

Madame de La Fayette's The Princess of Clèves - a new translation

University Press of America - The Princess of Cleves by Madame de La Fayette

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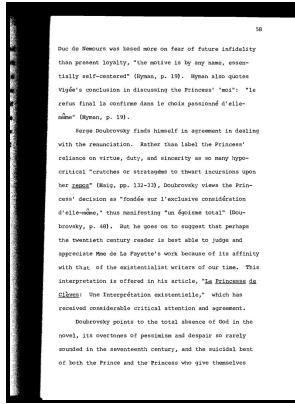
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de Clèves

Madame de Lafayette: The Princesse

The care of the ladies was to recommend themselves either to the Queen, the Dauphin-Queen, or the Queen of Navarre, or to Madame, or the Duchess of Valentinois.

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As soon as he was arrived, they went in order to the Church; the King led Madame, who wore also a close crown, her train being borne by Mademoiselles de Montpensier and Longueville; the Queen came next, but without a crown; after her followed the Queen-Dauphin, Madame the King's sister, the Duchess of Lorraine, and the Queen of Navarre, their trains being borne by the Princesses; the Queens and the Princesses were all of them attended with their maids of honour, who were richly dressed in the same colour which they wore themselves; so that it was known by the colour of their habits whose maids they were: they mounted the place that was prepared in the Church, and there the marriage ceremonies were performed; they returned afterwards to dine at the Bishop's Palace, and went from thence about five o'clock to the Palace where the feast was, and where the Parliament, the Sovereign Courts, and the Corporation of the City were desired to assist. He had been that evening with the Duke of Guise, who had given a great entertainment to the Duke of Ferrara his brother-in-law, and to all the young people of the Court: it happened that the discourse turned upon ingenious letters; and the Viscount de Chartres said he had one about him the finest that ever was writ: they urged him to show it, and on his excusing himself, the Duke de Nemours insisted he had no such letter, and that what he said was only out of vanity; the Viscount made him answer, that he urged his discretion to the utmost, that nevertheless he would not show the letter; but he would read some parts of it, which would make it appear few men received the like. Why is she reluctant to tell her husband that it is rumored that M.

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But I got the main idea, and what I understood I really liked. The Princess of Cleves mourns her and decides to avoid the company of the Duke of Nemours. In the meantime the Duke of Nemours continued at Brussels, his thoughts being wholly employed on his design in England; he was continually sending or receiving couriers from thence; his hopes increased every day, and at last Lignerolly sent him word that it was time to finish

by his presence what was so well begun; he received this news with all the joy a young ambitious man is capable of, who sees himself advanced to a throne merely by the force of his personal merit; his mind insensibly accustomed itself to the grandeur of a Royal State; and whereas he had at first rejected this undertaking as an impracticable thing, the difficulties of it were now worn out of his imagination, and he no longer saw anything to obstruct his way.

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The coronation of Francis II is to be held in Reims, and the whole court goes there. After the loss of her husband she retired from Court, and lived many years in the country; during this retreat, her chief care was bestowed in the education of her daughter; but she did not make it her business to cultivate her wit and beauty only, she took care also to inculcate virtue into her tender mind, and to make it amiable to her. Move over Romeo and Juliet, the Duke of Nemours and the Princess of Clèves are the patron saints of star-crossed lovers.

The Princess of Cleves by Madame de Lafayette

So, it may be two years or so. Two weddings are being celebrated at the court at once: the king's daughter Princess Elizabeth with the Spanish king, and the king's sister Marguerite of France with the Duke of Savoy. The King had such an affection for the Constable, that he was no sooner possessed of the Government, but he recalled him from the banishment he had been sent into by Francis the First: thus was the Court divided between Messieurs de Guise, and the Constable, who was supported by the Princes of the blood, and both parties made it their care to gain the Duchess of Valentinois.

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However industrious she was to avoid being looked at by him, and to speak less to him than to any other, some things escaped her in an unguarded moment, which convinced him he was not indifferent to her; a man of less discernment than he would not have perceived it, but he had already so often been the object of love, that it was easy for him to know when he was loved; he found the Chevalier de Guise was his rival, and the Chevalier knew that the Duke de Nemours was his; Monsieur de Guise was the only man in the Court that had unravelled this affair; his interest having made him more clear-sighted than others; the knowledge they had of each other's sentiments created an opposition between them in everything, which, however, did not break out into an open quarrel; they were always of different parties at the running, at the ring, at tournaments, and all diversions the King delighted in, and their emulation was so great it could not be concealed.

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