

Catherine Trotter, *Letters of Love and Galantry: The Adventures of a Young Lady*. Edited by Brooklynn Thomason, Cheryl Kurz-Young, Danna Rodriguez, and Gracelyn Hobbs (2025).

The Adventures of a Young Lady.

Written by herself, in several Letters to a Gentleman in the Country.

Letter VI.

If I did not know to the contrary by my own experience, you would make me believe that friendship and love can't be contained in one breast¹. Is it possible you can be so much taken up with *Ambrisia*, that you have not time enough to tell me of it? In this solitude, I should hear of *Cleander's*² affairs from two or three, before I know anything of them from you. They tell me you are every day with your new mistress and that you are well received there. I should be pleased with it. If I did not fear, instead of finding two friends, I would lose that one, whose friendship I prefer to all other things: but you'll make me almost jealous of her if you don't write quickly, for this is my fourth since I've heard from you.

Tell me, *Cleander*, you search into the nature of things that know the passions of men. How they are formed in the soul, and by what means, and what degrees they rise. Tell me how I may give that awe, that fear, or that respect which I hear often talked of, that makes men not dare to tell a woman that they love her. Is it the grave, the sour, the proud, or the modest looks? Or is there no such thing, but in songs and romances? For my part, I could never meet with it. Though perhaps there is some pleasure in being beloved, I cannot endure to be told of it, unless by the language of the eyes, or so; for that we need not understand.³ But there's nothing so dull, or so

¹ One person's heart

² Olinda's closest friend

³ "Even though being loved might be pleasant, I can't bear to be *told* that someone loves me unless it's said through the eyes or so, because then we don't have to actually fully understand it."

troublesome to me, as a declared lover. This reflection was occasioned by an adventure that happened to me two days ago.⁴

A stripling⁵ of eighteen, whose father and mother had been servants in the family where I am, said to one in the house, who told me, that he was in love with me, and after had the insolence to tell me himself, that he was in love. “But you do not consider with whom, madam,” added he, and just as he was going to finish his declaration, by good fortune, he was called away. Can anything be more provoking? Teach me where to place my anger: on the men, or on myself. *Antonio*⁶ was bashful to a fault in other things, and yet he did not fear to say all he thought, and the fault may be more to me. *Cloridon*,⁷ who treated me with the highest respect imaginable, discovered his love for me. As soon as he knew it himself, and many have pretended it, that never felt any, at least for me. The last indeed had encouragement enough, not to repent of what he had done, and reason not to despair of anything he could ask. So, after being two years contented with my love, he resolved to put it to the test, and began to pretend to favours. With all the arguments he could invent, or find, to persuade me of the innocence and lawfulness of what he asked. You may find what influence they had upon me by the following lines, which he sent me in a letter the next day.

“I.

Not one kind word, not one relenting look?

The harsh, cruel doom to mitigate?

less severe or painful

Your native sweetness, even your eyes forsook;

abandon or reject

They shined, but in the fiercest form of hate.

⁴ “I began to reflect because of something that happened to me two days ago.”

⁵ A very young man, often seen as immature and childish.

⁶ A young man that confessed his feeling to Olinda.

⁷ Long term admirer of Olinda, that started to ask for more leading to her dislike of him.

II.

Isn't honour these rigid laws impose; my

That no sign of gentleness will allow;

That tells you, it is a crime to pity foes,

And you offer all the utmost rigour to show?

III.

All praise the judge, unwilling to condemn,

Where clemency with justice long debates: *mercy*

But he who rigorously insults, we blame,

And think the man more than his sin he hate

IV.

Dare I, my judge, be accused of cruelty?

When at her feet she saw her slave implore,

With hasty joy she gave the sad decree: *decision*

I hate you, and will never see you more.

V.

*Ay! It is too plain the false Olinda's pleased
To see the captives death, her eyes had made:
As what she wished she the occasion seized;
No sigh, a kind reluctance betrayed.*

VI.

*If you intend to try your power, or skill,
A nobler way pursue the great design:
The meanest wretch on Earth knows how to kill;
But to preserve from death, an act of Divine. God*

VII.

*Like Heav'n, you with a breath can recreate Heaven
Your creature, that without you does not live:
Say that you love, and you revoke my fate; reverse
And I'm immortal if you can forgive.*

My fiercest wishes you shall then restrain,

And love that tramples o're my heart subdue: *over*

What doubt can of your mighty pow'r remain, power

When even that submits and yields to you?"

I believe I spoke from my heart, when I told him I hated him. I'm sure I thought so then, when I saw him, whom I believ'd to have an esteem and respect for me, act as if he had neither. I said the most violent things I could imagine against him, and left him without the least reluctance.

But my rage, or hate, was soon converted to a quiet stupid grief, that overwhelmed my soul, and left me not the power of easing it in the common way, in tears, or complaints. I saw that I must resolve never to see him again, whatever it made me endure, and in clarity I saw all that could make me unhappy, without any hopes of a remedy.⁸ For thô⁹ he wrote to me often to beg my pardon, and vowed a thousand times, he would not be guilty of the same fault again. Thô he was sure to be successful; yet I prevailed with myself absolutely to refuse to see him, with more resolution than I thought myself capable of. For I considered it was dangerous to trust him, notwithstanding¹⁰ his protestations, since he had broken his word before, and I don't know if I had not some reason to distrust myself after having gone so far, as not only to suffer him to talk to me of his love, but to own mine to him. When he saw this would not do, he had recourse to his old way

⁸ She decides to never see him again no matter what and, in reflection, she saw no resolution to her sorrow

⁹ Though

¹⁰ Despite

of writing upon business; but the letter came first to my hands, and so I stifled it, and said nothing of it to my mother.

A week later a porter¹¹ came to me, and said he was sent by the Countess of — — who wanted me to go immediately to her lodgings. For she had something of great consequence to tell me, and that he left her at a place where she had dined, but she was just going home. Away I went, and when they told me she was not at home, I thought she would not fail to be there presently, and went upstairs to stay for her. When I came into the room, I saw *Cloridon* there, and I would have retired¹², but he civilly hindered¹³ me, and told me he was waiting for his cousin, for this lady was nearly related to him, whom he expected to come in very soon. But it was a great happiness I came before her, and more than he cou'd have hoped for from fortune, for at first he pretended it was chance that brought us together there. But he knew I must find it out, and so to prevent my discovering it from the lady, he told me that coming to visit her, and not to find her at home, came into his thoughts to send for me in her name. He knew that she used to visit me, and often desired me to go abroad with her, or to bear her company at home, so that he hoped he might succeed without being suspected. I was in great confusion, and very angry at the trick he had put upon me, and yet I could not but be a little pleased at it too. I loved to see him, and was glad of an opportunity to give him his pardon, which I did, but made a vow never to consent to meet him in private. Thô he begged it upon his knees above an hour, and said he wou'd not rise till I had granted it. I suppose he was not as good as his word, but I left him in that posture, and before I went away, charged him not to write to me any more.

This interview served to increase my melancholy. I indulged it for a long time, and thought upon nothing but what soothed and added to it, but at length, considering the occasion of my misfortune, it represented itself to me. Not only as my folly¹⁴ but my crime, and then I concluded it must be a crime to grieve for the loss of that, which it was a crime to love, and so fixed a resolution of overcoming my passion, which I endeavoured to do by reason, and by diversions. Had I had you, my friend, to assist me with your counsels¹⁵ I would have found it much less difficult, but now I had the

¹¹ A person employed to carry luggage, goods, ect.

¹² Left

¹³ To keep back, delay, or stop

¹⁴ Foolishness

¹⁵ Advice

strongest part of myself to combat without any aid. I often gave ground, and sometimes suffered myself to be vanquished by the bewitching reflections of what unequalled satisfactions I had found in his company, and how many happy hours I enjoyed with him. But some good thought would rouse my soul to strive again, and then the victory was mine.

I find by experience it is but bravely, heartily, and thoroughly resolving upon a thing, and it is half done. There's no passion, no temptation so strong, but resolution can overcome. All is to be able to resolve, there's the point, for one must lose a little of the first ardour¹⁶. *Before one can do that, and many of our sex have ruin'd themselves, for want of time to think.*¹⁷ It is not a constant settled purpose of virtue, there must be a particular resolution for a particular attack. It is easy enough to say, "no Man shall prevail with me to do an ill thing," but the difficulty is that such a Man shall not. He that I love, he that it is death for me to deny any thing to: There I got the better of myself, and at last attained to a calm serenity of mind, which I have enjoyed ever since, as much as can be expected in such a world as this, and which nothing can disturb. If you continue to have that friendship for me, which you have professed, and which your silence makes me almost doubt of, there's hardly anything I could not more easily believe, than that *Cleander* is false, or inconstant. Write quickly, for I am impatient to know the cause of this unkindness too.

Your constant Friend,
Olinda.

¹⁶ British spelling for the word ardor, means enthusiasm or passion

¹⁷ Before one can lose a little passion, which many of our sex have ruined themselves, one must want to take time to think.