The Forsaken Wife

POEM TEXT

Methinks 'tis strange you can't afford
One pitying look, one parting word;
Humanity claims this as its due,
But what's humanity to you?

Cruel man! I am not blind,
Your infidelity I find;
Your want of love my ruin shows,
My broken heart, your broken vows.
Yet maugre all your rigid hate,
I will be true in spite of fate;
And one preeminence I'll claim,
To be forever still the same.

Show me a man that dare be true,
That dares to suffer what I do;
That can forever sigh unheard,
And ever love without regard,
I will then own your prior claim
To love, to honour, and to fame;
But till that time, my dear, adieu,
I yet superior am to you.

SUMMARY

I find it odd that you can't spare me one compassionate glance or word of goodbye. All of humanity thinks it's owed that much, but what do you care about humanity?

You vicious man! I'm not deceived—I know you've cheated on me. My wrecked life is proof of your lovelessness, my heartbreak, and your broken promises. Still, despite your fixed hatred for me, I'll be faithful to you no matter how unfortunate I become. And I'll have one thing over you: I'll always be myself.

If you can show me one man who would dare to be as faithful as I am and suffer as much as I do—who can sigh for love without ever being heard, and keep loving without any attention or respect in return—I'll say that you have all the love, integrity, and good reputation you used to claim for yourself. Until then, goodbye, dear—I'm still better than you are.

THEMES

FEMALE FIDELITY VS. MALE INFIDELITY

"The Forsaken Wife" is a dramatic monologue delivered by a woman whose husband has cruelly abandoned her. Not only has he "broken" his "vows" and her "heart," but he's done so abruptly, without so much as a goodbye. Even as she condemns his infidelity, she insists on staying faithful to him, defies him to show her a man that would do the same in her place, and proudly concludes that she is "superior" to him in every way. Broadly, the poem suggests that women betrayed by men can attain a kind of martyrdom: by refusing to stoop to their betrayers' level, they can maintain their dignity while gaining a permanent moral high ground.

The speaker casts her departed husband as the epitome of male cruelty and infidelity. She denounces him as a "Cruel man" without "humanity," one who can't even spare a "pitying look" or proper goodbye as he abandons her. She accuses him of breaking his marriage vows, developing a "hate" for her, and committing "infidelity" (that is, cheating on her).

Rather than take revenge on her disloyal husband by mimicking his behavior, she shames him by doing the opposite: remaining perfectly loyal to *her* vows. She insists on staying "true" to him even though he's caused her "ruin," and casts this choice as a way of preserving her values and her pride. In fact, she proudly claims a moral victory over him, achieving "preeminence" (i.e., superiority) by remaining "the same" as she was when she married him.

Ultimately, the speaker implies that men *in general* don't have it in them to be as loyal as she is (and, by extension, as women can be). She mockingly challenges him to "Show me a man [...] That dares to suffer what I do," implying that men couldn't handle the pain they inflict on women with as much grace and courage as women show. She suggests that her husband's "claim[s]" to "love," "honour," and "fame" (high reputation) pale beside her own—and perhaps that, in general, men can't love the way women do. She ends on a note of ringing pride, both in her moral "superior[ity]" over her husband and, implicitly, in her womanhood.

Thomas was writing in a time and place (18th-century England) when women had virtually no legal power within their marriages, including no power to file for divorce. Thus, her poem hints at a broader social commentary about the unfair arrangements suffered by women of the period. The poem's speaker may be trapped in a terrible situation, but she's determined to act as honorably as possible under the circumstances.

Where this theme appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-20

LINE-BY-LINE ANALYSIS

LINES 1-4

Methinks 'tis strange you can't afford
One pitying look, one parting word;
Humanity claims this as its due,
But what's humanity to you?

Lines 1-4 begin the poem on a note of sarcastic anger. The title character, "The Forsaken Wife," shames her unfaithful husband—the man who has *forsaken*, or abandoned, her—for leaving without any kind of proper goodbye:

> Methinks 'tis strange you can't afford
> One pitying look, one parting word;

Using bitter understatement (and the archaic words "Methinks 'tis," meaning "I think it is"), she tells him that she finds his icy behavior "strange." It soon becomes clear that she finds it a lot more than strange: she finds it "Cruel" and heartless. He *could*, of course, "afford" a compassionate "look" or a "word" of goodbye; he just chooses not to spare them. He's broken his marriage vows and dumped her cold. The /w/ and /p/ alliteration of line 2 ("One pitying look, one parting word") underscores her outrage at his behavior.

She then adds a sharp rhetorical question:

> Humanity claims this as its due,
> But what's humanity to you?

In the speaker's view, everyone feels they're owed at least *some* pity, or *some* kind of goodbye, when their romantic partner leaves them. It's just a basic expectation of "Humanity." But the question implies that the husband doesn't care about "humanity" at all. Notice that this word can have two meanings: *humankind* or *humane behavior*. In a kind of pun, the speaker implies that the selfish husband has no interest in either.

These opening lines establish that the poem will consist of rhyming couplets stacked up to form larger stanzas. They also provide a succinct, powerful introduction to the voice of the speaker, who is not identical with the poet but rather a character in a dramatic monologue. The poem captures this character at a moment of intense emotion, as her anger at her cheating husband boils over.

LINES 5-8

Cruel man! I am not blind,
Your infidelity I find;
Your want of love my ruin shows,
My broken heart, your broken vows.

In lines 5-8, the speaker's bitter sarcasm turns to blunt anger. She condemns her husband for his "Cruel[ty]" and "infidelity," portraying him as heartless and dishonest:

> Cruel man! I am not blind,
> Your infidelity I find;
> Your want of love my ruin shows,
> My broken heart, your broken vows.

"I am not blind" means, in effect, "I'm not deceived" or "I see who you really are." She's found out about her husband's cheating ("infidelity"); in other words, she knows he's leaving her for someone else, not just abandoning the marriage. She declares that "my ruin shows"—that is, her wrecked life proves—the husband's "want of love" ("want" here means *lack*), her own "broken heart," and his "broken [marriage] vows." (The inverted syntax in line 7—"Your want of love my ruin shows" rather than "My ruin shows your want of love"—is a common technique in older poetry.) All in all, she feels devastated and betrayed.

The emphatic repetitions in this passage, including the "Your"/"Your" anaphora in lines 6-7 and the two "broken"s in line 8, help convey the speaker's vehement anger. The exclamation point after "Cruel man" is the only one in the poem, and seems to represent an outburst of emotion after the relatively restrained verbal irony of the first stanza.

LINES 9-12

Yet maugre all your rigid hate,
I will be true in spite of fate;
And one preeminence I'll claim,
To be forever still the same.

There's an emotional shift in lines 9-12, signaled by the word "Yet" in line 9. As devastated as the speaker feels, she's settled on a path forward, at least in terms of her emotional response to her husband's betrayal:

> Yet maugre all your rigid hate,
> I will be true in spite of fate;

The word "maugre" is an archaic synonym for "despite," so the speaker means that despite her husband's "rigid hate" (unshakable hostility toward her), she will remain "true" to her marriage vows. She will do so "in spite of fate," meaning in spite of her misfortune, or in spite of whatever fortune might still hold in store. (In the strictly patriarchal society of 18th-century England, women abandoned by their husbands typically faced financial hardship, social ostracism, and other difficulties.)

The speaker adds that she will "claim" one "preeminence," or

one form of superiority, over her husband: "To be forever still the same." Even though he's broken his vows and turned on her, revealing that he's not the man she thought he was, she will remain faithful to her promises and continue to be herself. The alliterative phrase "still the same" accentuates her righteous determination. By juxtaposing her virtuous behavior with his betrayal, the speaker finds the moral high ground and attempts to shame the man who's wronged her.

LINES 13-16

Show me a man that dare be true,
That dares to suffer what I do;
That can forever sigh unheard,
And ever love without regard,

In lines 13-16, the speaker's tone grows more defiant, and the poem makes a broader commentary on gender differences. The abandoned wife challenges her husband to "Show [her] a man" that would "suffer" as stoically as she does in her position:

> Show me a man that dare be true,
> That dares to suffer what I do;
> That can forever sigh unheard,
> And ever love without regard,

The repetition of "that" and "dare"/"dares" accentuates her proud defiance as she piles one challenge on top of another. She implies that no man would have it in him to love as faithfully as she and other abandoned women do, while getting as little in return. Although her "sigh[s]" of heartbreak will be "forever [...] unheard," and she'll never get any "regard" (respect or attention) for her "love," she has the bravery—the "dar[ing]"—to stay "true" to the vows she swore.

Through these statements, the speaker places herself in the position of noble martyr, while suggesting that men in general lack the courage for her kind of unrequited love. In the process, she's flouting the gender stereotypes of her day; men of this period typically considered women "the weaker sex." Of course, the poem is addressed directly to the speaker's husband, so she's also implying that *he* couldn't be as strong as she is! The next four lines will build on this idea.

LINES 17-20

I will then own your prior claim
To love, to honour, and to fame;
But till that time, my dear, adieu,
I yet superior am to you.

Lines 17-20, part of the single long sentence that makes up the final stanza, build on the challenge posed in lines 13-16. Having dared her husband to "Show [her]" a man who could love as selflessly and faithfully as she does, the speaker offers to change her opinion of him if he fulfills that challenge:

> I will then own your prior claim
> To love, to honour, and to fame;

Basically, she's saying: *Show me a man who could love the way I do, and I'll take back everything I said about you—I'll say you're as loving, honorable, and reputable as you once claimed to be.* The word "own" here means "acknowledge" or "admit," and "fame" means simply "good reputation" rather than any kind of celebrity.

Notice, too, the repetition of the word "claim," which also appeared as a verb in lines 3 and 11. In each case, the word involves a claim *to* something, whether it's a set of virtues, a particular virtue, or basic human respect. Morally speaking, the poem plays out like a post-breakup settlement, in which the wronged partner asserts what she has a *claim* to—and what the person who hurt her doesn't.

Of course, the speaker is being ironic when she offers the conditions on which she'll change her opinion. She doesn't actually believe her husband *can* find her a man who can love as selflessly as she does. She knows he certainly isn't that man himself. Therefore, she'll never have to admit that he was a decent man after all, or lose her moral high ground:

> But till that time, my dear, adieu,
> I yet superior am to you.

In other words, "Until you can do that impossible task, I'll always be a better person than you are." The speaker may have been humiliated by her faithless husband, but in these final lines, she fully recovers her pride—and tells him off for good.

POETIC DEVICES

ALLITERATION

The poem uses alliteration to add emphasis at several key moments. Listen to the /w/ and /p/ alliteration in line 2, for example:

> One pitying look, one parting word;

Along with the parallelism and repeated "-ing" suffix, these repeated consonant sounds underscore the speaker's bitter indignation. (Picture the way an ordinary, real-life speaker might deliver a line like, "You couldn't even say *one word!*")

Repeated /s/ sounds (sibilance) in line 12 also emphasize the speaker's emotion—this time, her proud determination to stay true to her partner and herself:

> And one preeminence I'll claim,
> To be forever still the same.

Similarly, the repeated /d/ sounds in lines 13-14 ring out with pride and defiance:

> Show me a man that dare be true,
> That dares to suffer what I do;

Assonance ("suffer what") and the near-repetition of "dare"/"dares" also contribute to this effect.

A final example of alliteration appears in the phrase "till that time" (line 19), underlining the speaker's verbal irony: clearly, she believes "that time" (when men are as faithful as women) will never come. In all these cases, alliteration heightens the emotion of an impassioned dramatic monologue.

Where Alliteration appears in the poem:

- **Line 2:** "One," "pitying," "one," "parting," "word"
- **Line 12:** "still," "same"
- **Line 13:** "dare"
- **Line 14:** "dares," "do"
- **Line 19:** "till," "time"

JUXTAPOSITION

The speaker juxtaposes her own loyalty with her husband's disloyalty, and his former "claim" to virtue with the harsh reality of his true character. By drawing these contrasts, the speaker justifies her own claim to the moral high ground over her husband.

In fact, the word "claim" is important in establishing these differences. In the first stanza, the speaker accuses her husband of denying her even the basic compassion and respect that "Humanity" in general "claims as its due" (line 3). In other words, he behaves like an inhuman monster. This behavior contrasts sharply with his "prior claim / To Love, to honour, and to fame" (lines 17-18). Basically, he seemed to be loving, honorable, and well thought of, but he turned out to be something else entirely.

The speaker also "claim[s]" the moral advantage, or "preeminence," over him on account of her own virtue. She juxtaposes his "infidelity" with her "true" faithfulness (lines 6, 10), shaming him for breaking his marriage "vows" (line 8) by honoring her own in spite of everything.

Through these juxtapositions, the humiliated speaker knocks her husband down several pegs while elevating herself to recover her dignity. She argues that he's not the man he claimed to be; in fact, he's so cruel, he's barely human. Meanwhile, she's the picture of "superior" love.

Where Juxtaposition appears in the poem:

- Lines 1-12
- Lines 17-20

ANAPHORA

The speaker uses anaphora to create strenuous, vehement emphasis as she chides her unfaithful husband. The repetition of words at the beginning of lines and clauses helps establish her tone of rising indignation. In line 2, for example, the repeated "One" ("One pitying look, one parting word") suggests a piling on of accusations. A similar effect occurs in lines 6-7, which accuse the husband of being a loveless cheater:

> Your infidelity I find;
> Your want of love my ruin shows,

In the third stanza, the speaker's indignation merges with proud defiance. Once again, anaphora helps show the rising emotion:

> Show me a man that dare be true,
> That dares to suffer what I do;
> That can forever sigh unheard,

Finally, the anaphoric repetition of "To" in line 18 ("To love, to honour, and to fame") ties together a list of virtues the husband once claimed for himself—virtues that now seem very ironic in light of his infidelity. By choosing this phrasing over the more concise "To love, honour, and fame," the speaker forces the reader to dwell a little longer on the irony.

Where Anaphora appears in the poem:

- **Line 2:** "One," "one"
- **Line 6:** "Your"
- **Line 7:** "Your"
- **Line 13:** "that"
- **Line 14:** "That"
- **Line 15:** "That"
- **Line 18:** "To," "to," "to"

REPETITION

Beyond the anaphora covered previously in this guide, the poem contains other noteworthy examples of repetition. In particular, it repeats a number of important words in order to heighten its emotional effect and underline its themes.

For example, the repetition of the word "claim," while subtle, helps establish key differences between the husband and the wife, and even between the husband and the rest of "humanity." Versions of this word appear three times in the poem: in lines 3, 11, and 17. First, humanity itself "claims" the right to compassion and respect—both of which the husband has denied the speaker. Then, the speaker "claims" a kind of moral superiority, or "preeminence," over the husband by pointing to her own fidelity. Finally, the speaker remembers the husband's former "claim" to love, integrity, and good reputation—and

fiercely denies the validity of this claim.

Other repeated words include "man" (fitting for a poem that comments on gender), "love" (fitting for a poem that comments on love), "broken" (ditto for shattered romantic hopes), and "true" (ditto for fidelity). The speaker also repeats "dare"/"dares" (lines 13-14) to emphasize that men wouldn't *dare* be as faithful as her—that is, they're not brave enough to risk loving the way women do. And the repetition of "forever" (lines 12, 15) provides a touch of defiant hyperbole—or maybe pious faith—as the speaker swears to stay true to her husband for all eternity.

Where Repetition appears in the poem:

- **Line 3:** "Humanity," "claims"
- **Line 4:** "humanity"
- **Line 5:** "man"
- **Line 7:** "love"
- **Line 8:** "broken," "broken"
- **Line 10:** "true"
- **Line 11:** "claim"
- **Line 12:** "forever"
- **Line 13:** "man," "dare," "true"
- **Line 14:** "dares"
- **Line 15:** "forever"
- **Line 16:** "love"
- **Line 17:** "claim"
- **Line 18:** "love"

RHETORICAL QUESTION

The poem contains a single rhetorical question, which appears in line 4:

> Humanity claims this as its due,
> But what's humanity to you?

Though it's the only question in the poem, it's a powerful one. Its tone is one of moral condemnation: the speaker isn't really *asking* her unfaithful husband what humanity means to him, she's *saying* that he doesn't care about his fellow human beings. (She's also saying that he doesn't care about "humanity" in the sense of compassion and humaneness.) After the restrained sarcasm of "Methinks 'tis strange" (line 1), she's now blatantly shaming her husband. In fact, in the next line, she'll exclaim that he's a "Cruel man!"

Right away, in this first stanza, the speaker's rhetorical question makes the scope of her accusations clear. She's not just saying that her husband is callous toward his wife, or even toward women in general; she's accusing him of being a cold-hearted monster to everyone around him.

Where Rhetorical Question appears in the poem:

- **Line 4:** "But what's humanity to you?"

VOCABULARY

Methinks (Line 1) - An archaic way of saying "I think."

'Tis (Line 1) - An archaic contraction of "it is." ("Methinks 'tis" means "I think that it is.")

Infidelity (Line 6) - Lack of sexual faithfulness; cheating.

Want (Line 7) - Lack or absence.

Ruin (Line 7) - Here referring to personal disaster, including social disgrace and/or financial distress.

Maugre (Line 9) - An archaic synonym for "despite."

Preeminence (Line 11) - Superiority (here meaning an area of superior strength, ability, etc.).

Regard (Line 16) - Attention and/or respect. (Here, to "love without regard" means to love without getting any attention and/or respect in return.)

Own (Line 17) - Here meaning "acknowledge" or "admit the truth of."

Fame (Line 18) - Here meaning "good reputation," not "celebrity."

Adieu (Line 19) - French for "goodbye."

FORM, METER, & RHYME

FORM

The poem contains three stanzas of four, eight, and eight lines, respectively. Those stanzas are composed of rhyming couplets, meaning that the first line rhymes with the second, the third with the fourth, and so on. The meter is iambic tetrameter (i.e., the lines generally follow a da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM rhythm), and the rhymes are either exact or nearly exact. (See Meter and Rhyme Scheme sections for more.)

The couplets seem an appropriate choice for a poem about couplehood! True, the couple in "The Forsaken Wife" has fallen apart, but the speaker remains faithful to her vows. The consistency of the form seems to mirror the consistency of her feelings—her commitment, however unhappy and defiant, to the couple she and her husband once were.

METER

The poem's meter is iambic tetrameter, meaning that its lines typically contain four *iambs* (feet, or metrical units, consisting of an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable). In other words, the lines generally follow a pattern that sounds like this: da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM. Readers can hear this

pattern clearly in lines 7-8, for example:

> Your want | of love | my ru- | in shows,
> My bro- | ken heart, | your bro- | ken vows.

At times, this pattern helps suggest how the poet intends readers to hear or pronounce certain words. For instance, the meter effectively squishes the four syllables of "Humanity" (line 3) into three: "Human'ty." The "i" syllable is pronounced so lightly here that it's elided (not counted) for metrical purposes.

In other lines, the poet changes the pattern slightly for variety and/or emphasis. Listen to the start of line 13:

> Show me | a man | that dare | be true,

Here, both the line and stanza begin with a stressed syllable—part of the emphatic phrase "Show me." The metrical variation gives the phrase a defiant ring and helps convey the speaker's proud, yet bitter tone.

RHYME SCHEME

The poem's stanzas (of four, eight, and eight lines, respectively) are made of rhyming couplets. In other words, the rhyme scheme of the poem is AABB ... and so on. The full scheme is: AABB CCDDEEFF GGHHIIJJ.

For the most part, the rhymes are exact. A few ("afford"/"word," "shows"/"vows," "unheard"/"regard") are slant rhymes for most modern-day English speakers. (Some accents and vowel pronunciations were different in 18th-century England, so some of these might have been exact rhymes for the poet.)

The use of couplets may relate to the poem's commentary on love, couples, and heartbreak. Even though the speaker's marriage has fallen apart, she insists on remaining true to the man who's left her. Her steady couplets seem to mirror her steadfast devotion to the relationship. It's as if the poem's form is saying: *I'm committed to couplehood even if you aren't.*

SPEAKER

As the title indicates, the speaker is a "Forsaken Wife": a woman whose husband has abandoned her. The poem is addressed to her "Cruel," unfaithful husband in tones of anger and defiance. While expressing a sense of wounded betrayal, she also takes pride in claiming the moral high ground—"preeminence"—by staying true to the marriage vows he's broken.

The title casts the speaker as a character separate from the poet, who never married. In other words, the poem is a dramatic monologue. Rather than a sharply specific character (with a name, location, etc. attributed to her), the speaker is a generic figure, a kind of stand-in for abandoned wives everywhere. She may be a woman of the poet's time and place (18th-century England), but the poem's setting is never established, so it's hard to say for sure.

Likewise, the character may or may not express some aspect of the poet's personal experience, but in the absence of any clear biographical evidence, this is only a matter of speculation. (Elizabeth Thomas had a 16-year engagement with a man whose health and finances prevented him from marrying. He didn't leave her for another woman, though; he died before they could marry.)

SETTING

The poem's setting is never specified. The speaker and her faithless husband might be having a "parting" scene, as line 2 suggests; or the poem might be set sometime after their parting. (The phrasing in the last stanza indicates that the speaker may have "suffer[ed]" for a while now.)

The poet may have chosen to leave the speaker's name, age, and location vague in order to make her a more broadly relatable figure. She could be any abandoned wife, anywhere. Her generic nature makes her situation seem timeless, allowing a variety of readers to connect with it.

CONTEXT

LITERARY CONTEXT

Elizabeth Thomas (1675-1731) wrote "The Forsaken Wife" in the early 1700s, during a time when English women had little power in marriage, the literary world, or society as a whole. As the classical education received by many male scholars was unavailable to women, Thomas educated herself at home. She began writing poetry as a young adult and published "The Forsaken Wife" pseudonymously in 1722, in the collection *Miscellany Poems on Several Subjects*.

The pen name she published under, Corinna, was given to her by fellow poet John Dryden—the UK's first Poet Laureate—as an ambiguous compliment. According to scholar Anne McWhir:

> She was known as "Dryden's Corinna," an identification she herself encouraged and publicized, but one that has plagued her subsequent reputation. Dryden called her Corinna to indicate his approval of two [of her] poems [...]
>
> Dryden refers to two distinct Corinnas. The first is the woman-as-poet, the Corinna of history and legend whose poems survive only in fragments [...] The second is the Ovidian [courtesan] Corinna, the object of male desire that obscures the poet.

In other words, the nickname alludes to both an ancient female

poet and the lover of an ancient male poet—though Dryden claimed he was referring only to the former.

Men tended to exclude women from the literary spaces of Thomas's time, and she was the victim of a harshly sexist attack by her era's most famous poet, Alexander Pope. Furious that Thomas had played a role in making some of his private letters public, Pope caricatured "Corinna" in his satirical poem *The Dunciad* (1728). Her reputation damaged and finances in disarray, Thomas spent several of her unhappy later years in debtors' prison before dying in 1731. Still, she kept writing in the decade before her death. Pope believed she was the co-author of a counterattack on him, *Codrus: or, The Dunciad Dissected* (1728).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

For even the wealthiest women in 18th-century England, marriage was a near-universal expectation—and divorce a near impossibility. Women were not allowed to initiate divorce proceedings, and only a few hundred divorces took place in the entire country between 1700 and 1857.

By and large, women in bad marriages had little choice but to suffer through their unfortunate circumstances. Some had opportunities to pursue other relationships on the side, but adultery carried serious personal and social risks. Assuming the "Wife" in the poem is meant to be a contemporary of Thomas's, she is legally trapped in her broken marriage and trying to maintain her dignity within the harsh constraints of her society. In her view, she achieves a moral "preeminence," or "superior[ity]," by fulfilling the social expectation of fidelity to her husband even as he breaks his vows to her.

"The Forsaken Wife" is a dramatic monologue, meaning that it's written in the voice of a character separate from the poet. Thomas herself never married, though she was engaged for 16 years to a fellow writer, Richard Gwinnett (1675-1717). Due to a series of financial, family, and health problems, the couple was unable to marry before Gwinnett died, and Thomas was unable even to collect the bequest he tried to leave her in his will. While Thomas was not in the same position (relative to Gwinnett) as the abandoned wife in the poem, she certainly experienced long periods of loneliness and romantic frustration. Her correspondence with Gwinnett was published in a volume titled *Pylades and Corinna* (1732).

MORE RESOURCES

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- 18th-Century Women Writers — A book about Elizabeth Thomas and other often-overlooked women writers of the 18th century. (Free login required to read.) (https://archive.org/details/risefallofwomano0000clar/page/n7/mode/2up)
- The Poet's Life — A brief biography of Elizabeth Thomas. (https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/thomas-elizabeth-1675-1731)
- Divorce in Thomas's Time — A brief summary of English divorce law from the 1600s through the 1800s, encompassing the period (1700-1731) during which Thomas wrote. (https://victorianweb.org/gender/layton2.html)
- Marriage in the 18th Century — Read/listen to a talk about the laws surrounding marriage in 18th-century England and Wales. (https://media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/tracing-marriages-in-18th-century-england-and-wales-a-reassessment-of-law-and-practice/)
- Poetry and Misogyny in the 18th Century — An analysis of an attack on Elizabeth Thomas (a.k.a. "Corinna") in Alexander Pope's satirical poem The Dunciad (1728), which also harshly mocks other women of Pope's day. (http://drc.usask.ca/projects/eng803/heather/dunciadbooktwo/dunciadtwo.html)

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