

*LII – Love Is a Traitor With Sharp Claws*

Yes, indeed, Marquis, it is due to my friendship, it is due to my counsel that the Countess owes the tranquility she begins to enjoy, and I cannot conceive the chagrin that causes the indifference she manifests for you. I am very far, however, from desiring to complain of you; your grief springs from a wounded vanity.

Men are very unjust – they expect a woman always to consider them as objects interesting to them, while they, in abandoning a woman, do not ordinarily omit anything that will express their disdain. Of what importance to you is the hatred or love of a person whom you do not love? Tell me that. Your jealousy of the little Duke is so unreasonable that I burst out laughing when I learned it. Is it not quite simple, altogether natural, that a woman should console herself for your loss, by listening to a man who knows the value of her heart better than you? By what right, if you please, do you venture to take exceptions to it? You must admit that Madame de Sévigné was right – you have a foolish heart, my poor Marquis.

In spite of all that, the part you wish me to play in the matter appears to me to be exceed-

ingly agreeable. I can understand how nice it would be to aid you in your plan of vengeance against an unfaithful woman. Though it should be only through rancor or the oddity of the thing, we must love each other. But all such comedies turn out badly generally. Love is a traitor, who scratches us when we play with him.

So, Marquis, keep your heart, I am very scrupulous about interfering with so precious an association. Moreover, I am so disgusted with the staleness of men, that henceforth I desire them only as friends. There is always a bone to pick with a lover. I am beginning to understand the value of rest, and I wish to enjoy it. I will return to this, however. It would be very strange if you take the notion that you need consolation, and that my situation exacts the same succor because the Marquis de has departed on his embassy. Undeceive yourself, my friends suffice me, and, if you wish to remain among their number, at least do not think of saying any more gallant things to me, otherwise – Adieu, Marquis.