

~~VALENTINE Your own?~~

~~HANNAH Byron.~~

~~Pause. Two researchers again.~~

→ THOMASINA Septimus, do you think that I will marry Lord Byron?

AUGUSTUS Who is he?

THOMASINA He is the author of 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage', the most poetical and pathetic and bravest hero of any book I ever read before, and the most modern and the handsomest, for Harold is Lord Byron himself to those who know him, like myself and Septimus. Well, Septimus?

SEPTIMUS (Absorbed) No.

Then he puts her lesson book away into the portfolio and picks up his own book to read.

THOMASINA Why not?

SEPTIMUS For one thing, he is not aware of your existence.

THOMASINA We exchanged many significant glances when he was at Sidley Park. I do wonder that he has been home almost a year from his adventures and has not written to me once.

SEPTIMUS It is indeed improbable, my lady.

AUGUSTUS Lord Byron?!—he claimed my hare, although my shot was the earlier! He said I missed by a hare's breadth. His conversation was very facetious. But I think Lord Byron will not marry you, Thom, for he was only lame and not blind.

SEPTIMUS Peace! Peace until a quarter to twelve. It is intolerable for a tutor to have his thoughts interrupted by his pupils.

AUGUSTUS You are not *my* tutor, sir. I am visiting your lesson by my free will.

SEPTIMUS If you are so determined, my lord.

AUGUSTUS - THOMASINA - SEPTIMUS

Thomasina laughs at that, the joke is for her. Augustus, not included, becomes angry.

AUGUSTUS Your peace is nothing to me, sir. You do not rule over me.

THOMASINA (Admonishing) Augustus!

SEPTIMUS I do not rule here, my lord. I inspire by reverence for learning and the exaltation of knowledge whereby man may approach God. There will be a shilling for the best cone and pyramid drawn in silence by a quarter to twelve *at the earliest*.

AUGUSTUS You will not buy my silence for a shilling, sir. What I know to tell is worth much more than that.

And throwing down his drawing book and pencil, he leaves the room on his dignity, closing the door sharply. Pause. Septimus looks enquiringly at Thomasina.

THOMASINA I told him you kissed me. But he will not tell.

SEPTIMUS When did I kiss you?

THOMASINA What? Yesterday!

SEPTIMUS Where?

THOMASINA On the lips!

SEPTIMUS In which county?

THOMASINA In the hermitage, Septimus!

SEPTIMUS On the lips in the hermitage! That? That was not a shilling kiss! I would not give sixpence to have it back. I had almost forgot it already.

THOMASINA Oh, cruel! Have you forgotten our compact?

SEPTIMUS God save me! Our compact?

THOMASINA To teach me to waltz! Sealed with a kiss, and a second kiss due when I can dance like Mama!