

INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet contains an extract from the TETE-A-TETE column in the Town and Country Magazine.

Each month details of the latest adulterous or eloping couples of LONDON would be described for an eager audience.

REYNOLDS, referred to in this article as the 'Knight' and as the 'modern Apelles', is featured here with the 'AMIABLE LAURA' (Miss F—gs). She is forced to live with her Aunt after the death of her Father in battle. Unhappy and forced to live in ISOLATION, she decides to run away ...

At length, unable any longer to support this thralldom, she broke from her confinement, and took refuge at her milliner's, who, like most of her fraternity, had more professions than one. Finding Miss J—gs in a distressed situation, she judged her a fine object to make a prey of, and in a short time introduced her to Lord F—. He had just quarrelled with one of his mistresses, and was in search of a new face.

His lordship no sooner beheld Miss J—gs than he was enraptured with her, and he made her such offers as few young females, in her situation, would have rejected; but she would not listen to them, though he proposed making her a settlement of one hundred a year, besides an handsome monthly allowance.

Her pious and virtuous landlady, finding that these allurements would not have their desired effect, had recourse to other expedients. Miss J—gs had now lodged with Mrs P—r about five weeks, and in the course of that time had had ample credit for caps, and every kind of millinery goods. She accordingly acquainted our heroine, she was greatly distressed for money, and was necessitated to present her bill. Miss J—gs lamented her incapacity of acquitting it, but promised faithfully to do it as soon as possible. To this Mrs P— had her reply ready. 'If it was not in your power Miss, I would not make the demand. Lord F— has

acquainted me with the proposals he has made you, and if you are so squeamish as to refuse them, I shall only add, that those who can pay and won't pay must be made to pay'. Saying this, she bounced out of the room, and left Miss J—gs to her own meditations; a flood of involuntary tears bathed her beauteous cheeks, whilst a rapid revolution of ideas succeeded one another – the alternative was neither more nor less than this, prostitution in the arms of a debilitated old lecher, or the horrors of a jail.

Whilst she was in this situation Lord F— entered and demanded the cause of her grief. Taken thus by surprise, in so critical a state, she was incapable of uttering a syllable; when casting his eye upon the table, he perceived her landlady's bill, and upon taking it up said, surely this is not the cause of your melancholy? But without waiting for an answer he rang the bell, called up Mrs P—r, and pulling out his purse, immediately discharged it.

This generous act in some measure captivated her, and made her view him in a much more favourable light than before – In a word, he gradually gained upon her; she forgot his age and infirmities; she forgot her honour. The reader after this need not be told of her succeeding situation. His lordship doted upon her in every sense of the word, anticipating all her wants –

gratifying all her desires in his power. He proposed having her picture drawn, and the greatest artist was fixed upon to execute it. The Modern Apelles therefore was certainly the man.

Miss J—gs accordingly waited upon our hero with this intention. He stared with admiration at her beauty – but when he beheld her charms revealed, to display her in a graceful attitude, he was petrified – the pencil dropped from his fingers, and his eyes were fixed with wonder and delight. After some time however, recovering his faculties from this enchanting delirium, he made some small progress in the portrait, but protracted the completion of it for several weeks, in order to be blessed with her repeated visits.

At length Lord F— became quite impatient to have the picture, and called upon our hero in order to know the cause of the delay: the Modern Apelles found out excuses, and made proper apologies, but was compelled to fix a day for sending it home. At the last sitting Miss J—gs presented the artist with a hundred pound note; he made an obeisance, retired for a moment, and returned with a gold snuff box, wherein was his own miniature, and in which he enclosed the banknote he had received from her, ‘entreating Miss J— to preserve that for his sake, as the greatest favour on earth could at present request’. She was so flustered with the

unexpected compliment, that, in great confusion, she put it into her pocket and retired.

A short time after she accidentally left this snuff box on her toilet, and Lord F— coming, during her absence, had the curiosity to examine it: he finding our hero’s picture in it, his jealousy was immediately roused, when reflecting upon her frequent visits she had paid the knight, the length of time before her picture was finished, and various other circumstances, particularly our heroine’s extolling his politeness and generosity, his lordship readily concluded, that he was in entire possession of her affections, and he was a dupe now to visit her. Accordingly he wrote the following laconic billet, which he left upon her snuff box.

‘Madam, I am now convinced my suspicions were not ill grounded; underneath is a testimony which cannot be controverted; I therefore take this final leave of you, as I have too long been the dupe to your artifices’.

No sooner had our hero learnt that his lordship had quitted Miss J—gs, than he waited upon her; and after a few introductory compliments, offered his purse and person. Her present situation would not let her refuse either, as it would have been ridiculous to have laid claim to virtue, though she probably might to chastity from his lordships inabilities; and as the knight had

already made a very favourable impression on her, she, with seeming reluctance, yielded to his proposal, and since that time there is great reason to believe they have been mutually happy.

*'The AMIABLE LAURA and The MODERN
APELLES', published in
The Town and Country Magazine
August 1779*

*Verses 'On Reading Some Adulatory Verses to
a Certain Celebrated Knight of the Brush',
printed in the Public Advertiser April 29 1777*

*When R---s with incessant puff
Bedaubs himself with nauseous stuff
I think the man is mad
Self Adulation should confine
Her breath to him who paints a sign
Because his works are BAD*

*But that this Lord of Gaudy Tints
Should trust his fame to Daily Prints
I can't forgive: ----
"Hold there" a surly critic cried
"The Tints and Papers coincide
Alike they're FUGITIVE"*

Reynolds's Reply printed in the
Public Advertiser
3 May 1777

*And dost thou think, thou scribbling elf
Or is it downright lying
That worthy REYNOLDS puffs himself
Both sense & shame defying?
He scorns to act so vile a part
Thy part we well divine
How ill, poor Bard, thou readest his heart
How legible is thine!*

*His FAME throughout the world shall fly
Thine is a passing vapour
His works with TIME alone shall die
Thine with a daily paper*