

# **Acis and Galatea**

John Gay

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# Acis and Galatea

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*ACIS* and *GALATEA*:

An ENGLISH PASTORAL OPERA. In THREE ACTS.

THE ARGUMENT.

Acis was the Son of Faunus, and the Nymph Symethis. He loved and was beloved of the Nymph Galatea, Daughter to Nereus, the Son of Oceanus and Tethys. Acis was allowed to be the handsomest Youth of all Sicily; he was happy in his Amours with Galatea, till Polyphemus the Cyclop, Son of Neptune, fell in love with her, who surprising 'em together, with a Piece of a Rock overwhelmed Acis. Galatea, by her Persuasion, gained her Father Nereus's Consent to change him into a River. The Story at large is mentioned in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Lib. XIII.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

*Acis.* Mr. *Mountier.*

*Polyphemus.* Mr. *Waltz.*

*Damon.* Mrs. *Mason.*

WOMEN.

*Galatea.* Miss *Arne.*

*Chorus of Shepherds, and Shepherdesses.*

## ACT I.

CHORUS.

*O the Pleasure of the Plains,  
Happy Nymphs and happy Swains,  
Harmless, Merry, Free, and Gay,  
Dance and sport the Hours away.  
For us the Zephyr blows,  
For us distils the Dew,*

Acis and Galatea

*For us unfolds the Rose,  
And Flowers display their Hue,*

*For us the Winters rain,  
For us the Summers shine,  
Spring swells for us the Grain,  
And Autumn bleeds the Vine.  
O the, &c.  
[Exeunt.*

*Enter Galatea.*

Recitativo.

*Gal.*

Ye verdant Plains and woody Mountains,  
Purling Streams, and bubbling Fountains,  
Ye painted Glories of the Field;  
Vain are the Pleasures which ye yield,  
Too thin the Shadow of the Grove,  
Too faint the Gales, to cool my Love,  
*AIR.*

*Hush, ye pretty warbling Quire,  
Your thrilling Strains,  
Awake my Pains,  
And kindle soft Desire.  
Cease your Song, and take your Flight;  
Bring back my Acis to my Sight.  
[Exit.*

*Hush ye, &c.*

*Enter Acis.*

*AIR.*

*Where shall I seek the charming Fair,  
Direct the way, kind Genius of the Mountains,  
O tell me if you saw my Dear,  
Seeks she the Groves, or Bathes in Crystal Fountains?  
Where, &c.*

*Enter Damon.*

Recitativo.

*Dam.*

Stay, Shepherd, stay, see how thy Flocks  
In yonder Valley stray;  
What means this melancholy Air,

Acis and Galatea

No more thy tuneful Pipe we hear.  
*AIR.*

*Shepherd, what art thou pursuing?  
Heedless running to thy ruining;  
Share our Joy, our Pleasure share,  
Leave thy Passion till to-morrow,  
Let this Day be free from Sorrow,  
Free from Love and free from Care.  
Shepherd, &c.*

Acis.

Recitativo.

*Acis.*

Lo! here my Love, turn *Galatea*, hither turn thine Eyes,  
See at thy Feet the loving *Acis* lies.  
*AIR.*

*Love in her Eyes sits playing,  
And sheds delicious Death;  
Love in her Lips sits straying,  
And warbling in her Breath.  
Love on her Breast sits panting,  
And swells with soft Desire,  
No Grace, no Charm is wanting,  
To set the Heart on Fire.  
Love in, &c.*

*Enter Galatea.*

Recitativo.

*Gal.*

O didst thou know the Pains of absent Love,  
*Acis* would ne'er from *Galatea* rove.  
*AIR.*

*As when the Dove,  
Laments her Love,*

*All on the naked Spray,  
When he returns,  
No more she mourns,  
But loves the live-long Day.  
Billing, cooing,  
Panting, wooing,  
Melting Murmurs fill the Grove,  
Melting Murmurs lasting love.  
As when, &c.*

[Exeunt.]

Acis and Galatea

*Enter Acis, and Galatea.*

*Duetto.*

*Both.*

*Happy, happy Pair,*

*Happy, happy we, Gal.*

*What Joys I feel. Acis.*

*What Charms I see. Gal.*

*Of all Youths, thou dearest Boy, Acis.*

*Of all Nymphs thou brightest Fair. Both.*

*Thou art all my Bliss,*

*Thou all my Joy.*

*Happy, &c.*

[Exeunt.

**ACT II.**

*Enter Shepherds.*

*CHORUS.*

*Wretched Lovers, Fate has past*

*This sad Decree, no Joy shall last,*

*Wretched Lovers, quit your Dream,*

*Behold the Monster, Polypheme.*

*See what ample Strides he takes,*

*The Mountain nods, the Forest shakes,*

*The Waves run frighted to the Shores.*

*Hark! how the thund'ring Giant roars.*

Polyphemus.

Recitativo.

*Polyph.*

I rage, I melt, I burn,

The feeble God has stab'd me to the Heart.

Thou trusty Pine, Prop of my Godlike Steps,

I lay thee by.

Bring me an hundred Reeds of decent growth,

To make a Pipe for my capacious Mouth.

In soft enchanting Accents let me breathe,

Sweet *Galatea's* Beauty, and my Love.

*AIR.*

*O ruddier than the Cherry,*

*O sweeter than the Berry,*

*O Nymph more bright*

ACT II.

Acis and Galatea

*Than Moonshine Night,  
Like Kidlings blith and merry.  
Ripe as the melting Cluster,  
No Lilly has such Lustre,  
Yet hard to tame,  
As raging Flame,  
And fierce as Storms that bluster.  
O Ruddier, &c.*

Polyphemus.

Recitativo.

*Polyph.*

Whither, Fairest, art thou running?  
Still my warm Embraces shunning.

Galatea.

*Gal.*

The Lion calls not to his Prey,  
Nor bids the Wolf the Lambkin stay.

Polyphemus.

*Polyph.*

Thee, *Polyphemus*, great as *Jove*,  
Calls to Empire and to Love,  
To his Palace in the Rock,  
To his Dairy, to his Flock,  
To the Grape of purple Hue,  
To the Plumb of Glossy Blue,  
Wildings which expecting stand,  
Proud to be gather'd by thy Hand. *Gal.*  
Of Infant Limbs to make my Food,  
And swill full Draughts of Humane Blood!  
Go, Monster, bid some other Guest;  
I loath the Host, and loath the Feast.

*[Exit.*

Polyphemus.

*AIR*

*Polyp.*

*Cease to Beauty to be suing,  
Ever whining, Love disdainning,  
Let the Brave, their Aims pursuing,  
Still be conqu'ring, not complaining.  
Cease to, &c.*

Damon.

*AIR.*

*Dam.*

*Wou'd you gain the tender Creature?  
Softly, gently, kindly treat her;*

ACT II.

## Acis and Galatea

*Suff'ring is the Lover's Part:  
Beauty by Constraint, possessing,  
You enjoy but half the Blessing,  
Lifeless Charms, without the Heart.  
Wou'd you, &c.  
[Exeunt Polyp. and Dam.*

*Enter Acis.*

Recitativo.

*Acis.*

His hideous Love provokes my Rage,  
Weak as I am, I must engage;

Inspir'd by thy victorious Charms,  
The God of Love will lend his Arms.  
*AIR.*

*Love sounds the Alarm, and Fear is a flying;  
When Beauty's the Prize, what Mortal fears dying?  
In Defence of my Treasure I'll bleed at each Vein;  
Without her, no Pleasure, for Life is a Pain.  
Love sounds, &c.*

## ACT III.

*Enter Acis in a melancholy Posture, Damon following him.*

*AIR.*

*Consider, fond Shepherd,  
How fleeting's the Pleasure,  
That flatters our Hopes,  
In pursuit of the Fair;  
The Joys that attend it,  
By Moments we measure,  
But Life is too little  
To measure our Care.*

*Enter Galatea.*

Recitativo.

*Gal.*

Cease, O cease! thou gentle Youth,  
Trust my Constancy and Truth;  
Trust my Truth and Pow'rs above,  
The Pow'rs propitious still to Love.

ACT III.

Acis and Galatea

AIR.

Both.

*The Flocks shall leave the Mountains,*

*The Floods the Turtle–Dove,*

*The Nymphs forsake the Fountains,*

*Ere I forsake my Love.*

*Enter Polyphemus.*

Polyp.

*Torture, Fury, Rage, Despair,*

*I cannot, no, I cannot bear. Both.*

*Not Show'rs to Larks so pleasing,*

*Nor Sunshine to the Bee;*

*No Sleep to Toil so easing,*

*As these dear Smiles to me.*

*[Exit.*

Polyp.

*Fly swift, thou massy Ruin, fly,*

*Presumptuous Acis, die.*

*[Polyphemus kills Acis with a great Stone, which he gathers from a Rock.*

*Enter Acis, supported by Shepherds.*

Recitativo.

Acis.

Help, *Galatea*, help the Parent Gods,

And take me dying to your deep Abodes.

*CHORUS of Shepherds and Shepherdesses.*

*Mourn all the Muses, weep all the Swains,*

*Tune your Reeds to doleful Strains;*

*Groans, Cries, and Howlings, fill the neighb'ring Shore;*

*Ah! the gentle Acis is no more.*

Galatea.

Gal.

Must I my *Acis* still bemoan,

Inglorious, crush'd beneath that Stone?

*CHORUS.*

*Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve,*

*Bewail not whom you can't relieve.*

Galatea.

Gal.

Must the lovely charming Youth,

Die for his Constancy and Truth?

*CHORUS.*

*Cease, Galatea, cease to grieve,*

*Bewail not whom you can't relieve.*

ACT III.

Acis and Galatea

*Call forth thy Pow'r, employ thy Art,  
The Goddess soon can heal the Smart.  
Galatea.*

*Gal.*  
Say, what Comfort can I find,  
For dark Despair o'er-clouds my Mind?  
*[Exit.*

*CHORUS.*

*To Kindred Gods the Youth returns,  
Through verdant Plains to roll his Urn.*

*Enter Galatea.*

*Recitativo.*

*Gal.*  
'Tis done, thus I exert my Pow'r Divine,  
Be thou immortal, tho' thou art not mine.  
*AIR.*

*Heart, the Seat of soft Delight,  
Be thou now a Fountain bright;  
Purple be no more thy Blood,  
Glide thou like a Crystal Flood;  
Through the Plains he joys to rove,  
Murm'ring still his gentle Love.*

*CHORUS.*

*Galatea, dry thy Tears,  
Acis now a God appears;  
See how he rears him from his Bed!  
See the Wreath that binds his Head!  
Hail, thou gentle murm'ring Stream,  
Shepherds Pleasure, Muses Theme,  
Through the Plain still joy to rove,  
Murm'ring still thy gentle Love.*