The Rape of the Lock

By Alexander Pope

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# Table of Contents

THE RAPE of the LOCK. CANTO I. ....................................................................................................................

THE RAPE of the LOCK. CANTO II. ..............................................................................................................

THE RAPE of the LOCK. CANTO III. .............................................................................................................

THE RAPE of the LOCK. CANTO IV. ............................................................................................................... 

THE RAPE of the LOCK. CANTO V. ...............................................................................................................
TO
MRS. ARABELLA FERMOUR.

MADAM,

It will be in vain to deny that I have some value for this piece, since I dedicate, it to you. Yet you may bear me witness, it was intended only to divert a few young Ladies, who have good sense and good Humour enough, to laugh not only at their sex’s little unguarded Follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the Air of a Secret, it soon found its Way into the World. An imperfect Copy having been offer’d to a Bookseller, You had the Good-Nature for my Sake to consent to the publication of one more correct: This I was forc’d to before I had executed half my Design, for the Machinery was entirely wanting to compleat it.

The Machinery Madam, is a Term invented by the Critiks, to signify that Part which the Deities, Angels, or Dæmons, are made to act in a poem: For the ancient Poets are in one respect like
many modern Ladies; Let an Action be never so trivial in it self, they always make it appear of the utmost Importance. These Machines I determin'd to raise on a very new and odd Foundation, the Rosicrucian, Doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard Words before a Lady, but 'tis so much the Concern of a Poet to have his Works understood, and particularly by your Sex, that You must give me leave to explain two or three difficult Terms.

The Rosicrucians are the People I must bring You acquainted with. The best Account I know of them is in the French Book call'd Le Comte de Gabalis, which

both in its Title and Size is so like a Novel, that many of the fair Sex have read it for one by Mistake, according to these Gentlemen, the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes, or Dæmons of Earth, delight in Mischief; but the Sylphs, whose Habitation is Air, are the best-condition'd Creatures imaginable. For the say, any Mortals may enjoy the most intimate Familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a Condition very easie to all true Adepts, an involute Preservation of Chastity.

As to the following Canto's, all the Passages of them are as Fabulous, as the Vision at the beginning, or the Transformation at the End; (except the Loss of your

Hair, which I always name with Reverence.) The Human Persons are as Fictitious as the Airy ones; and the Character of Belinda, as it is now manag'd, resembles You in nothing but in Beauty.

If this Poem had as many Graces as there are in Your Person, or in Your Mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the World half so Uncensured as You have done. But let its Fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this Occasion of assuring You that I am. with the truest Esteem,

Madam
Your Most Obedient
Humble Servant.
A. POPE.
THE
RAPE of the LOCK.

CANTO I.

WHAT dire Offence from am'rous Causes springs,
What mighty Quarrels rise from Trivial Things,
I sing -- This Verse to C---l, Caryll, Muse! is due;
This, ev'n Belinda, Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the Subject, but not so the Praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my Lays.

Say what strange Motive, Goddess! cou'd compel
A well-bred Lord t'assault a gentle Belle?
Oh say what stranger Cause, yet unexplor'd,
Cou'd make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
And dwells such Rage in softest Bosoms then?
And lodge such daring Souls in Little Men?

Sol, Sol thro' white Curtains did his Beams display,
And op'd those Eyes which brighter shine than they;
Now Shock, Shock had giv'n himself the rowzing Shake,
And Nymphs prepar'd their Chocolate, chocolate to take;
Thrice the wrought Slipper knock'd against the Ground, slipper
And striking Watches, watches the tenth Hour resound.
Belinda still her downy Pillow prest,
Her Guardian Sylph, sylph prolong'd the balmy Rest.
'Twas he, Ariel had summon'd to her silent Bed
The Morning Dream that hover'd o'er her Head.
A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau, beau,
(That ev'n in Slumber caus'd her Cheek to glow)

Seem'd to her Ear his winning Lips to lay,
And thus in Whispers said, or seem'd to say.
Fairest of Mortals, thou distinguish'd Care
Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air!
If e'er one Vision touch'd thy infant Thought,
Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught,
Of airy Elves by Moonlight Shadows seen,
The silver Token, and the circled Green,
Or Virgins visited by Angel-Pow'rs,
With Golden Crowns and Wreaths of heav'nly Flowers,
Hear and believe! thy own Importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow Views to Things below.
Some secret Truths from Learned Pride conceal'd,
To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd:
What tho' no Credit doubting Wits may give?
The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.
Know then, unnumbered Spirits round thee fly,
The light Militia of the lower Sky;

These, tho' unseen, are ever on the Wing,
Hang o'er the Box, and hover round the Ring.
Think what an Equipage thou hast in Air,
And view with scorn Two Pages and a Chair.
As now your own, our Beings were of old,
And once inclos'd in Woman's beauteous Mold:
Thence, by a soft Transition, we repair
From earthly Vehicles to those of Air.
Think not, when Woman's transient Breath is fled,
That all her Vanities at once are dead:
Succeeding Vanities she still regards,
And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the Cards.
Her Joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And Love of Ombre, after Death survive.
For when the Fair in all their Pride expire,
To their first Elements the Souls retire;
The Sprights of fiery Termagants in Flame,
Mount up, and take a Salamander's Name.
Soft yielding Minds to Water glide away,
And sip with Nymphs, their Elemental Tea.

The graver Prude sinks downward to a Gnome,
In search of Mischief still on Earth to roam.
The light Coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the Fields of Air.
Know farther yet; Whoever fair and chaste
Rejects Mankind, is by some Sylph embrac'd:
For Spirits, freed from mortal Laws, with ease
Assume what Sexes and what Shapes they please.
What guards the Purity of melting Maids,
In Courtly Balls, and Midnight Masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous Friend, and daring Spark,
The Glance by Day, the Whisper in the Dark;
When kind Occasion prompts their warm Desires,
When Musick softens, and when Dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
Tho' Honour is the Word with Men below.

Some Nymphs there are, too conscious of their Face,
For Life predestin'd to the Gnomes Embrace

Who swell their Prospects and exalt their Pride,
When Offers are disdain'd, and Love deny'd.
Then gay Ideas crowd the vacant Brain;
While Peers and Dukes, and all their sweeping Train,
And Garters, Stars, and Coronets appear,
And in soft Sounds, Your Grace salutes their Ear.
'Tis these that early taint the Female Soul,
Instruct the Eyes of young Coquettes to roll,
Teach Infants Cheeks a bidden Blush to know,
And little Hearts to flutter at a Beau.

Oft when the World imagine Women stray,
The Sylphs thro' mystick Mazes guide thier Way,
Thro' all the giddy Circle they pursue,
And old Impertinence expel by new.
What tender Maid but must a Victim fall
To one Man's Treat, but for another's Ball?
When Florio speaks, what Virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her Hand?

With varying Vanities, from ev'ry Part,
They shift the moving Toyshop of their Heart;
Where Wigs with Wigs, with Sword-knots Sword-knots strive,
Beaus banish Beaus, and Coaches Coaches drive.
This erring Mortals Levity may call,
Oh blind to Truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.

Of these am I, who thy Protection claim,
A watchful Sprite, and Ariel is my Name.

Late, as I rang'd the Crystal Wilds of Air,
In the clear Mirror of thy ruling Star
I saw, alas! some dread Event impend,
E're to the Main, main this Morning's Sun descend.

But Heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warn'd by thy Sylph, oh Pious Maid beware!
This to disclose is all thy Guardian can.
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!

He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leapt up, and wak'd his Mistress with his Tongue.

'Twas then Belinda! if Report say true,
Thy Eyes first open'd on a Billet-doux, billet-doux;
Wounds, Charms, and Ardors, were no sooner read
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy Head.

And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd,
Each Silver Vase in mystic Order laid.
First, rob'd in White, the Nymph intent adores
With Head uncover'd, the cosmetic Pow'rs.

A heav'nly Image in the Glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her Eyes she rears;
Th' inferior Priestess, at her Altar's side,
Trembling, begins the sacred Rites of Pride
Unnumber'd Treasures ope at once, and here
The various Off'ring's of the World, world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious Toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring Spoil.

This Casket India's glowing Gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breaths from yonder Box.

The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
Transform'd to Combs, the speckled and the white.
Here Files of Pins extend their shining Rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.
Now awful Beauty puts on all its Arms,
The Fair each moment rises in her Charms,
Repairs her Smiles, awakens ev'ry Grace,
And calls forth all the Wonders of her Face;
Sees by Degrees a purer Blush arise,
And keener Lightnings quicken in her Eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling Care;
These set the Head, and those divide the Hair,
Some fold the Sleeve, while others plait the Gown;
And Betty, Betty’s prais’d for Labours not her own.
THE RAPE of the LOCK.

CANTO II.

1 NOT with more Glories, in th' Etherial,\textit{\textcopyright} Plain,
2 The Sun first rises o'er the purpled Main,
3 Than issuing forth, the Rival,\textit{\textcopyright} of his Beams
4 Lanch'd on the Bosom of the Silver Thames .
5 \textit{Fair Nymphs}, nymphs, and well-drest Youths around her shone,
6 But ev'ry Eye was fix'd on her alone.
7 On her white Breast a sparkling \textit{Cross} she wore,
8 Which \textit{Jews}, cross might kiss, and Infidels adore.

9 Her lively Looks a sprightly Mind disclose,
10 Quick as her Eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
11 Favours to none, to all she Smiles extends,
12 Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
13 Bright as the Sun, her Eyes the Gazers strike,
14 And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
15 Yet graceful Ease, and Sweetness void of Pride,
16 Might hide her Faults, if \textit{Belles} had faults to hide:
17 If to her share some Female Errors fall,
18 Look on her Face, and you'll forget 'em all.

19 This \textit{Nymph}, nymph, to the Destruction of Mankind,
20 Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
21 In equal Curls, and well conspir'd to deck
22 With shining Ringlets her smooth \textit{Ivry}, ivory Neck.
23 Love in these Labyrinths his Slaves detains,
24 And mighty Hearts are held in slender Chains.
25 With hairy \textit{Sprindges}, sprindges we the Birds betray,
26 Slight Lines of Hair surprize the \textit{Finny Prey}, finney,

27 \textit{Fair Tresses}, tresses Man's Imperial Race insnare,
28 And Beauty draws us with a single Hair.
Th' Adventrous  *Baron*  the bright Locks admir'd,
He saw, he wish'd, and to the Prize aspir'd:
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By Force to ravish, or by Fraud betray;
For when  *success*  a Lover's Toil attends,
Few ask, if Fraud or Force attain'd his Ends.

For this, e're  *Phaebus*,  Phaebus  rose, he had implor'd
Propitious Heav'n, and ev'ry Pow'r ador'd,
But chiefly  *Love*  ---to  *Love*  an Altar built,
Of twelve vast  *French*  Romances, neatly gilt.
There lay the  *sword-knot*,  sword-knot  Sylvia  's Hands had sown,
With  *Flavia's*  *busk*  that oft had rapp'd his own:
A Fan, a Garter, half a Pair of Gloves;
And all the 'Trophies of his former Loves.
With tender  *bilet-doux*,  bilet-doux  he lights the Pyre,
And breaths three am'rous Sighs to raise the Fire.

Then  *prostrate*,  prostrate  falls, and begs with ardent Eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess  *the Prize*,  Prize :
The Pow'r's gave  *Ear*,  Ear , and granted half his Pray'r,
The rest, the Winds dispers'd in empty Air.

But now secure the  *painted Vessel*,  Vessel  glides,
The Sun-beams trembling on the floating Tydes,
While melting Musick steals upon the Sky,
And soften'd Sounds along the Waters die.
Smooth flow the Waves, the  *Zephyrs*,  zephyrs  gently play
*Belinda*  smil'd, and all the World was gay.
All but the  *Sylph*  ----With careful Thoughts opprest,
Th' impending Woe sate heavy on his Breast.
He summons strait his  *Denizens*,  Denizens  of Air;
The  *lucid*,  lucid  Squadrons round the Sails repair:
Soft o'er the Shrouds Aerial Whispers breath,
That seem'd but  *Zephyrs*  to the Train beneath.
Some to the Sun their Insect-Wings unfold,
Waft on the Breeze, or sink in Clouds of Gold.

Transparent Forms, too fine for mortal Sight,
Their fluid Bodies half dissolv'd in Light.
Loose to the Wind their airy Garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring Textures of the filmy Dew;
Dipt in the richest Tincture of the Skies,
Where Light disports in ever-mingling Dies,
While ev'ry Beam new transient Colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their Wings.

Amid the Circle, on the gilded Mast,
Superior by the Head, was Ariel plac'd;
His Purple Pinions, opening to the Sun,
He rais'd his Azure Wand, and thus begun.

Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your Chief, give Ear,
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Daemons hear!
Ye know the Spheres and various Tasks assign'd,
By Laws Eternal, to th' Aerial Kind.
Some in the Fields of purest AEther play,
And bask and whiten in the Blaze of Day.

Some guide the Course of wandring Orbs on high,
Or roll the Planets thro' the boundless Sky.
Some less refin'd, beneath the Moon's pale Light
Hover, and catch the shooting stars by Night;
Or suck the Mists in grosser Air below,
Or dip their Pinions in the painted Bow,
Or brew fierce Tempests on the wintry Main.
Or on the Glebe distill the kindly Rain.
Others on Earth o'er human Race preside,
Watch all their Ways, and all their Actions guide:
Of these the Chief the Care of Nations own,
And guard with Arms Divine the British Throne.

Our humbler Province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious Care.
To save the Powder from too rude a Gale,
Nor let th' imprison'd Essences exhale,
To draw fresh Colours from the vernal Flow'rs,
To steal from Rainbows ere they drop in Show'rs
A brighter Wash; to curl their waving Hairs,
Assist their Blushes, and inspire their Airs;
Nay oft, in Dreams, Invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelo.

This Day, black Omens threat the brightest Fair,
That e'er deserv'd a watchful Spirit's Care;
Some dire Disaster, or by Force, or Slight,
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt, \textit{wrapt} in Night.
Whether the Nymph shall break \textit{Diana}, \textit{Diana}'s Law,
Or some frail \textit{China} Jar receive a Flaw,
Or stain her Honour, or her new \textit{Brocade}, \textit{Brocade},
Forget her Pray'rs, or miss a Masquerade,
Or lose her Heart, or Necklace, at a Ball;
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that \textit{Shock} must fall.
Haste then ye Spirits! to your Charge repair;
The flutt'ring Fan be \textit{Zephyretta}, \textit{Zephyretta}'s Care;
The Drops to thee, \textit{Brillante}, \textit{Brillante}, we consign;
And \textit{Momentilla}, \textit{Momentilla}, let the Watch be thine;

Do thou, \textit{Crispissa}, \textit{Crispissa}, tend her fav'rite Lock;
\textit{Ariel} himself shall be the Guard of \textit{Shock}.
To Fifty chosen \textit{Sylphs}, of special Note,
We trust th' important Charge, the \textit{Petticoat}:
Oft have we known that sev'nfold Fence to fail;
Tho' stiff with Hoops, and arm'd with Ribs of Whale, \textit{Ribs}.
Form a strong Line about the Silver Bound,
And guard the wide Circumference around.

Whatever spirit, careless of his Charge,
His Post neglects, or leaves the Fair at large,
Shall feel sharp Vengeance soon o'ertake his Sins,
Be \textit{stopt}, \textit{stopt} in \textit{Vials}, \textit{Vials}, or transfixt with \textit{Pins};
Or plung'd in Lakes of bitter \textit{Washes} lie,
Or wedg'd whole Ages in a \textit{Bodkin's} \textit{bodkin} Eye:
\textit{Gums} and \textit{Pomatums} \textit{pomatums} shall his Flight restrain,
While clog'd he beats his silken Wings in vain;
Or Alom- \textit{Stypticks}, \textit{styptick} with contracting Power
Shrink his thin Essence like a rivell'd Flower.

Or as \textit{Ixion}, \textit{Ixion} fix'd, the Wretch shall feel
The giddy Motion of the whirling \textit{Mill}, \textit{Mill}
Midst Fumes of burning Chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the \textit{Sea}, \textit{Sea} that froaths below!

\textit{He}, \textit{He} spoke; the Spirits from the Sails descend;
Some, Orb in Orb, around the Nymph extend,
Some the mazy Ringlets of her Hair,
Some hang upon the Pendants of her Ear;
With beating Hearts the dire Event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the Birth of Fate.
THE RAPE of the LOCK.

CANTO III.

1 CLOSE by those Meads, for ever crown'd with Flow'rs,
2 Where Thames with Pride surveys his rising Tow'rs,
3 There stands a Structure of Majestick Frame,
4 Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its Name.
5 Here Britain's Statesmen oft the Fall foredoom
6 Of Foreign Tyrants, and of Nymphs at home;
7 Here Thou, great Anne! whom three Realms obey,
8 Dost sometimes Counsel take--and sometimes Tea.

9 Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs resort,
10 To taste awhile the Pleasures of a Court;
11 In various Talk th' instructive hours they past,
12 Who gave a Ball, or paid the Visit last:
13 One speaks the Glory of the British Queen,
14 And one describes a charming Indian Screen;
15 A third interprets Motions, Looks, and Eyes;
16 At ev'ry Word a Reputation dies.
17 Snuff, or the Fan, supply each Pause of Chat,
18 With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

19 Mean while declining from the Noon of Day,
20 The Sun obliquely shoots his burning Ray;
21 The hungry Judges soon the Sentence sign,
22 And Wretches hang that Jury-men may Dine;
23 The Merchant from th' Exchange returns in Peace,
24 And the long Labours of the Toilette cease ----
25 Belinda now, whom Thirst of Fame invites,
26 Burns to encounter two adventrous Knights,

27 At Ombre, singly to decide their Doom;
28 And swells her Breast with Conquests yet to come.
29 Strait the three Bands prepare in Arms to join,
30 Each Band the number of the Sacred Nine.
Soon as she spreads her Hand, th' Aerial Guard
Descend, and fit on each important Card,
First Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore, matadore,
Then each, according to the Rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient Race,
Are, as when Women, wondrous fond of place.

Behold, four Kings in Majesty rever'd,
With hoary Whiskers and a forky Beard;
And four fair Queens whose hands sustain a Flow'r,
Th' expressive Emblem of their softer Pow'r;
Four Knives in Garbs succinct, a trusty Band,
Caps on their heads, and Halberds in their hand;
And Particolour'd Troops, a shining Train,
Draw forth to Combat on the Velvet Plain,

The skilful Nymph reviews her Force with Care;
Let Spades be Trumps, she said, and Trumps they were.
Now move to War her Sable matadores,
In Show like Leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillo first, unconquerable Lord!
Led off two captive Trumps, and swept the Board
As many more Manillo forc'd to yield,
And march'd a Victor from the verdant Field.
Him Basto follow'd, but his Fate more hard
Gain'd but one Trump and one Plebeian Card.
With his broad Sabre next, a Chief in Years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears;
Puts forth one manly Leg, to fight reveal'd;
The rest his many-colour'd Robe conceal'd.
The Rebel-Knave, that dares his Prince engage,
Proves the just Victim of his Royal Rage.
Ev'n mighty Pam that Kings and Queens o'erthrow,
And mow'd down Armies in the Fights of Lu,
And Chance of War! now, destitute of Aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the Victor Spade!

Thus far both Armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron, Fate inclines the Field.
His warlike Amazon her Host invades,
Th' Imperial Consort of the Crown of Spades.
The Club's black Tyrant first her Victim dy'd,
Spite of his haughty Mien, and barb'rous Pride:
What boots the Regal Circle on his Head,
His Giant Limbs in State unwidly spread?
That long behind he trails his pompous Robe,
And of all Monarchs only grasps the Globe, Globe?

The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroiler'd King who shows but half his Face,
And his refugent Queen, with Pow'r's combin'd,
Of broken Troops an easie Conquest find.

Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild Disorder seen,
With Throngs promiscuous strow the level Green.
Thus when dispers'd a routed Army runs,
Of Asia's Troops, and Africk's Sable Sons,

With like Confusion different Nations fly,
In various habits and of various Dye,
The pierc'd Battalions dis-united fall,
In Heaps on Heaps; one Fate o'erwhelms them all.

The Knave of Diamonds now exerts his Arts,
And wins (oh shameful Chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
At this, the Blood the Virgin's Cheek forsook,
A livid Paleness spreads o'er all her Look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching Ill,
Just in the Jaws of Ruin, and Codille.
And now, (as oft in some distemper'd State)
On one nice Trick depends the gen'r'al Fate,
Lurk'd in her Hand, and mourn'd his captive Queen.
He springs to Vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like Thunder on the prostrate Ace.
The Nymph exulting fills with Shouts the Sky,
The Walls, the Woods, and long Canals reply.

Oh thoughtless Mortals! ever blind to Fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate!
Sudden these Honours shall be snatch'd away,
And curs'd for ever this Victorious Day.

For lo! the Board with Cups and Spoons is crown'd,
The Berries crackle, and the Mill turns round.
On shining Altars of Japan, they raise
The silver Lamp, and fiery Spirits blaze.
From silver Spouts the grateful Liquors glide,
And China's Earth receives the smoking Tyde.
At once they gratify their Scent and Taste,
While frequent Cups prolong the rich Repast.
Strait hover round the Fair her Airy Band;
Some, as she sip'd, the fuming Liquor fann'd,
Some o'er her Lap their careful Plumes display'd,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich Brocade.

Coffee, (which makes the Politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half shut Eyes)

Sent up in Vapours to the Baron's Brain
New Stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah cease rash Youth! desist e'er 'tis too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of

Scylla, Scylla's Fate!
Chang'd to a Bird, and sent to flit in Air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injur'd Hair!

But when to Mischief Mortals bend their Mind,
How soon fit Instruments of Ill they find?
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting Grace
A two-edg'd Weapon from her shining Case;
So Ladies in Romance assist their Knight,
Present the Spear, and arm him for the Fight.
He takes the Gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little Engine on his Finger's Ends,
This just behind Belinda's Neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant Steams she bends her Head:
Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprights repair,
A thousand Wings, by turns, blow back the Hair,

And thrice they twitch'd the Diamond in her Ear,
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the Foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close Recesses of the Virgin's Thought;
As on the Nosegay, Nosegay in her Breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' Ideas rising in her Mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her Art,
An Earthly Lover lurking at her Heart.
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his Pow'r expir'd,
Resign'd to Fate, and with a Sigh retir'd.
The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring *Forfex*. *Forfex* wide,
T'inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal Engine clos'd,
A wretched *Sylph* too fondly interpos'd;
Fate urg'd the Sheers, and cut the *Sylph* in twain,
(*But Airy Substance soon unites again), *Airy*
The meeting Points that sacred Hair dissever
From the fair Head, for ever and for ever!

- 28 -

Then flash'd the living Lightnings from her Eyes,
And Screams of Horror rend th' affrighted Skies.
Not louder Shrieks by Dames to Heav'n are cast,
When Husbands or when *Monkeys*, *Monkeys* breath their last,
Or when rich *China* Vessels, fal'n from high,
In glistening Dust and painted Fragments lie!

Let *Wreaths of Triumph*, *Wreaths* now my Temples twine,
(The Victor cry'd) the glorious Prize is mine!
While Fish in Streams, or Birds delight in Air,
Or in a Coach and Six the *British* Fair,
As long as *Atalantis*, *Atalantis* shall be read,
Or the small Pillow grace a Lady's Bed,
While *Visits* shall be paid on solemn Days,
When numerous Wax-lights in bright Order blaze,
While Nymphs take Treats, or Assignations give,
So long my Honour, Name, and Praise shall live!

What Time wou'd spare, from Steel receives its date,
And Monuments, like Men, submit to Fate!

- 29 -

Steel did the Labour of the Gods destroy,
And strike to Dust th' Imperial Tow'rs of *Troy*;
Steel cou'd the Works of mortal Pride confound,
And hew Triumphant Arches to the Ground.
What Wonder then, fair Nymph! thy Hairs shou'd feel
The conqu'ring Force of unresisted Steel?
CANTO IV.

1 BUT anxious Cares the pensive Nymph opprest,
2 And secret Passions labour'd in her Breast.
3 Not youthful Kings in Battel seiz'd alive,
4 Not scornful Virgins who their Charms survive,
5 Not ardent Lovers robb'd of all their Bliss,
6 Not ancient Ladies when refus'd a Kiss,
7 Not Tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
8 Not Cynthia when her Manteau 's pinn'd awry,
9 E'er felt such Rage, Resentment and Despair,
10 As Thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd Hair.
11 For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew,
12 And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
13 Umriel, a dusky melancholy Spright,
14 As ever fully'd the fair face of Light,
15 Down to the Central Earth, his proper Scene,
16 Repairs to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen, \[n165\].
17 Swift on his sooty Pinions flitts the Gnome,
18 And in a Vapour reach'd the dismal Dome, \[Dome\].
19 No cheerful Breeze this sullen Region knows,
20 The dreaded East is all the Wind that blows.
21 Here, in a Grotto, sheltred close from Air,
22 And screen'd in Shades from Day's detested Glare,
23 She sighs for ever on her pensive Bed,
24 Pain at her side, and Languor at her Head.
25 Two Handmaids wait the Throne: Alike in Place,
26 But diff'ring far in Figure and in Face.
27 Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient Maid,
28 Her wrinkled Form in Black and White array'd;
29 With store of Pray'rs, for Mornings, Nights, and Noons,
Her Hand is fill'd; her Bosom with Lampoons.

There Affectation with a sickly Mien
Shows in her Cheek the Roses of Eighteen,
Practis'd to Lisp, and hang the Head aside,
Faints into Airs, and languishes with Pride;
On the rich Quilt sinks with becoming Woe,
Wrapt in a Gown, for Sickness, and for Show.
The Fair ones feel such Maladies as these,
When each new Night-Dress gives a new Disease.

A constant Vapour o'er the Palace flies;
Strange Phantoms rising as the Mists arise;
Dreadful, as Hermit's Dreams in haunted Shades,
Or bright as Visions of expiring Maids.
Now glaring Fiends, and Snakes on rolling Spires,
Pale Spectres, gaping Tombs, and Purple Fires:

Now Lakes of liquid Gold, Elysian Scenes,
And Crystal Domes, and Angels in Machines.

Unnumber'd Throngs on ev'ry side are seen
Of Bodies chang'd to various Forms by Spleen.
Here living Teapots stand, one Arm held out,
One bent; the Handle this, and that the Spout:
A Pipkin there like Homer's Tripod walks;
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pye talks;
Men prove with Child, as pow'rful Fancy works,
And Maids turn'd Bottels, call aloud for Corks.

Safe past the Gnome thro' this fantastick Band,
A Branch of healing Spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus addrest the Pow'r--Hail wayward Queen;
Who rule the Sex to Fifty from Fifteen,
Parent of Vapors and of Female Wit,
Who give th' Hysteric or Poetic Fit,
On various Tempers act by various ways,
Make some take Physick, others scribble Plays;

Who cause the Proud their Visits to delay,
And send the Godly in a Pett, to pray.
A Nymph there is, that all thy Pow'r disdains,
And thousands more in equal Mirth maintains.
But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a Grace,
Or raise a Pimple on a beauteous Face,
Like Citron-Waters, Matron's Cheeks inflame,
Or change Complexions at a losing Game;
If e'er with airy Horns, I planted Heads,
Or rumpled Petticoats, or tumbled Beds,
Or caus'd Suspicion when no Soul was rude,
Or discompos'd the Head-dress of a Prude,
Or e'er to costive Lap-Dog gave Disease,
Which not the Tears of brightest Eyes could ease:
Hear me, and touch Belinda with Chagrin;
That single Act gives half the World the Spleen.

The Goddess with a discontented Air
Seems to reject him, tho' she grants his Pray'r.

A wondrous Bag with both her Hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the Winds;
There she collects the Force of Female Lungs,
Sighs, Sobs, and Passions, and the War of Tongues.
A Vial next she fills with fainting Fears,
Soft Sorrows, melting Griefs, and flowing Tears.
The Gnome rejoicing bears her Gift away,
Spreads his black Wings, and flowly mounts to Day.

Sunk in Thalestris, Arms the Nymph he found,
Her Eyes dejected and her Hair unbound.
Full o'er their Heads the swelling Bag he rent,
And all the Furies issued at the Vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal Ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising Fire.
O wretched Maid! she spread her hands, and cry'd,
(While Hampton 's Ecchos wretched Maid reply'd)
Was it for this you took such constant Care
The Bodkin, Comb, and Essence to prepare;

For this your Locks in Paper-Durance, bound,
For this with tort'ring Irons wreath'd around?
For this with Fillets, strain'd your tender Head,
And bravely bore the double Loads of Lead?
Gods! shall the Ravisher display your Hair,
While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare!
Honour forbids! at whose unrival'd Shrine
Ease, Pleasure, Virtue, All, our Sex resign.
Methinks already I your Tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded Toast, Toast,
And all your Honour in a Whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless Fame defend?
'Twill then be Infamy to seem your Friend!
And shall this Prize, th' inestimable Prize,
Expos'd thro' Crystal to the gazing Eyes,
And heighten'd by the Diamond's circling Rays,
On that Rapacious Hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall Grass in Hide -Park Circus, Circus grow,
And Wits take Lodgings in the Sound of Bow, Bell

She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her Beau demand the precious Hairs:
(Sir Plume, of Amber Snuff-box, Snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice Conduct of a clouded Cane, Cane
With earnest Eyes, and round unthinking Face,
He first the Snuff-box open'd, then the Case,
And thus broke out--- "My Lord, why, what the Devil?
"Z---ds!, Z---ds damn the Lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
"Plague on't! 'tis past a Jest---nay prithee, Pox, Pox!
"Give her the Hair---he spoke, and rapp'd his Box.

It grieves me much (reply'd the Peer again)
Who speaks so well shou'd ever speak in vain.
But * by this Lock, n195, this sacred Lock I swear.
(Which never more shall join its parted Hair,

Which never more its Honours shall renew,
Clipped from the lovely Head where once it grew)
That while my Nostrils draw the vital Air,
This Hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.
He spoke, and speaking in proud Triumph spread
The long-contended Honours of her Head.

But Umbriel, hateful Gnome! forbears not so;
He breaks the Vial whence the Sorrows flow.
Then see! the Nymph in beauteous Grief appears,
Her Eyes half languishing, half drown'd in Tears;
On her heav'd Bosom hung her drooping Head,
Which, with a Sigh, she rais'd; and thus she said.

For ever curs'd be this detested Day,
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite Curl away!
Happy! ah ten times happy, had I been,
If Hampton-Court these Eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken Maid,
By Love of Courts to num'rous Ills betray'd.

Oh had I rather un-admir'd remain'd
In some lone Isle, or distant Northern Land;
Where the gilt Chariot never mark'd the way,
Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!
There kept my Charms conceal'd from mortal Eye,
Like Roses that in Desarts bloom and die.
What mov'd my Mind with youthful Lords to rome?
O had I stay'd, and said my Pray'rs at home!
'Twas this, the Morning Omens did foretel;
Thrice from my trembling hand the Patch-box fell;
The to't'ring China shook without a Wind,
Nay, Poll sate mute, and Shock was most Unkind!
A Sylph too warn'd me of the Threats of Fate,
In mystic Visions, now believ'd too late!
See the poor Remnants of this slighted Hair!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy own did spare.
This, in two sable Ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new Beauties to the snowie Neck.
The Sister-Lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its Fellow's Fate foresees its own;

Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal Sheers demands;
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious Hands.
Oh hadst thou, Cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any Hairs but these!
SHE said: the pitying Audience melt in Tears,
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's Ears.
In vain Thalestris with Reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half to fixt the Trojan cou'd remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido rag'd in vain.
To Arms, to Arms! the bold Thalestris cries,
And swift as Lightning to the Combate flies.

All side in Parties, and begin th' Attack;
Fans clap, Silks russle, and tough Whalebones crack;
Heroes and Heroins Shouts confus'dly rise,
And base, and treble Voices strike the Skies.
No common Weapons in their Hands are found,
Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal Wound.

* So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage,
And heav'nly Breasts with human Passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars, Latona, Hermes, Arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud Alarms.
Jove's Thunder roars, Heav'n trembles all around;
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing Deeps resound;
Earth shakes her nodding Tow'rs, the Ground gives way;
And the pale Ghosts start at the Flash of Day!

Triumphant Umbriel on a Sconce's Height
Clapt his glad Wings, and sate to view the Fight,
Propt on their Bodkin Spears the Sprights survey
The growing Combat, or assist the Fray.

While thro' the Press enrag'd Thalestries flies,
And scatters Deaths around from both her Eyes,
A Beau, Beau and Witling, Witling perish'd in the Throng,
One dy'd in Metaphor, and one in Song.
O cruel Nymph! a living Death I bear,
Cry'd Dapperwit, Dapperwit, and sunk beside his Chair.
A mournful Glance Sir Fopling, Fopling upwards cast,
* Those Eyes are made so killing, Camilla, ---was his last:
Thus on Meander, Meander's flow'ry Margin lies
Th' expiring Swan, and as he sings he dies.

As bold Sir Plume, Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stept in, and kill'd him with a Frown;
She smil'd to see the doughty, doughty Hero slain,
But at her Smile, the Beau reviv'd again.

+ Now Jove, scales suspends his golden Scales in Air,
Weighs the Mens Wits against the Lady's Hair;

The doubtful Beam long nods from side to side;
At length the Wits mount up, the Hairs subside, subside.

See fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual Lightning in her Eyes;
Nor fear'd the Chief th' unequal Fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his Foe to die, die.
But this bold Lord, with manly Strength indu'd,
She with one Finger and a Thumb subdu'd,
Just where the Breath of Life his Nostrils drew,
A Charge of Snuff, Snuff the wily Virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to ev'ry Atome, Atom just,
The pungent Grains of titillating Dust.
Sudden, with starting Tears each Eye o'erflows,
And the high Dome re-ecchoes to his Nose.

Now meet thy Fate, th' incens'd Virago cry'd,
And drew a deadly Bodkin from her Side.
(*The same, his ancient Personage, a229 to deck,
Her great great Grandsire wore about his Neck

In three Seal-Rings, seal-ring; which after melted down,
Form'd a vast Buckle for his Widow's Gown:
Her infant Grandame's Whistle next it grew,
The Bells she gingled, and the Whistle blew;
Then in a Bodkin grac'd her Mother's Hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)

Boast not my Fall (he cry'd) insulting Foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low.
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty Mind;
All that I dread, is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's Flames,---but burn alive.

*Restore the Lock*! she cries; and all around
*Restore the Lock*! the vaulted Roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello, Othello in so loud a Strain
Roar'd for the Handkerchief that caus'd his Pain.
But see how oft Ambitious Aims are cross'd,
And Chiefs contend 'till all the Prize is lost!

The Lock, obtain'd with Guilt, and kept with Pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a Prize no Mortal must be blest,
So Heav'n decrees! with Heav'n who can contest?

Some thought it mounted to the Lunar Sphere,
* Since all things lost on Earth, are treasur'd there.
There Heroe's Wits are kept in pondrous Vases,
And Beau's in Snuff-boxes and Tweezer-Cases.
There broken Vows, and Death-bed Alms, Alms are found,
And Lovers Hearts with Ends of Riband, Riband bound;
The Courtiers Promises, and Sick Man's Pray'rs,
The Smiles of Harlots, and the Tears of Heirs,
Cages for Gnats, and Chains to Yoak a Flea;
Dry'd Butterflies, and Tomes of Casuistry.

But trust the Muse---she saw it upward rise,
Tho' mark'd by none but quick Poetic Eyes;
*So Rome's great Founder, Rome*
To Proculus alone confess'd in view.)

A sudden Star, it shot thro' liquid Air,
And drew behind a radiant Trail of Hair.
Not Berenice, Berenice's Locks first rose so bright,
The Skies bespangling with dishevel'd Light.
The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleas'd pursue its Progress thro' the Skies.

This the Beau-monde shall from the Mall survey,
And hail with Musick its propitious Ray.
This, the blest Lover shall for Venus take,
And send up Vows from Rosamonda's Lake.
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless Skies,
When next he looks thro' Galilaeo's Eyes;
And hence th' Egregious Wizard shall foredoom
The Fate of Louis, and the Fall of Rome.

Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn the ravish'd Hair
Which adds new Glory to the shining Sphere!
Not all the Tresses that fair Head can boast
Shall draw such Envy as the Lock you lost.

For, after all the Murders of your Eye,
When, after Millions slain, your self shall die;
When those fair Suns shall sett, as sett they must,
And all those Tresses shall be laid in Dust;
This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to Fame,
And mid'st the Stars inscribe Belinda's Name!
FINIS.
The frontispiece was designed by Louis du Guernier (1677-1716) a well-known illustrator of the period; he also designed the images that appear before each of the five cantos. They were engraved by Claude du Bosc (1682-1745?); both men had been born in France but moved to London, probably in pursuit of the good opportunities for skilled engravers in the London book trade, and worked together on a number of projects for London patrons and booksellers in these years. Illustrations as detailed as these were very time-consuming and therefore expensive to produce, and the presence of six custom-engraved images was a sign that Pope and his publisher Bernard Lintot were trying to create a particularly impressive and beautiful object. Pope, who was a talented amateur painter in his own right, almost certainly had a role in designing the images, although we do not know exactly how he participated. The frontispiece is a composite of major events in the poem to follow. The "sylphs," spirits of vanity and erotic desire, float around Belinda, the heroine of the poem, as she puts on her makeup; they also drop playing cards, alluding to the card game in Canto III, and point to the shooting star that ascends at the end of Canto V. In the front lower right of the image, a satyr, with pointed ears and cloven hoofs, holds the kind of mask that women in the period sometimes wore in public; like many authors in the period, Pope is playing on the homophone between "satyr," the sexually-agressive half-human, half-animals of Greek mythology, and "satire," the literary form of which "The Rape of the Lock" is an example. Behind the characters is the facade of Hampton Court Palace, the royal home down the Thames from London where much of the action of the poem takes place. Pope clearly intended the images and the poem to be read together, a feature that is not possible in most modern reproductions of the poem, which rely on the poetic text alone.

Alexander Pope’s "The Rape of the Lock" is the most famous poem written in English in the eighteenth century. Chances are, if a modern reader knows only one poem from the period, this is the one. Which is a strange thing. The poem’s subject matter is unusual, even unique: the cutting off of a lock of hair from the head of a young woman and the aftermath of that event. And the poem is written in a form, the heroic couplet, that is rarely used today. But "The Rape of the Lock" has endured because it so fully captured, while also satirizing, an image of a particular world, a world of aristocratic ease, but also great anxiety. And it is also an astonishing accomplishment simply as a poem. No poet of the eighteenth century used the heroic couplet more deftly than Alexander Pope (depicted here in a contemporary painting by Charles Jervis; National Portrait Gallery, London), and perhaps nowhere in his career did he craft couplets and the larger units he built from them—verse paragraphs, cantos, the entire poem itself—with greater verve and delicacy.

The poem is based on a true story. At a party one day in 1710 or 1711, Robert Petre, a young man from an aristocratic family, crept up behind Arabella Fermor, a young woman also from a prosperous household, and cut off a lock of her hair. Petre may have thought of this as an amusing, or even a flirtatious prank, but she was angry, and the two families started snubbing and sniping at each other. Years later, Pope described what happened next: “The stealing of Miss Belle Fermor’s hair was taken too seriously, and caused an estrangement between the two families, though they had lived long in great friendship before. A common acquaintance and well-wisher to both desired me to write a poem to make a jest of it, and laugh them together.
again. It was in this view that I wrote my Rape of the Lock, which was well received and had its effect in the two families.” The “common acquaintance” was John Caryll, a friend of Pope’s who was also close to both the Fermor and Petre families. Like all of them, Caryll was also a Catholic who faced persecution in an era when the government of Britain continued to suspect that Catholics were potentially a subversive force whose loyalties to the Protestant monarchy could not be assured. And sometimes with reason; Caryll was a Jacobite, a supporter of the exiled Pretender, the Stuart James III, then living in exile in France. James continued to claim that he was the true king of Britain, and there were Jacobites who called for the restoration of the Stuart monarchy until the movement was finally defeated at the Battle of Culloden in Scotland in 1745. Caryll never joined in any of the conspiracies that took place in the early part of the century to restore the Stuart monarchy, but he did secretly give financial support to a Catholic church in his neighborhood, which was itself illegal. Caryll may have felt that Catholics in Britain had enough problems without feuding among themselves. Pope, who was at this point starting work on a massive translation of Homer’s poem *The Iliad*, seems quickly to have seen the possibility of re-imagining the incident in epic terms, creating what has been called a “mock epic” for the way in which it uses the conventions of epic poetry to describe what is by comparison a trivial event.

Pope’s memory of the happy outcome of the poem was, however, a little rose colored from time. Pope wrote the first version of “The Rape of the Lock” quickly—he said it took two weeks; he may have been exaggerating—and it then circulated among the families and their friends in manuscript for a while. That version of the poem, which was much shorter than the one that has ultimately been most read, was published anonymously in 1712, and at this point things got more complicated. As more and more people read the poem now that it was in print, the double entendres and erotic implications of Pope’s work became clearer, and Arabella Fermor—who had initially agreed with letting the poem be printed—was embarrassed as friends started pointing out to her where the dirty jokes were. Sir Charles Brown, the original for the “Sir Plume” of the poem, was also angry at the way he was portrayed (as an idiot). Pope went back to work, and over the course of the next couple of years, added the elaborate “machinery” of the poem, the sylphs and fairies that hover around the action, embedding the original story in a framework of fantasy that deflects some of the agency of the central characters. (Robert Petre’s response to the publication of the first version of the poem is, by the way, unrecorded. Petre married Catherine Walsmeley in 1712, but he died only a few months later from smallpox.) Pope included a letter of dedication to Arabella Fermor that aimed to defuse some of her anger. That new edition, handsomely printed with engravings accompanying each canto, was published as a separate volume in 1714, and immediately became a best-seller, selling around 3,000 copies in four days, which even now would be an extraordinary total for any book, much less a poem in rhyming couplets. It has been admired, critiqued, and argued with ever since.

- [JOB]

n001 Pope is the inventor of this term, which first appeared here at the opening of *The Rape of the Lock*. He is indicating that he will emulate such epics as Homer's *Iliad* or Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but in a comic register.

- [JOB]

n002 The full quote, which comes from Book VIII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, should read, "Ciris et, a tonso est hoc nomen adepta capillo": she acquired the name from the cutting of the hair. Ovid's
story, first published in 8 CE, goes like this. Nisus was the King of Alcathous and he had a lock of purple hair on his crown that guaranteed the safety of his kingdom. Scylla, his daughter, fell in love with King Minos, who was conquering this kingdom, and in order to gain his favor, Scylla cut off the lock of her father's hair. But, disgusted with her disloyalty, Minos left by ship. As Scylla swam after Minos, King Nisos, having been transformed into a sea eagle, attempted to drown her. Instead of drowning, Scylla was turned to a sea bird and called Ciris, (cutter), being named after the lock that she cut off. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, translated by Anthony S. Kline, http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/trans/Metamorph8.htm

arabella Arabella Fermor (1696-1737; image credit: Victoria and Albert Museum) was from a prominent Catholic family. She came to public attention in an unwelcome way when Robert Petre, from another prominent Catholic family, surreptitiously cut off a lock of her hair at a party. He may have thought it was a good prank, but she was (justifiably) angry, and the Fermor and Petre families (who may have been in negotiations to marry the two), became estranged. John Caryll, a friend of Pope's who was also Robert Petre's guardian, asked Pope to write about the incident in such a way as to make a joke of it and smooth relations. *The Rape of the Lock* is Pope's effort to heal the breach. He did not, however, ask Arabella Fermor for her approval before publishing the first version of the poem in 1712, and she was initially unhappy at the poem's double-entendre and the way that it seemed to compare her situation to raped heroines of antiquity like Helen of Troy or Lucrece. This letter, published with the much-enlarged 1714 edition of the poem, can be read in part as Pope's attempt to mollify her.

- [JOB]

dedicate Pope is probably referring to the Latin epigraph that appeared with the first edition of the poem: "Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos, / Sed juvat hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis," by the Roman poet Martial, in his *Epigrams* xii, 84, translates as, "I was loathe, Belinda, to violate your locks, but I am pleased to have granted that much to your prayers." Pope is insinuating that Arabella Fermor asked for the poem to be written. This was not the case.

machine Refers to the fairy-like creatures in the poem: the sylphys, the nymphs, the gnomes, the salamanders. As he explains in the next line, they are the portrayals of what we would call in the real world, deities, angels or demons.

Rosicruци The Rosicrucians were an occult movement that emerged in the early seventeenth century in Europe. It was an odd combination of Christian mysticism and other kinds of esoteric teaching, such as the Kabbala, which comes out of the Jewish tradition. There were several Rosicrucian manifestos that laid out theories of mystical knowledge, and the movement had adherents and drew curious thinkers to it throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pope does not seem to have been a serious adherent, but is here using some of the supernatural apparatus associated with Rosicrucianism to frame his story.

Lady It seems unlikely that Pope is aware how unctuous and condescending he sounds here; or perhaps he is aware and does not mind. It's hard to say with Pope.

Gabalis *The Count of Gabala* was written by Nicolas-Pierre-Henri de Montfaucon de Villars, a French cleric, and published in 1670. It is an odd book. In it, an anonymous narrator encounters the Comte de Gabalis, who teaches the narrator about the occult, including various beliefs associated with the Rosicrucians. The Count introduces such things as the Sylphs of the Air, the Undines of the Water, the Gnomes of the Earth and the Salamanders of Fire. It is entirely possible that de
Villars is satirizing occult sciences, which had a vogue in seventeenth century Europe, as absurd or incompatible with orthodox religion. But it is hard to be sure; this may be an example of a satire that does not make its intentions clear enough.

To an English reader of 1714, the word "novel" still sounded like a French import, and it would have denoted a short, perhaps slightly scandalous, love story. The novel was not understood to be a serious genre, a form of literature. Any reading of a novel for more than entertainment is a "mistake."

John Caryll, the mutual friend of Pope and the two families involved in the dispute; he seems to have attempted to mediate between them, in part suggesting that Pope write this poem.

The heroine of the poem, inspired by Arabella Fermor.

Sol is Latin for the Sun.

Belinda's lapdog.

Chocolate, served in this period only as a drink, was enormously popular, especially among those who could afford it as well as the sugar to cut the bitterness.

Belinda stomps her slippered foot on the ground to call for her maid.

Striking watches indicate the hour and quarter-hour by means of hammers hitting bells or gongs. The watch rang, announcing that it was 10 o'clock.

sylphs here are imagined as feminine spirits that stand guard over young women

Ariel, Belinda's guardian Sylph, created the dream that she was having.

a young man dressed up for the Queen's birthday, one of highlights of the social calendar in this period.

Folklore that says that fairies and elves left silver tokens in rings of dark coarse grass that were supposed to be where fairies danced. The tokens were supposedly left for humans who were favored by fairies. Pat Rogers attributes the use to Jonathan Swift's Dryades: Or, the Nymphs Prophecy, although that probably comes from ancient folklore as well. Rogers, Pat. "Faery Lore and The Rape of the Lock." Essays on Pope. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993. Print.

fairy creatures, imagined here as soldiers

The creatures are always present (on the wing meaning in flight) in the places where London's society is found.

A ‘box’ in a theatre or opera-house.

Ring - Charles I created a circular track called the Ring in Hyde Park where members of the royal court could drive their carriages. The park was opened to the public in 1637 and it soon became a fashionable place to visit.

Here it refers to a carriage with horses and attendants, but can also just mean carriage alone.
The fairy creatures used to be beautiful women like Belinda.

Possibly death, or some (magical) means by which they are transformed from their human selves in to the fairy creatures.

After the "transition" spoken of earlier, a former coquette now turned into a sylph still can see and look at the cards although she does not play.

A trick-taking card game for three people using forty cards. A game of ombre is played later on and is described in detail in Canto III. It is almost certainly no coincidence that the word ombre is archaic Spanish for "man"; Belinda is literally and figuratively playing the game of man. "Ombre, sylphs, sprights"

Different kinds of women became transformed into different kinds of spirits. The fiery boisterous women became Salamanders. The mild demure women became Nymphs. The prudish women became Gnomes. The flirty girlish women became Sylphs.

That is, women's chastity only seems to be governed by honour; it is really the intervention of the sylphs that sustains chastity.

Not a reference to any specific men. Florio, along with Damon, were common names used in early epic poetry to refer to men in general, the way we use, Tom, Dick, and Harry, today. "The aristocratic young men of the time were, like the ladies, lacking in any serious purpose or morality. Florio and Damon are representatives of those gallants and fops who vie with one another to capture the hearts of the ladies.

the open sea

a love letter

a small dressing table

mirror

Belinda's "toilet" is likened to an "altar" at which Belinda and her maid are now left to worship the priestess, or Belinda's "heav'nly image" as mentioned two lines above this line. By this point, it has become clear that the vanity nurtured by the Gnomes has set in, leaving the mortal human beings to worship a new priestess, Belinda's reflection.

During the 18th century, Britain became the dominant empire among European trading empires as it became the first western nation to industrialize. During this time, merchants began trading with both North America and the West Indies, where colonies had been established. This granted Britain access to parts of the world and their amenities that had previously been unbeknownst to them. The ability to interact with far-off countries such as India and Arabia yielded new luxuries and a new understanding of the world outside of Europe. The ability for Belinda to have access to these luxuries further exemplifies her wealth.

"Glitt'ring spoil" refers directly to the spoils of war, "valuables seized by violence, especially in war," most likely as a result of the colonization of these foreign lands in pursuit of broadening trade opportunities.
casket a. A small box or chest for jewels, letters, or other things of value, itself often of valuable material and richly ornamented.
gems Since before recorded history, India has been a leading source for precious gems, producing some of the finest gemstones.
Arabia Refers to scented oils or perfumes from the Arabian Peninsula or the middle east as it is now known. They came in elaborate and ornate containers and were very expensive.
tortoise Hair combs made from tortoise shell and ivory from elephant tusks.
patches "a small disk of black silk attached to the face, especially as worn by women in the 17th and 18th centuries for adornment" (OED) This is essentially an artificial beauty mark.
a awful
arsms Arms: (n.) weapons With the use of militaristic diction as seen in "puts in all its Arms", Pope has Belinda preparing for battle just as Achilles prepared for the Trojan War in Homer's Iliad.
Betty her maid.
etherial Of or relating to heaven, God, or the gods; heavenly, celestial. Oxford English Dictionary
rival that is, Belinda
nymphs The other women traveling with her (here not the nymphs who are the protectors of her chastity).
cross The cross here is stripped of its Christian meaning; it is Belinda who people are now worshipping
nymph Belinda
ivory In likening Belinda's neck to ivory, imported from Africa, the narrator again associates her beauty with the products of emergent colonialism and global commerce.
sprinnges a snare used for bird-catching
finney Finny, adj., "Provided with or having fins; finned." The "Finny Prey> refers to fish, which are also caught with a hair-like line, reiterating the comparison of beauty as a deadly trap. "finny, adj.1." Oxford English Dictionary
tresses " A plait or braid of the hair of the head, usually of a woman. A long lock of hair (esp. that of a woman), without any sense of its being plaited or braided; mostly in pl. tresses." "tress, n." Oxford English Dictionary
success The "Success" of a "Lover's Toil" in this era would be marriage.
Phaebus Variant spelling of Phoebus, a common name for Apollo, god of the sun. Oxford English Dictionary
sword-knot "n. a ribbon or tassel tied to the hilt of a sword (originating from the thong or lace with which the hilt was fastened to the wrist, but later used chiefly as a mere ornament or badge)." "sword-knot, n." Oxford English Dictionary
busk "A strip of wood, whalebone, steel, or other rigid material attached vertically to the front section of a corset so as to stiffen and support it." "busk, n.3." Oxford English Dictionary

bilet-doux love letters

prostrate "Of a person: lying with the face to the ground, in token of submission or humility, as in adoration, worship, or supplication; (hence more generally) lying stretched out on the ground, typically with the face downwards. Freq. in predicative or quasi-adverbial use, as in to fall prostrate, to lie prostrate, etc." Oxford English Dictionary

Prize "The Prize" refers to Belinda's lock of hair.

Ear "Gave Ear" means that they (the ambiguous supernatural entities) listened to the Baron.

Vessel The "painted Vessel" refers to the boat gliding across the river Thames, carrying Belinda to Hampton Court.

zephyrs "The west wind, esp. as personified, or the god of the west wind." Oxford English Dictionary

Denizens That is, the other sylphs.

lucid "Bright, shining, luminous, resplendent." Oxford English Dictionary

Tincture "A colouring matter, dye, pigment; spec. a dye used as a cosmetic." Oxford English Dictionary

Dies Variant spelling of "dyes."

Pinions "A bird's wing; esp. (chiefly poet. and rhetorical) the wing of a bird in flight. Also: the terminal segment of a bird's wing, bearing the primary flight feathers." Oxford English Dictionary

Azure bright blue

Chief That is, Arial, who goes on to give a speech to the other spirits.

orbs Celestial bodies not in a regular orbit, such as comets.

Bow Rainbow

glebe Soil

Fair Young women, such as Belinda

Powder Face-powder
ernal  "Of, pertaining or belonging to, the springtime; appropriate to the spring; spring-like: Of weather, scenery, etc." *Oxford English Dictionary*

Flounce  "An ornamental appendage to the skirt of a lady's dress, consisting of a strip gathered and sewed on by its upper edge around the skirt, and left hanging and waving." *Oxford English Dictionary*

Furbelow  Variant spelling of "furbelow: "A piece of stuff pleated and puckered on a gown or petticoat; a flounce; the pleated border of a petticoat or gown." *Oxford English Dictionary*

brightest  That is, Belinda.

wrapt  "Concealed, covered, hidden." "wrapped, adj." *Oxford English Dictionary*

Diana  "An ancient Roman female divinity, the moon-goddess, patroness of virginity and of hunting." *Oxford English Dictionary*  "Diana's" law would be the law of chastity or virginity, so to break the law would be to have pre-marital sex.

Brocade  "A textile fabric woven with a pattern of raised figures, originally in gold or silver." *Oxford English Dictionary*

Zephyreta  the nymphs' names are invented, each derived from a word related to the object entrusted to it.  "Zephyretta," from "zypher" has care of the breeze-producing fan.

Brillante  "Brillante," from 'brilliant', is entrusted with Belinda's shining earrings.

Momentilla  "Momentilla" is the nymph in charge of the pocket-watch.

Crispissa  "Crispissa," from "crisp," has charge of the two precise curls of hair.

Ribs  Whalebone was used to form the ribs in women's corsets and skits.

stopt  "That is, stopped or blocked.

Vials  "A vessel of a small or moderate size used for holding liquids; in later use spec., a small glass bottle" *Oxford English Dictionary*

bodkin  "A needle-like instrument with a blunt knobbled point, having a large (as well as a small) eye, for drawing tape or cord through a hem, loops, etc." *Oxford English Dictionary*

pomatums  An ointment for the skin or hair; = pomade "pomatum, n." *Oxford English Dictionary*

styptick  A "styptic" is a kind of medicine used to contract organic tissue (for example, to stop a cut bleeding), frequently made out of "alum," a type of mineral salt. *Oxford English Dictionary*

Ixion  "Ixion, in Greek legend, murdered his father-in-law and could find no one to purify him until Zeus did so. Ixion abused his pardon by trying to seduce Zeus’s wife, Hera. Zeus, to punish him, bound him on a fiery wheel, which rolled unceasingly through the air or, according to the more common tradition, in the underworld." *Ixion | Greek Mythology.* *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*

Mill  Compares being trapped in the grinder of a coffee mill to the mythological figure Ixion, who was fixed to a fire wheel spinning in the air of the underworld forever.
Sea This is referring to the hot coffee in the grinder/pot.

He That is, Arial, the leader of the spirits.

Nymph That is, Belinda.

thrid That is, the spirits "threaded" her hair.

meads That is, meadows.

Hampton Court Palace, a royal palace on the banks of the Thames River, about twelve miles from central London. The palace was originally built by Cardinal Wolsey starting in 1514. He gave it to Henry VIII as a way of trying to get back in Henry's good graces, but it did not work; Wolsey was executed anyway for failing to get Henry the divorce he wanted. Henry built Hampton Court into an enormous royal palace. In the late 1600s, the great architect Christopher Wren built an enormous extension for William III. They tore down part of the earlier palace and added on in what was then the modern style, creating a large Baroque palace designed to emulate the Palace of Versailles in France, at that time the grandest royal palace in Europe. In the early part of the eighteenth century, when this poem takes place, Hampton Court was the most important royal palace in England, where the monarch usually lived, and courtiers like Belinda and the Baron would have flocked there to make their presence known at court. Image: Hampton Court Palace by Andreas Tille, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Anne Queen Anne (1665-1714), the last Stuart monarch of Great Britain. She took the throne upon the death of her father, William III in 1702. She died the year that the poem was published. [Image: Queen Anne, painted by Michael Dahl, around 1705 (National Portrait Gallery)].

ombre Ombre was a popular three-player card game similar to the modern game of Bridge. Each game can have nine rounds (“tricks”). The most straightforward way to win is by taking five tricks (drawing the highest-ranked card in each round), after which the game ends. The game begins with an auction to decide the trump suit. The highest-bidding player is the “ombre” (from the Spanish “hombre” for "man"), and the other two play against her while trying to ensure their individual successes. The penalty enacted on each of the two non-ombres is greater if the ombre wins than if the other non-ombre wins. Similarly, the ombre will lose more if either of the two gains five tricks than if no one has won five at the end of nine rounds. The game was popular among the aristocratic class throughout Europe. The joke throughout is that Belinda is in effect playing the game of “man,” both on the card table and in life. The game as it plays out over the next section of the poem is an entirely plausible game, with each move following according to the actual rules of ombre. Belinda, for example, wins the starting auction and becomes the "ombre" for duration of this game. See Alban George Henry Gibbs, The Game of Ombre. London: privately printed, 1874, 3rd edition (expanded) 1902, upon which we rely in tracing the course of the game.

matadore The matadores (spadillio, manillio, and basto) are the three highest-ranking cards in the trump suit. The matadore would be the ace of spades; the manillio card is the lowest ranking card in the trump suit (the suit would vary from game to game, identified by the winner of the auction at the start), and the basto is the ace of clubs. Belinda controls all three.
Velvet Plain is, the cloth covering the three-sided card table on which Belinda and the two men are playing the game. The Kings, Queens, Jacks, and other cards are imagined as being arranged like soldiers on a battlefield.

Belinda’s starting hand is made up of spadillio, manillio, basto: the king of spades, the king and queen of hearts, and the 5 and 4 of diamonds. The Baron begins the game with the king of clubs, the jack, 7, 5, and 3 of spades (the trump suit), the king, queen, and jack of diamonds, and the ace of hearts. Belinda and the Baron both have extremely strong hands, while the third character has no strong cards.

Having won the "auction" at the start of the game by outbidding the other two players, Belinda chooses the trump suit.

Belinda quickly wins the first five rounds or "tricks" of the game by playing her cards skilfully.

In the following three stanzas, the Baron begins to threaten Belinda’s winning streak. He wins tricks five through eight, tying their scores. His first move is with the Queen of Spades.

The King of Clubs is often pictured holding an orb, or globe.

"Codille" would be a loss at the game, if the Baron were to win the final trick. Belinda must either win trick nine, or hope that the third player does, in order to avoid losing to the Baron.

A trick is a round. As explained above, a game consists of nine tricks; whoever takes five wins the game. At this point, with Belinda and the Baron tied with four tricks each, the game is down to the final round.

The Baron mourns that he has already played a Queen that could win the round. He plays an Ace; Belinda counters with a King (which in ombre outranks an Ace) and wins final trick and thus the game.

Coffee beans, which are being ground in a mill to make fresh coffee.

"Japan" was a style of wooden furniture, highly polished and often decorated in a vaguely Asian style; hence the name. Japan-style furniture was expensive, and therefore fashionable among wealthy people in Europe at this time.

Nisos, king of Megara, was at war against Crete, but it was decreed by fate that his kingdom would be safe as long as a purple lock of hair remained on his head. His daughter Scylla fell in love with the king of Crete, Minos, and cut off her father's purple lock to give to him. Minos rejected the gift, and both Nisos and Scylla turned into birds.

A nosegay is a small flower bouquet, worn like a corsage.

Latin for scissors.

A reference to John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where Satan is injured in the war in heaven when a sword "Passed through him, but th' Ethereal substance closed/ Not long divisible."

In eighteenth-century England, the wealthy kept many kinds of pets, including monkeys. The lower classes sometimes kept performing monkeys, which could earn them extra money.

In ancient Greece, laurel wreaths were worn as a symbol of victory or honor.
Atalantis Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes, from the New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean, published in 1709, was a scandalous but very popular work of fiction by Delarivier Manley. With its salacious details of politicians' private lives, the story satirizes the corruption of the aristocracy.

According to the humours theory of human psychology, which held sway from the middle ages into the early modern period, a person's temperament was set by the mixture of various fluids—humours—in the body. The spleen was thought to produce yellow bile, an excess of which would lead to depression. So by analogy "the spleen" became shorthand for a state of depression, which Belinda is experiencing in the wake of the theft of her lock of hair. Umbriel's journey through the Cave of Spleen is analogous to the journeys, fraught with many perils, which Aeneas (in Vergil's Aeneid) and Odysseus (Homer's Odyssey) made to the underworld in those epics.

That is, a domed building.

Lampoon "Lampooning" in seventeenth and eighteenth century England was a scathing form of satire that attacked a specific person's appearance. It originates from the French word "lampons," which means "let's drink," and Alexander Pope himself lampooned a fellow writer, Joseph Addison, in his work "An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot." The form fell into disuse soon after this time but the term "lampoon" still refers to an insult directed at a specific person or institution. Werlock, Abby H. P. The Facts on File Companion to the American Short Story. 2nd ed. New York NY: Facts On File, 2010. Print.

A reference to Elysium/Elysian Fields/Elysian Plain of classical mythology, where mortals favored by the gods for their rectitude were sent to dwell after they had departed from the land of the living. Elysium was originally the exclusive province of the heroes who had acquired immortality from the gods Elysian in the context of this passage means like "paradise."

"A pipkin is "A small earthen boiler."

The automatons (or "tripods"), twenty in all, fashioned with rivets and gold wheels by the lame god Vulcan in his workshop so that they might be dispatched whenever the gods congregated at Mt. Olympus, returning to the workshop afterwards to be at the beck and call of Vulcan. From Book XVIII of Homer's Iliad.

According to Samuel Johnson's 1755 Dictionary, "pett" is "A slight passion; a slight fit of anger."

Gooseberry pie

The branch of spleenwort, a humble fern, is a parodic reference to the golden bough bore by Aeneas during his journey, accompanied by the Cumaean Sibyl, through the underworld. Aeneas, having been guided by a pair of doves to a place in a forest where the golden bough had been long obscured from the sight of man, had plucked the golden bough in order to obtain safe passage through the underworld. He and the Sibyl were ferried to the underworld across the Acheron River. Spleenwort got its name because it was believed to have medicinal properties, particularly in treating "spleen" or, in our terms, depression.
Citron-Waters  Brandy based on citrus wine.

Horns  "Horns" were associated with being cuckolded.

costive  Constipated.

Bag  In Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus receives a bag of winds from Aeolus, the god of wind.

Thalestris  Thalestris was a queen of the Amazons, the mythological race of warrior women.

Furies  Three mythological goddesses of revenge.

Ire  Intense anger.

Paper  In this period, women used paper, often heated and shaped with lead, to curl their hair.

Fillets  A headband, here being used to shape a hairstyle.

Lead  Lead was heated to curl women's hair.

Fops  "Fop" was a contemporary slang term for man overly concerned with his outer appearance to the point that it bothers other people. It originated in this context in seventeenth-century England to refer to a generally foolish, effeminate man incapable of engaging in intellectual conversation. In this line, the definition of a "fop" is exemplified by the fact that they and ladies are both jealous of Belinda's hair.

Toast  The term "toast" originated as a term for a lady for whose health a group of people dedicated a drink, similar to how people propose toasts today. This lady's name was seen as adding a special flavor to the drink in question, similar in function to a spiced toast that would have been a common feature in alcoholic drinks at the time. *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Circus  The Ring-Road in Hyde Park, at this time a fashionable area to take a carriage on a nice day to see and be seen by those who could afford carriages.

Bell  The bells of St Mary-le-Bow, a church which was located in the Cheapside district of London. This was not a fashionable area; it was for a long time traditionally associated with working-class Cockneys from the East End.

Snuff-box  High society gentlemen of this time generally stored their "snuff," or sniffing tobacco, in jeweled boxes made from precious materials such as porcelain, ebony, and, in this case, amber. Sir Plume is very vain about his fancy snuff-box.

Cane  A walking stick, perhaps made of glass or porcelain, and "clouded" in a decorative way.

Z--ds  "Zounds" is a euphemism for "by God's wounds," that is, the wounds that Jesus received when being nailed to the cross. That was considered blasphemous, so "zounds" became a work-around. In context, a mild expletive, like "damn."
"Pox" refers either to small-pox or to venereal disease; here it is being used as an expletive without so specific a meaning.

This passage may be a passage from Homer (Iliad, book 23) in which Achilles cuts off a lock of his own hair to mourn and commemorate the death of Patroclus. Many of his men follow suit and cut off Locks of their own hair, and Achilles then cuts off another lock of his hair that he had been growing for the river Spercheus to make his trip home safer. This continues the trend throughout the poem of using military conquest language to describe the event of cutting off a lock of Belinda's hair.

Chariot May be a reference to the chariot driven by Helios (whose identity was later subsumed into that of Apollo), the god of the sun and a Titan, in order to mark the waxing and waning of daylight. He was complemented by his sisters, Eos and Selene, who personified the Dawn and the Moon, respectively.

Bohea A black tea that originated in China's Buyi hills, for which it is named, and was of relatively low quality. (Oxford English Dictionary

Patch-box A small and rectangular (at times oval) box with beauty patches, small pieces of class with a sticky side, which were worn by ladies of fashion during the eighteenth century for decorative purposes or to cover a blemish. A patch box was bejeweled and made of gold, and could also be painted/enamed with amorous scenes. A patch could have the appearance of a star, an animal, an insect, a figure, a crescent, or a spot. The location of a patch also contributed to its signification. "Patch Box." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica. Web. 3 Dec. 2015. http://www.britannica.com/topic/patch-box.

China "China" in this context refers to porcelain dishes that came via trade routes from China. These trade routes between China and England first began to flourish during the eighteenth century, and many rich English citizens were obsessed with obtaining as many exotic Chinese goods as they could to show off their wealth. Chinese porcelain was much finer and of higher quality than anything that European makers could produce for a few more decades. Chang, Elizabeth. "The Chinese Taste in Eighteenth-Century England." Eighteenth-Century Fiction 25 (2012): 248-50. University of Toronto Press. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.

Poll Short for "Polly," surely the name of a pet parrot owned by Belinda.

Jove Jove, also known as Jupiter, was the king of the Roman gods. He is the roman equivalent to the Greek god Zeus.

Ears That is, the reason that the Baron cannot hear Belinda's cries is because of the intervention of the gods Fate and Jove. Just as the gods intervene in the lives of heroic characters from epic, here they interfere in the lives of trivial British aristocrats.

Dido In the Aeneid by Virgil, Aeneas, the lover of Dido, queen of Carthage, is told by Zeus he must leave Italy because of fate. As a last effort Dido sends her sister Anna to persuade him to stay in Italy, but she fails.

Whalebones Whalebone was used to stiffen women's clothing, such as corsets and hoop skirts.

Gods Homer makes the gods fight in his tales similar to the way Pope forces the characters in the poem to fight.

Pallas Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom
Mars  Mars was the Roman god of war.

Latona  In Greek mythology, Latona was the mother of Apollo and Diana and the mistress of Zeus.

Hermes  Hermes was the messenger god of Greek mythology, known as Mercury in Roman mythology.

Sconce  A lantern with a handle and a shield, so that you could carry the light around.

sate  That is, perched. Pope adds in a footnote: "Minerva in like manner, during the Battle of Ulysses with the Suitors in Odyss. perches on a beam of the roof to behold it."

Beau  A dandy; a many perhaps overly concerned with his appearance

Witling  Someone who aspiring to become a wit (and probably failing at it).

Dapperwit  A character in William Wycherley's 1671 play Love in a Wood.

Fopling  Reference to Sir Fopling Flutter, a character in George Etherege's 1677 play The Man of Mode.

Camilla  Pope later added a footnote: "The Words of a Song in the Opera of Camilla" Camilla was a popular opera, first staged in London in 1706 and frequently revived after that. Unlike many operas of the period, which were sung in Italian, this was in English, based on an Italian opera by Silvio Stampiglio.

Meander  In Greek Mythology, Meander was both the name of a river god and for the river that was his home. "Meander" now is a general turn for a bend in a river, or to describe anything or anyone that takes a roundabout route to a destination.

Plume  The name gives insight to the character. A plume is an arrangement of feathers used by a bird for display or worn by a person for ornament. Plume is also used as a verb 'to plume oneself' synonymous to the action of preening at one's looks. Oxford English Dictionary

doughty  Brave, capable, and determined, also marked by fearless resolution. Oxford English Dictionary

scales  Jove, the head of the Roman system of deities, is here responsible for putting the social order back into balance, and is weighing the contending claims of the men and the women. These lines refer to a moment in Homer's Iliad where Zeus had used scales to balance the claims of Hector and Achilles and determined their fates.

subside  Jove weighs the battle in the men's favor, but Belinda overcomes this by tossing snuff in the Baron's face.

die  "to die" is a common euphemism for orgasm. It was a common poetical term in the 16th and 17th centuries. Oxford English Dictionary

Snuff  A fine-ground tobacco, intended for consumption by being sniffed or snorted into the nose.

Atom  Pope is referring to the ancient theory that posited the "atom" as an infinitely small piece of matter that could not be further divided.
Virago  A man-like, heroic woman. *Oxford English Dictionary*


seal-ring  a finger ring bearing a seal; signet ring. *Oxford English Dictionary*

Grandam  grandmother

Othello  In Shakespeare's *Othello*, the titular character is tricked into believing his wife Desdemona has been unfaithful by his ensign Iago. A key piece of evidence is Desdemona's handkerchief, which Iago has planted in the room of Othello's lieutenant, Cassio.

Alms  gifts of money extended as charity

Riband  a ribbon

Casuistry  Thick books of meaningless philosophy through the use of clever but unsound reasoning, especially in relation to moral questions. *Oxford English Dictionary*

Poetic  That is, Pope's eyes; he is the only person who can "see" what has happened, as the lock of hair has been transformed into a star in the sky. Buried here is the play on words: "coma," the Latin word for hair, is the root for "comet," celestial bodies that were so named because of the long hair-like trail that followed the main body. There is such a comet depicted in the upper-left hand corner of the plate that precedes this canto.

Rome  In popular myth and legend, Rome was founded by Romulus, who ruled for 37 years and then mysteriously disappeared, apparently taken up to the heavens in a whirlwind. Proculus, a friend of Romulus, swore that he saw Romulus ascending to heaven.

Berenice  Berenice II was the wife of Ptolemy III, the Pharoah of Egypt in the third century BCE. The legend went that Berenice offered to cut off her hair as an offering to the goddess Aphrodite if Ptolemy would return safely home from a dangerous battle. After his safe return, she placed her hair in the temple. But the next morning, the hair had vanished. The court astronomy Conon suggested that the hair had been transformed into a constellation in the night sky, a star cluster that became (and is still) known as the "Coma Berenices," Latin for "Berenice's hair."

Beau-  High society.

Mall  A broad, tree-lined promenade in St. James's Park in London, where courtiers and other aristocrats would aim to see and be seen. [Image: View of the Mall in Saint James, around 1710, by an unknown artist. *National Gallery, Public Domain.*]

Rosamonda  Rosamonda's Pond was a body of water in St. James's Park in London, on the site of what is now Buckingham Palace. The pond was named for Rosamund Clifford, the semi-legendary mistress of Henry II in the twelfth century whose relationship with the king became a byword for doomed love affairs. In the eighteenth century, the Pond was apparently well known as a place for lovers to meet secretly.
John Partridge (1644-c.1714) an astrologer known for publishing almanacs with (generally incorrect) yearly predictions of deaths of notable individuals like the King of France (during a time where France and England were at war).

Eyes  i.e., the telescope, developed by Galileo Galilei

Louis XIV (1638-1715), the King of France. He was for a long time the most powerful and feared ruler in Europe. But the threat he and France posed to their neighbors was checked by the Treaty of Utrecht, signed in 1713, and Louis died the year after this poem was published. His "Fate," then, was very much up in the air at the time that Pope was writing. [Image: Portrait of Louis XIV by Hyacynthe Rigaud, 1701. Wikimedia Commons]

Muse  The Muses are the nine Greek goddesses devoted to the arts; they are often imagined as a source of inspiration for a poet.