The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

By Christopher Marlowe

Pre-reading

3. Vocabulary
Sort the words: which are nouns and which are the corresponding verbs? Then translate the nouns into Danish.

resist propose rejection desire complain adoration argue seduction reject proposal resistance exaggeration plead desire entreaty gratify argument adore seduce complaint entreat exaggerate plea gratification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Danish translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>propose</td>
<td>proposal</td>
<td>forslag, frieri</td>
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Learning check
In pairs: student A reads out the Danish nouns to student B and student B, without looking at the task, has to come up with the corresponding English nouns. Then student B reads out the Danish nouns to student A, and student A, without looking at the task, has to come up with the corresponding English verbs.
WIDER CONTEXTS

1. Literary context: other text by a different writer: Sir Walter Raleigh’s poem “The Nymph’s reply”

   1. Read Sir Walter Raleigh’s poem “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd” and compare the woman’s reply and your own replies to the shepherd from the Learning check.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618) was a soldier, explorer and colonizer, but also a courtier, philosopher, poet and historian. He became a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I in the 1580s, and he was one of the most politically powerful men at her court. He was executed in 1618 by King James I, Elizabeth’s successor, on charges of treason. “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd” is Raleigh’s response to Marlowe’s poem “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”. The date of the poem is unknown but it is thought to be about 1592.

Pre-reading

1. In “The Nymph’s reply” you will find the following line “In folly ripe, in reason rotten”. What does that tell you about the reasons for the nymph’s reaction to the shepherd’s invitation? Be as precise as you can.

The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd’s tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee, and be thy love.
Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields,
To wayward winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy’s spring, but sorrow’s fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten –
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
The coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

Glossary

no means  på ingen måde
breed  formere sig, gro, trives
While-reading

Comprehension, analysis and interpretation

1. In groups: translate the poem and then take turns to read a stanza each and to rephrase the stanza.
2. Which two lines did you particularly like/not like? Why? Learn the two lines by heart.
3. Stanza 1: Why hasn’t the nymph been persuaded to come and live with the shepherd and be his love?
4. Is stanza 2 a direct reply to Marlowe’s stanza 2?
5. How does the nymph follow up her verbal attack in the rest of the poem?
6. What aspects of nature does the nymph focus on?
7. The last line in stanza 5 is almost a repetition of the last line in stanza 1. Why doesn’t the author end the poem after the fifth stanza?
8. Comment on the number of examples of alliteration in each stanza. What is the function of alliteration in this poem?
9. Stanza 1 and the rest of the poem: What is the tone? Does it change?
10. Stanza 2-5: Is there an implied ‘but’ at the start of each stanza? Why/why not?
11. Characterize the tone: ironic joyful longing mocking optimistic pessimistic polite sarcastic sincere skeptical teasing witty
12. What is the theme of the poem?
13. Is this a carpe diem poem? Why/why not?
14. Is the poem a parody of Marlowe’s poem? Look for example at direct references to Marlowe’s poem, meter, rhyme, structure, length, the use of alliteration and the choice of words.

Post-reading

LEARNING CHECK

No study aids.

1. What does carpe diem mean?

2. The nymph’s reply is an answer to a poem called _______________________________________ by _______________________________________.

3. The poem is a parody of that poem because

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
4. Write down one of the two lines you learned by heart.

____________________________________________________________________________

5. The nymph’s reply was written by ___________________________ in about ________ (year).

2. Literary context: other text by a different writer: John Donnes’s poem “The Bait”

John Donne’s poem “The Bait” is also a response to Marlowe’s poem “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”. It is from Songs and Sonnets, which was first published in 1633.

Read the poem “The Bait” by John Donne and compare Raleigh’s and Donne’s responses to Marlowe’s poem.

John Donne (1572-1631) studied law and wrote love poems and satires in the early 1590s which he circulated among his friends. He made a name for himself at the court of Queen Elizabeth I, and in 1596-1597 he went on a military expedition to the Azores. Donne’s life is divided into two different and opposing phases. The first phase is typified in his witty, passionate, daring love poems. In the second phase, he became the most famous preacher of his day. He was ordained in 1615 and from 1621 until his death he was Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral. His poems were published after his death.

The Bait

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will some new pleasures prove
Of golden sands and crystal brooks,
With silken lines and silver hooks.

Glossary

bait madding, lokkemad
prove opleve, afprøve
brook bæk
line fiskesnøre
hook fiskekrog
There will the river whispering run
Warmed by thy eyes, more than the sun.
And there th’ enamoured fish will stay,
Begging themselves they may betray.

When thou wilt swim in that live bath,
Each fish, which every channel hath,
Will amorously to thee swim,
Gladder to catch thee, than thou him.

If thou, to be so seen, beest loth,
By sun, or moon, thou darknest both
And if myself have leave to see,
I need not their light, having thee.

Let others freeze with angling reeds,
And cut their legs, with shells and weeds,
Or treacherously poor fish beset,
With strangling snare, or windowy net.

Let coarse bold hands, from slimy nest
The bedded fish in banks out-wrest,
Or curious traitors, sleeve-silk flies,
Bewitch poor fishes’ wandering eyes.

For thee, thou needest no such deceit,
For thou thyself art thine own bait;
That fish, that is not caught thereby,
Alas, is wiser far than I.
Comprehension, analysis and interpretation

1. Who is speaking to whom about what?
2. Stanza 2: Explain line 2. How powerful are the woman’s eyes. See also stanza 4.
3. Stanza 2: Why the personification of the fish? Are they more than just fish? See also the rest of the poem and try to figure out who is the fish, who is fishing, and who catches whom?
4. Stanza 1 and 2: What is the mood and the tone? Where in the poem do the mood and the tone change?
5. Stanza 3: Where is the woman the speaker addresses?
6. Stanza 4: “so seen”: Seen how?
7. Stanza 4: Find an example of hyperbole.
8. Stanzas 5 and 6: Which methods are used? Are they fair?
9. Stanza 7: What has happened to the speaker’s mood? What emotion in the woman does he appeal to?
10. How does Donne make clear that this poem is a response to Marlowe’s poem “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”? Look for example at structure, direct and indirect quotes, meter, rhyme and imagery.