At most I find constant and true

"A little bird they call a bee,

With yellow wings, see, mother, see,

How it has gor'd and wounded me!"

"And are not you," replied his mother,

"For all the world just such another,

Just such another peevish thing, Like in bulk, and like in sting?

For when you aim a pois'nous dart

Against some poor unwary heart,

How little is the archer found, And yet how wide, how deep the wound!"

Another SHEPHERDESS:
DORINDA

Dear pretty, pretty, pretty youth,

Unveil, unveil your eyes,

How can you, can you sleep

When I, when I am by?

Were I with you all night to be,

Methinks I could, methinks I could,

I could from sleep be free.

Alas, alas my dear, you're cold as stone:

You must no longer lie alone.

But be with me my dear, And I in each arm

Will hug you close and keep you warm.

A third SHEPHERDESS: IRIS

I love and I must, and yet I would fain,

With a large dose of reason cure my pain,

But I am past hope, and yet it seems strange,

A thing that's call'd man not subject to change.

Had I power to scorn as she (he) to despise,

I might at once be inconstant and wise.

Then tell me, oh tell me, how it should be

So easy, to some, yet so hard to me.

Scene 2

ADONIS: Venus!

VENUS: Adonis!

ADONIS

Venus, when shall I taste soft delights

And on thy bosom lie?

Let's seek the shadiest covert of this grove

And never, never disappoint expecting love.

VENUS

Adonis, thy delightful youth Is full of beauty and of truth.

With thee the Queen of Love employs

The hours design'd for softer joys.

ADONIS

My Venus still has something new

Which forces lovers to be true.

VENUS

Me my lovely youth shall find Always tender, ever kind.

VENUS

Hark, hark, the rural music sounds,

Hark, hark the hunters, hark, hark the hounds!

They summon to the chase, haste haste away.

ADONIS

Adonis will not hunt today.

I have already caught the noblest prey.

VENUS

No, my shepherd, haste away,

Absence kindles new desire,

I would not have my lover tire...

My shepherd, will you know the art

By which I keep a conquer'd heart?

I seldom vex a lover's ears

With business or with jealous fears.

I give him freely all delights

With pleasant days and easy nights.

ADONIS

Yet there is a sort of men

Who delight in heavy chains

Upon whom ill-usage gains

And they never love till then.

VENUS

Those are fools of mighty leisure

Wise men love the easiest pleasure.

I give you freely all delights

With pleasant days and easy nights.

ADONIS: Adonis will not hunt today.

VENUS: No, my shepherd, haste away.

HUNTERS: AMINTA, CORIN
Come follow, follow, follow,
Come follow to the noblest game.

Here the spritely youth may purchase fame.

HUNTER: CORIN

A mighty boar our spear and darts defies,

He foams and rages, see, see, he wounds

The stoutest of our Cretan hounds,

He roars like thunder and he lightens from his eyes.

ADONIS

You who the slothful joys of city hate

And, early up, for rougher pleasures wait,

Next the delight which heav'nly beauty yields

Nothing, oh nothing is so sweet

As for our huntsmen, that do meet

With able coursers and good hounds to range the fields.

HUNTERS

Lady has fastened first but she is old;

Bring hither Lucky, he is strong and bold,

Heigh Lady, heigh Achilles; oh, they bleed,

Your spears, your spears, Adonis thou shalt lead.

Scene 3

CUPID

You place with such delightful care

The fetters which your lovers wear;

None can be weary to obey

When you their eager wishes bless,

The crowding Joys each other press

And round you smiling lovers play.

VENUS

Flattering boy, hast thou been reading

Thy lessons and refined arts

By which thou may'st set ableeding

A-thousand, thousand tender hearts?

CUPID

Yes, but mother, teach me to destroy

All such as scorn your wanton boy.

VENUS

Fit well your arrows when you strike

And choose for all what each may like.

But make some love, they know not why,

And for the ugly and ill-humour'd die;

Such as scorn Love's fire,

Force them to admire.

CUPID and others

The insolent, the arrogant,

The M-E-R-: Mer; C-E: Ce; N-A: Na; R-Y: Ry;

The mercenary, the vain and silly.

The jealous and uneasy, all such as tease ye...

Choose for the formal fool

Who scorns Love's mighty school,

One that delights in secret glances

And a great reader of romances.

For him that's faithless, wild and gay,

Who with Love's pain does only play,

Take some affected, wanton she,

As faithless and as wild as he.

VENUS

But, Cupid, how shall I make Adonis constant still?

CUPID: Use him very ill...

VENUS

To play, my Loves, to play;

Venus makes it holiday.

Two SHEPHERDESSES: IRIS, MIRANDA

O, the sweet delights of love,
Who would live and not enjoy 'em?

I'd refuse the throne of Jove,
Should power or majesty destroy 'em.

Give me me doubt or give me fears,
But let love remove 'em, I approve 'em.

Another SHEPHERDESS:
DORINDA

Let the Graces and pleasures repair,
With the youthful, the gay, the witty and fair.

May all harmless delights,
Happy days and kind nights,
Bless you and your lover so rare.

VENUS: Call, call the Graces.

CUPID

Come, all ye Graces! 'Tis your duty
To keep the Catalogue of Beauty.

GRACES

Mortals below, spirits above,
Sing the praises of the Queen of Love.

The world for that bright Beauty dies;

Sing the triumphs of her conqu'ring eyes.

Hark, ev'n Nature sighs. This joyful night

She will beget desire and yield delight.

Scene 4

VENUS

Adonis, uncall'd-for sighs
From my sad bosom rise,
And grief has the dominion of my eyes.

A mourning Love passed by me
now that sung

Of tombs and urns and ev'ry mournful thing:

Return, Adonis, 'tis for thee I grieve.

ADONIS

I come, as fast as Death will give me leave.

Behold the wound made by th' Aedalian boar;

Faithful Adonis now must be no more.

VENUS

Ah, blood and warm life his rosy cheeks forsake.

Alas, Death's sleep thou art too young to take.

My groans shall reach the heav'ns;

oh, pow'rs above

Take pity on the wretched Queen of Love!

ADONIS

Oh, I could well endure the pointed dart,

Did it not make the best of lovers part.

VENUS

Ye cruel gods, why should not I
Have the great privilege to die?

ADONIS

Love, mighty Love, does my kind bosom fire;

Shall I for want of vital heat expire?

No, no, warm life returns, and Death's afraid

This heart (Love's faithful kingdom) to invade.

VENUS

No, the grim Monster gains the day;

With thy warm blood life steals away.

ADONIS

I see fate calls; let me on your soft bosom lie.

There I did wish to live, and there I beg to die.

VENUS

Ah, Adonis my love, ah, Adonis...

With solemn pomp let mourning spirits bear

My soft Adonis through the yielding air...

He shall adorn the heav'ns, here I will weep

Till I am fall'n into as cold a sleep.

ALL

Mourn for thy servant, mighty God of Love,

Weep for your huntsman, oh forsaken grove.

Mourn, Echo, mourn, thou shalt no more repeat

His tender sighs and vows when he did meet

With the wretched Queen of Love,

In this forsaken grove.

The end.