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Fatal Jealousy [supplemental material]

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Fatal Jealousy, Author Unknown.

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MLA Citation

Fatal Jealousy, London: T. & R. Hughes. 1807. Print.

MLA Citation from the Gothic Archive

Fatal Jealousy; or, Blood Will Have Blood! Containing the History of Count Almagro and Duke Alphonso; Their Combat in the Dreadful Tournament and the Death of the Beautiful Bellarmine, Through the Artifice of Sophronia, Her Rival. Published 1807. E-Publications Marquette. The Gothic Archive, Marquette University, Wisconsin.

http://epublications.marquette.edu/english_gothic/1/. Accessed 9/16/13. Web.

Full Title

Fatal Jealousy; or, Blood Will Have Blood! Containing the History of Count Almagro and Duke Alphonso; Their Combat in the Dreadful Tournament and the Death of the Beautiful Bellarmine, Through the Artifice of Sophronia, Her Rival.

Summary

Fatal Jealousy opens during a Spanish campaign against the Moors. Count Almagro, a Spanish knight, is spared during combat by an old African prince, Razallah. Almagro later returns the favor by pledging to protect a dying Razallah's daughter, Almora. The two are married, despite objections to the bride being an infidel, and Almora turns out to be the daughter of a Spanish couple imprisoned by a licentious Moor. Upon their return to Spain, Almagro and Almora retire to the country. Their only daughter, Sofronia, is betrothed to Alphonso, Duke of Tenedos. While in Madrid for a tournament, Alphonso falls in love with the daughter of a goldsmith, Bellarmine. Upon learning of Alphonso's marriage to Bellarmine, Sofronia and her father swear revenge. Almagro challenges Alphonso to a duel, during which Alphonso decapitates Almagro. A guilt-ridden Alphonso decides to join the crusades as penance for killing the count. Before he leaves, Alphonso entrusts his faithful hound, Fidelio, to Bellarmine's care and claims that keeping the dog with her at all times will be an assurance of her fidelity. Upon learning this, Sofronia enlists a monk to steal Fidelio from Bellarmine. Bellarmine sets up a tent at nearby crossroads in order to ask knights returning from the crusades to seek Fidelio, but Sofronia, disguised as a knight, intercepts Alphonso and convinces him of Bellarmine's adultery. Alphonso kills Bellarmine in a fit of jealous rage and dies of grief a year later.

Constellation of Knowledge/Historical Context

Fatal Jealousy is derived from a much earlier tradition of revenge tragedies from the Early Modern period. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* is a prime example of this influence, offering a female character set on revenge similar to Sofronia.

Fatal Jealousy also borrows heavily from popular Gothic novels of the 1790s. Sofronia's vindictive nature is in keeping with a standing tradition of villainous aristocratic (non-English) women, bringing to mind the baroness from Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk*, the Marchesa from Anne Radcliffe's *The Italian*, and Mother Vittoria Bracciano from William Henry Ireland's *The Abbess*. In contrast, Bellarmine invokes the typical Protestant Gothic heroines from these novels, being of lower class origins, but endowed with a natural gentility and superiority of mind.

The chapbook also takes up Radcliffe's use of the explained supernatural. It offers two different episodes in which "ghosts" manipulate lower class characters. Bellarmine's priest brother, Fernando, uses his father's superstition to convince him to allow Bellarmine to marry Alphonso. The monk hired by Sofronia also uses Bellarmine's superstitious servants to gain possession of Fidelio. Again, the chapbook invokes Radcliffe's *The Italian* by having

a servant of the Church serve an upper class female set on revenge. The monk is described as corrupt and greedy, and Catholicism as rooted in superstition.

Fatal Jealousy is set during the Spanish Reconquista, a hundreds of years long conflict during which Spain took over large portions of Muslim-held Spain and Portugal in the name of Catholicism. The Order of Calatrava awarded to Almagro by Ferdinand in the chapbook refers to an actual religious order of fighters, sanctioned by the Pope in the twelfth century. Ferdinand and Isabella founded the Inquisition in Spain in order to monitor forced Muslim and Jewish converts. *Fatal Jealousy's* description of Spanish pillaging on these campaigns is another subtle criticism of the Catholic Church, and of countries like Spain that were still heavily influenced by Catholicism at the time of its publication. The Spanish armada joined with the French in aiding America against Britain in 1779, resulting in strong anti-Spanish sentiment in the wake of the American Revolution.

Key Words

African

Description forthcoming.

Chivalry

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Christian Slave

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Crusades

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Ferdinand

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Bibliography of Related Information

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature: The Essential Guide to the Lives and Works of Gothic Writers*. Facts on File: New York, 2005.