

The Maids Tragedy

by

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Persons Represented in the Play

King.

Lysippus, brother to the King.

Amintor, a Noble Gentleman.

Evadne, Wife to Amintor.

Malantius }
Diphilius } Brothers to Evadne.

Aspatia, troth-plight wife to Amnitor.

Calianax, an old humorous Lord, and
Father to Aspatia.

Cleon }
Strato } Gentlemen.

Diagoras, a Servant.

Antiphila }
Olympias } waiting Gentlewomen to Aspatia.

Dula, a Lady.

Night }
Cynthia }
Neptune }
Eolus } Maskers.

* * * * *

Act I

Enter Cleon, Strato, Lysippus, Diphilus.

Cleon. The rest are making ready Sir.

Strat. So let them, there's time enough.

Diph. You are the brother to the King, my Lord,
we'll take your word.

Lys. Strato, thou hast some skill in Poetry, What
thinkst thou of a Mask? will it be well?

Strat. As well as Mask can be.

Lys. As Mask can be?

Strat. Yes, they must commend their King, and speak
in praise of the Assembly, bless the Bride and
Bridegroom, in person of some God; th'are tyed
to rules of flattery.

Cle. See, good my Lord, who is return'd!

Lys. Noble Melantius!

[Enter Melantius.

The Land by me welcomes thy vertues home to Rhodes,
thou that with blood abroad buyest us our peace; the
breath of King is like the breath of Gods; My brother
wisht thee here, and thou art here; he will be too kind,
and weary thee with often welcomes; but the time doth
give thee a welcome above this or all the worlds.

Mel. My Lord, my thanks; but these scratcht limbs of mine have
spoke my love and truth unto my friends, more than my
tongue ere could: my mind's the same it ever was to you;
where I find worth, I love the keeper, till he let it go,
And then I follow it.

Diph. Hail worthy brother!
He that rejoyces not at your return
In safety, is mine enemy for ever.

Mel. I thank thee Diphilus: but thou art faulty;
I sent for thee to exercise thine armes
With me at Patria: thou cam'st not Diphilus: 'Twas
ill.

Diph. My noble brother, my excuse
Is my King's strict command, which you my Lord
Can witness with me.

Lys. 'Tis true Melantius,
He might not come till the solemnity
Of this great match were past.

Diph. Have you heard of it?

Mel. Yes, I have given cause to those that
Envy my deeds abroad, to call me gamesome;
I have no other business here at Rhodes.

Lys. We have a Mask to night,
And you must tread a Soldiers measure.

Mel. These soft and silken wars are not for me;
The Musick must be shrill, and all confus'd,
That stirs my blood, and then I dance with armes:
But is Amintor Wed?

Diph. This day.

Mel. All joyes upon him, for he is my friend:
Wonder not that I call a man so young my friend,
His worth is great; valiant he is, and temperate,
And one that never thinks his life his own,
If his friend need it: when he was a boy,
As oft as I return'd (as without boast)
I brought home conquest, he would gaze upon me,
And view me round, to find in what one limb
The vertue lay to do those things he heard:
Then would he wish to see my Sword, and feel
The quickness of the edge, and in his hand
Weigh it; he oft would make me smile at this;
His youth did promise much, and his ripe years
Will see it all perform'd.

[Enter Aspatia, passing by.]

Melan. Hail Maid and Wife!
Thou fair Aspatia, may the holy knot
That thou hast tyed to day, last till the hand
Of age undo't; may'st thou bring a race
Unto Amintor that may fill the world
Successively with Souldiers.

Asp. My hard fortunes
Deserve not scorn; for I was never proud
When they were good.

[Exit Aspatia.]

Mel. How's this?

Lys. You are mistaken, for she is not married.

Mel. You said Amintor was.

Diph. 'Tis true; but

Mel. Pardon me, I did receive
Letters at Patria, from my Amintor,
That he should marry her.

Diph. And so it stood,
In all opinion long; but your arrival
Made me imagine you had heard the change.

Mel. Who hath he taken then?

Lys. A Lady Sir,
That bears the light above her, and strikes dead
With flashes of her eye; the fair Evadne your
vertuous Sister.

Mel. Peace of heart betwixt them: but this is strange.

Lys. The King my brother did it
To honour you; and these solemnities
Are at his charge.

Mel. 'Tis Royal, like himself;
But I am sad, my speech bears so unfortunate a sound
To beautiful Aspatia; there is rage
Hid in her fathers breast; Calianax

Bent long against me, and he should not think,
If I could call it back, that I would take
So base revenges, as to scorn the state
Of his neglected daughter: holds he still his greatness
with the King?

Lys. Yes; but this Lady
Walks discontented, with her watry eyes
Bent on the earth: the unfrequented woods
Are her delight; and when she sees a bank
Stuck full of flowers, she with a sigh will tell
Her servants what a pretty place it were
To bury lovers in, and make her maids
Pluck'em, and strow her over like a Corse.
She carries with her an infectious grief
That strikes all her beholders, she will sing
The mournful'st things that ever ear hath heard,
And sigh, and sing again, and when the rest
Of our young Ladies in their wanton blood,
Tell mirthful tales in course that fill the room
With laughter, she will with so sad a look
Bring forth a story of the silent death
Of some forsaken Virgin, which her grief
Will put in such a phrase, that ere she end,
She'l send them weeping one by one away.

Mel. She has a brother under my command
Like her, a face as womanish as hers,
But with a spirit that hath much out-grown
The number of his years.

[Enter Amintor.]

Cle. My Lord the Bridegroom!

Mel. I might run fiercely, not more hastily
Upon my foe: I love thee well Amintor,
My mouth is much too narrow for my heart;
I joy to look upon those eyes of thine;
Thou art my friend, but my disorder'd speech cuts off
my love.

Amin. Thou art Melantius;
All love is spoke in that, a sacrifice
To thank the gods, Melantius is return'd
In safety; victory sits on his sword

As she was wont; may she build there and dwell,
And may thy Armour be as it hath been,
Only thy valour and thy innocence.
What endless treasures would our enemies give,
That I might hold thee still thus!

Mel. I am but poor in words, but credit me young man,
Thy Mother could no more but weep, for joy to see thee
After long absence; all the wounds I have,
Fetch not so much away, nor all the cries
Of Widowed Mothers: but this is peace;
And what was War?

Amin. Pardon thou holy God
Of Marriage bed, and frown not, I am forc't
In answer of such noble tears as those,
To weep upon my Wedding day.

Mel. I fear thou art grown too sick; for I hear
A Lady mourns for thee, men say to death,
Forsaken of thee, on what terms I know not.

Amin. She had my promise, but the King forbad it,
And made me make this worthy change, thy Sister
Accompanied with graces above her,
With whom I long to lose my lusty youth,
And grow old in her arms.

Mel. Be prosperous.

[Enter Messenger.

Messen. My Lord, the Maskers rage for you.

Lys. We are gone. Cleon, Strata, Diphilus.

Amin. Wee'l all attend you, we shall trouble you
With our solemnities.

Mel. Not so Amintor.
But if you laugh at my rude carriage
In peace, I'll do as much for you in War
When you come thither: yet I have a Mistress
To bring to your delights; rough though I am,
I have a Mistress, and she has a heart,
She saies, but trust me, it is stone, no better,

There is no place that I can challenge in't.
But you stand still, and here my way lies.

[Exit.

Enter Calianax with Diagoras.

Cal. Diagoras, look to the doors better for shame, you let
in all the world, and anon the King will rail at me; why
very well said, by Jove the King will have the show
i'th' Court.

Diag. Why do you swear so my Lord?
You know he'l have it here.

Cal. By this light if he be wise he will not.

Diag. And if he will not be wise, you are forsworn.

Cal. One may wear his heart out with swearing, and get
thanks on no side, I'le be gone, look to't who will.

Diag. My Lord, I will never keep them out.
Pray stay, your looks will terrifie them.

Cal. My looks terrifie them, you Coxcomby Ass you!
I'le be judg'd by all the company whether thou hast not a
worse face than I--

Diag. I mean, because they know you and your Office.

Cal. Office! I would I could put it off, I am sure I sweat
quite through my Office, I might have made room at my
Daughters Wedding, they had near kill'd her among them.
And now I must do service for him that hath forsaken her;
serve that will.

[Exit Calianax.

Diag. He's so humourous since his daughter was forsaken:
hark, hark, there, there, so, so, codes, codes.
What now?

[Within. knock within.

Mel. Open the door.

Diag. Who's there?

Mel. Melantius.

Diag. I hope your Lordship brings no troop with you,
for if you do, I must return them.

[Enter Melantius.

Mel. None but this Lady Sir.

[And a Lady.

Diag. The Ladies are all plac'd above, save those that
come in the Kings Troop, the best of Rhodes sit there,
and there's room.

Mel. I thank you Sir: when I have seen you plac'd
Madam, I must attend the King; but the Mask done, I'll
wait on you again.

Diag. Stand back there, room for my Lord Melantius, pray bear
back, this is no place for such youths and their Truls,
let the doors shut agen; I, do your heads itch? I'll
scratch them for you: so now thrust and hang: again,
who is't now? I cannot blame my Lord Calianax for
going away; would he were here, he would run raging
among them, and break a dozen wiser heads than his
own in the twinkling of an eye: what's the news now?

[Within.

I pray can you help me to the speech of the Master Cook?

Diag. If I open the door I'll cook some of your Calvesheads.
Peace Rogues.--again,--who is't?

Mel. Melantius within. Enter Calianax to Melantius.

Cal. Let him not in.

Diag. O my Lord I must; make room there for my
Lord; is your Lady plac't?

Mel. Yes Sir, I thank you my Lord Calianax: well met,
Your causless hate to me I hope is buried.

Cal. Yes, I do service for your Sister here,
That brings my own poor Child to timeless death;

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