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Dryden, John

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The Story Acis, Polyphemus, and Galatea. From the thirteenth Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses.

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The Story of ACIS, POLYPHEMUS, *and* GALATEA.

From the thirteenth Book of *Ovid*'s *Metamorphoses*.

ACIS, the lovely Youth, whose Loss I mourn,
From *Faunus*, and the Nymph *Symethis* born,
Was both his Parents Pleasure; but to me
Was all that Love could make a Lover be.
The Gods our Minds in mutual Bands did join:
I was his only Joy, and he was mine.
Now sixteen Summers the sweet Youth had seen;
And doubtful Down began to shade his Chin:
When *Polyphemus* first disturb'd our Joy,
And lov'd me fiercely, as I lov'd the Boy.
Ask not which Passion in my Soul was high'r,
My last Aversion, or my first Desire:
Nor this the greater was, nor that the less;
Both were alike, for both were in Excess.
Thee, *Venus*, thee both Heav'n and Earth obey;
Immense thy Pow'r, and boundless is thy Sway.
The *Cyclops*, who defy'd th' Ætherial Throne,
And thought no Thunder louder than his own,
The Terror of the Woods, and wilder far
Than Wolves in Plains, or Bears in Forests are,
Th' inhuman Host, who made his bloody Feasts
On mangl'd Members of his butcher'd Guests,
Yet felt the force of Love, and fierce Desire,
And burnt for me, with unrelenting Fire:
Forgot his Caverns, and his woolly Care,
Assum'd the Softness of a Lover's Air;
And comb'd, with Teeth of Rakes, his rugged Hair.

Now with a crooked Scythe his Beard he fleeks,
And mows the ſtubborn Stubble of his Cheeks:
Now in the Cryſtal Stream he looks, to try
His Simagres, and rowls his glaring Eye.
His Cruelty and Thirſt of Blood are loſt;
And Ships ſecurely ſail along the Coaſt.

The Prophet *Telemus* (arriv'd by chance
Where *Ætna*'s Summits to the Seas advance,
Who mark'd the Tracks of ev'ry Bird that flew,
And ſure Preſages from their Flying drew)
Foretold the *Cyclops*, that *Ulyſſes*' Hand
In his broad Eye ſhou'd thruſt a flaming Brand.
The Giant, with a ſcornful Grin, reply'd,
Vain Augur, thou haſt falſly prophefy'd;
Already Love his flaming Brand has toſt;
Looking on two fair Eyes, my Sight I loſt.
Thus, warn'd in vain, with ſtalking Pace he ſtrode,
And ſtamp'd the Margin of the briny Flood
With heavy Steps; and, weary, ſought agen
The cool Retirement of his gloomy Den.

A Promontory, ſharp'ning by degrees,
Ends in a Wedge, and overlooks the Seas:
On either Side, below, the Water flows:
This airy Walk the Giant Lover choſe;
Here on the midſt he ſate; his Flocks, unled,
Their Shepherd follow'd, and ſecurely fed.
A Pine ſo burly, and of Length ſo vaſt,
That ſailing Ships requir'd it for a Maſt,
He wielded for a Staff, his Steps to guide:
But laid it by, his Whiſtle while he try'd.
A hundred Reeds, of a prodigious Growth,
Scarce made a Pipe proportion'd to his Mouth:
Which when he gave it Wind, the Rocks around,
And wat'ry Plains, the dreadful Hiſs reſound.

I heard the Ruffian-Shepherd rudely blow,
Where, in a hollow Cave, I ſat below;
On *Acis*' Boſom I my Head reclin'd:
And ſtill preſerve the Poem in my Mind.
Oh lovely *Galatea*, whiter far
Than falling Snows, and riſing Lilies are;
More flow'ry than the Meads, as Cryſtal bright;
Erect as Alders, and of equal Height:
More wanton than a Kid; more ſleek thy Skin,
Than Orient Shells, that on the Shores are ſeen:
Than Apples fairer, when the Boughs they lade;
Pleaſing, as Winter Suns, or Summer Shade:
More grateful to the Sight, than goodly Plains;
And ſofter to the Touch, than Down of Swans,
Or Curds new turn'd; and ſweeter to the Taſte,
Than ſwelling Grapes, that to the Vintage haſte:
More clear than Ice, or running Streams, that ſtray
Through Garden Plots, but ah! more ſwift than they.
Yet, *Galatea*, harder to be broke
Than Bullocks, unreclaim'd to bear the Yoke:
And far more ſtubborn than the knotted Oak:
Like ſliding Streams, impoſſible to hold;
Like them, fallacious; like their Fountains, cold:
More warping, than the Willow, to decline
My warm Embrace; more brittle than the Vine;
Immoveable, and fixt in thy Diſdain:
Rough, as theſe Rocks, and of a harder Grain;
More violent, than is the riſing Flood:
And the prais'd Peacock is not half ſo proud:
Fierce as the Fire, and ſharp as Thiſtles are;
And more outragious, than a Mother-Bear:
Deaf as the Billows to the Vows I make;
And more revengeful than a troden Snake:

In Swiftneſs fleeter than the flying Hind,
Or driven Tempeſts, or the driving Wind.
All other Faults with Patience I can bear;
But Swiftneſs is the Vice I only fear.
Yet if you knew me well, you wou'd not ſhun
My Love, but to my wiſh'd Embraces run:
Wou'd languiſh in your turn, and court my Stay;
And much repent of your unwiſe Delay.
My Palace, in the living Rock, is made
By Nature's Hand; a ſpacious pleaſing Shade;
Which neither Heat can pierce, nor Cold invade.
My Garden fill'd with Fruits you may behold,
And Grapes in Cluſters, imitating Gold;
Some bluſhing Bunches of a Purple Hue:
And theſe, and thoſe, are all reſerv'd for you.
Red Strawberries in Shades expecting ſtand,
Proud to be gather'd by ſo white a Hand.
Autumnal Cornels latter Fruit provide,
And Plumbs, to tempt you, turn their gloſſy Side:
Not thoſe of common Kinds; but ſuch alone,
As in *Phæacian* Orchards might have grown:
Nor Cheſnuts ſhall be wanting to your Food,
Nor Garden-Fruits, nor Wildings of the Wood;
The laden Boughs for you alone ſhall bear;
And yours ſhall be the Product of the Year.
The Flocks, you ſee, are all my own; beſide
The reſt that Woods and winding Vallies hide;
And thoſe that folded in the Caves abide.
Aſk not the Numbers of my growing Store;
Who knows how many, knows he has no more.
Nor will I praiſe my Cattle; truſt not me,
But judge your ſelf, and paſs your own Decree:
Behold their ſwelling Dugs: the ſweepy Weight
Of Ewes, that ſink beneath the milky Freight;

In the warm Folds their tender Lambkins lie;
Apart from Kids, that call with human Cry.
New Milk in Nut-brown Bowls is duly serv'd
For daily Drink; the rest for Cheese reserv'd.
Nor are these Houshold Dainties all my Store:
The Fields and Forests will afford us more;
The Deer, the Hare, the Goat, the Savage Boar.
All sorts of Ven'son; and of Birds the best;
A pair of Turtles taken from the Nest.
I walk'd the Mountains, and two Cubs I found,
Whose Dam had left 'em on the naked Ground;
So like, that no Distinction cou'd be seen;
So pretty, they were Presents for a Queen;
And so they shall; I took them both away;
And keep, to be Companions of your Play.
Oh raise, fair Nymph, your beauteous Face above
The Waves; nor scorn my Presents, and my Love.
Come, *Galatea*, come, and view my Face;
I late beheld it, in the watry Glass,
And found it lovelier, than I fear'd it was.
Survey my tow'ring Stature, and my Size:
Not *Jove*, the *Jove* you dream, that rules the Skies,
Bears such a Bulk, or is so largely spread:
My Locks (the plenteous Harvest of my Head)
Hang o'er my manly Face; and dangling down,
As with a shady Grove, my Shoulders crown.
Nor think, because my Limbs and Body bear
A thick-set Underwood of bristling Hair,
My Shape deform'd: what fouler Sight can be,
Than the bald Branches of a leafless Tree?
Foul is the Steed without a flowing Mane;
And Birds, without their Feathers, and their Train.
Wool decks the Sheep; and Man receives a Grace
From bushy Limbs, and from a bearded Face.

My Forehead with a ſingle Eye is fill'd,
Round as a Ball, and ample as a Shield.
The glorious Lamp of Heav'n, the radiant Sun,
Is Nature's Eye; and ſhe's content with one.
Add, that my Father ſways your Seas, and I,
Like you, am of the watry Family.
I make you his, in making you my own;
You I adore, and kneel to you alone:
Jove, with his Fabled Thunder, I deſpiſe,
And only fear the Lightning of your Eyes.
Frown not, fair Nymph; yet I cou'd bear to be
Diſdain'd, if others were diſdain'd with me.
But to repulſe the *Cyclops*, and prefer
The Love of *Acis*, Heav'ns! I cannot bear.
But let the Stripling pleaſe himſelf; nay more,
Pleaſe you, tho' that's the thing I moſt abhor;
The Boy ſhall find, if e'er we cope in Fight,
Theſe Giant Limbs endu'd with Giant Might.
His living Bowels from his Belly torn,
And ſcatter'd Limbs, ſhall on the Flood be born,
Thy Flood, ungrateful Nymph; and Fate ſhall find
That Way for thee and *Acis* to be join'd.
For oh! I burn with Love, and thy Diſdain
Augments at once my Paſſion, and my Pain.
Tranſlated *Ætna* flames within my Heart,
And thou, Inhuman, wilt not eaſe my Smart.
Lamenting thus in vain, he roſe, and ſtrode
With furious Paces to the neighb'ring Wood:
Reſtleſs his Feet, diſtracted was his Walk;
Mad were his Motions, and confus'd his Talk.
Mad as the vanquiſh'd Bull, when forc'd to yield
His lovely Miſtreſs, and forſake the Field.
Thus far unſeen I ſaw: when, fatal Chance
His Looks directing, with a ſudden Glance,

Acis

Acis and I were to his Sight betray'd;
Where, nought ſuſpecting, we ſecurely play'd.
From his wide Mouth a bellowing Cry he caſt;
I ſee, I ſee, but this ſhall be your laſt.
A Roar ſo loud made *Ætna* to rebound;
And all the *Cyclops* labour'd in the Sound.
Affrighted with his monſtrous Voice, I fled,
And in the Neighb'ring Ocean plung'd my Head.
Poor *Acis* turn'd his Back, and, Help, he cry'd,
Help, *Galatea*, help, my Parent Gods,
And take me dying to your deep Abodes.
The *Cyclops* follow'd; but he ſent before
A Rib, which from the living Rock he tore:
Though but an Angle reach'd him of the Stone,
The mighty Fragment was enough alone,
To cruſh all *Acis*; 'twas too late to ſave,
But what the Fates allow'd to give, I gave:
That *Acis* to his Lineage ſhould return;
And rowl, among the River Gods, his Urn.
Straight iſſu'd from the Stone a Stream of Blood;
Which loſt the Purple, mingling with the Flood.
Then like a troubled Torrent it appear'd:
The Torrent too, in little ſpace, was clear'd.
The Stone was cleft, and through the yawning Chink
New Reeds aroſe, on the new River's Brink.
The Rock, from out its hollow Womb, diſclos'd
A Sound like Water in its Courſe oppos'd:
When (wond'rous to behold) full in the Flood,
Up ſtarts a Youth, and Navel-high he ſtood.
Horns from his Temples riſe; and either Horn
Thick Wreaths of Reeds (his Native Growth) adorn.
Were not his Stature taller than before,
His Bulk augmented, and his Beauty more,

His Colour blue, for *Acis* he might paſs:
And *Acis* chang'd into a Stream he was.
But, mine no more, he rowls along the Plains
With rapid Motion, and his Name retains.

VENI