

Love's last shift

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Love's Last Shift by Cooley Sibber has something for everybody and therefore it is hailed as the opportunistic work. Its 'virtues' are many and it caters to the needs of audience of all types. It highlights the conflicts of the gender roles. It appeals to the sentiments of men and women both as it is the same old story through the ages-- It is between him and her.

The play doesn't depict that the interests of men and women need to be at the loggerheads always and they should ever remain at war. It concedes that sentimental reconciliation is possible, though it leaves the hearts and minds of parties involved in the conflicts, damaged. This play has been hailed as the Restoration Comedy. It has daring sex scenes and enjoyable farce.

From the point of view audience, such family dramas are immensely liked, for each man identifies himself with the male character and each woman with the female character. And the final reconciliation between the two calms the agitated minds of both male and female. In the ultimate analysis, such a favorable result to the conflict is desired and welcomed by both.

Summary of the plot:

Amanda has a unique problem; it could as well be the problem of most of the wives. It is about reformation and rehabilitation of her husband. She earnestly desires to control her husband, Loveless, who has been going astray. His only pastime for the last ten years is to budget his time between the brothel and the bottle. He goes to the extent of not recognizing his wife, when he returns to London. She seduces him, acting like a top-class prostitute, at her luxurious house, and Loveless is totally taken by her physical charms and guile. She treats him throughout the night, gives him

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everything the mad and crazy body-loving, sensuous man desires to have from a woman.

The high drama goes on till the morning, when she reveals to him her true identity. The fickle-minded Loveless is greatly impressed by her faithfulness, and a reformed individual emerges out of his dubious “ movement that drove laughter from the stage and ushered in the platitudinous sententiousness and dreary exemplars of moral propriety that abound in eighteen century sentimental comedy.”(Love’s...)

Love’s Last Shift is his first play. (1696) In the meantime, the love-adventures of Sir Novelty, always fascinated with the women, that he comes into contact, add to the humor of the play. His fickle-mindedness and weakness before the feminine charms is understandable by the male audience. The comedy depicts the status and position of the women of that era, and how she worked to maintain the essential dignity of the family life in the trials, tribulations, duty and beauty of her life.

Character analysis:

Taking to consideration to the era to which the play belonged, it needs to get the credit it deserves. The interesting character of Sir Novelty, who flirts with many women, but at the same time remains deeply interested in maintaining his own appearance, is the example of the then prevailing fashion trends. His witticisms are enjoyable and demand attention. Polygamy is nothing new in a society, but the style in which it is characterized in the play like the role of

John Vanbrugh's sequel, is thoroughly enjoyable. The play was the hit of the era but has not stood the test of the time.

The characters of this sentimental comedy dominated the English stage for nearly a century. " Although Cibber drew extensively on the comedy of manners—his plays are sometimes said to be four acts of manners comedy followed by one act of sentimental comedy."(Loves...) The rest are supportive roles, but each doing justice to the identity of the character to which it was created. The rakish young lover, Sir Novelty's mistress Flareit, Sir Novelty Fashion etc.

Love's Last Shift confirms to the pattern of three such comedies by Cibber, " a husband and wife whose marriage is either in ruins or seriously in jeopardy, which mainly because of the man's failure to appreciate his wife's true qualities and his consequent pursuit of extra-marital sexual conquests. In each case, however, the husband is brought to a realization that true bliss is martial, and he, repents and reforms, virtue and ' bourgeois' morality emerge triumphant."(Loves...) In the present case, the wife has the taste of sweet revenge against her erring husband.

Conclusion:

Love's Last Shift is Cibber's first play. He " has often been accused of marking the beginning of the end of true comedy. Cultural historians would prefer to see his comedies as a symptom of the decisive social, political, and economic changes that took place during his lifetime, but there is no doubt that Cibber did much to transform comic drama in those years of transition

between 1690 and 1710 during which the essentially satirical comedy of manners gave way to the essentially exemplary comedy of sentiments.”(Loves...)

The fact that the play keeps the interest of the audience alive for a century means its characters have got to be truly exceptional and they must have weaved the magic on the stage. As for the criticism in the play, everyone has the right to criticize the prevailing social conditions. The suspenseful and comic sequences when Loveless makes love to his own wife, without being aware of it, are highly amusing. The role of Sir Novelty Fashion is challenging and has capacity to offer still challenge to the modern fashion-designer.

References Cited:

Article: Love's Last Shift (1696), has often been accused of marking the beginning of the end of true comedy. Cultural historians would prefer to see...

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