

Ballad: The Cunning Woman

In the bucolic lands of Arcadia, no couple shone with as much happiness as Bill and Jane. Their love was untainted by the troubles that often befuddled the society of their time—financial panics and stock market crashes were foreign to their simple, joyous existence. Bill tilled the land, while Jane nurtured the gardens; their days were filled with dance, music, and nature's chorus, encapsulated perfectly when Bill serenaded Jane, declaring their undying love and mutual fondness. This idyllic picture, however, was shadowed by Jane's pragmatic concern over Bill's appeal if a nobleman were to arrive, implying her affection might waver before a more prestigious suitor.

Bill, heartbroken by the thought, found his fears validated upon learning of Lord de Jacob Pillaloo's impending visit. Pillaloo, known for his love of women yet notorious for his commitment aversion, sparked panic in Bill for Jane's fidelity and her fear of attracting the nobleman's attention despite her genuine love for Bill. She lamented her attractiveness, fearing it would inevitably draw Lord Pillaloo's affections, preferring obscurity over the ensuing heartache his interest might bring. Through this narrative, the ballad captures the simplicity of true love juxtaposed with the complexities introduced by societal structures and status, all while maintaining a tone both whimsical and somber.