

The ARGUMENT.

MELEAGER, King of Etolia, being in love with Atalanta, Daughter of Jason, King of Arcadia, demanded her of her Father in Marriage ; but she not to lose the Pleasure she took in hunting wild Beasts, refused his Crown and Love ; and under the Name of Amarillis, went to the Woods among the Nymphs and Shepherds, the better to follow the Chace. Meleager, as a Shepherd, under the Name of Thirsis, follows her to the Woods, where she at last fell in love with him. Nicander, an old Shepherd, in whom Meleager had trusted the Secret, discovers their Births and Characters ; whereupon their Nuptials ensue. The Loves of Amintas and Irene are introduced, to give greater Scope to the Drama.

**Comment [C1]:** lit. love in with

**Text in Blue** is taken from the Score. It is absent from both Italian and English Libretti.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

*A large Champaign Country, with a Prospect of Cottages:  
A Wood on each Side, and a vast Mountain at a Distance.*

MELEAGER, *under the Name of Thirsis.*

[ARIOSO]

Dear happy Shades, and ever peaceful Grove,  
Amidst your Walks I seek the Fair I love.

Comment [C2]: lit. Grov,

### SCENE II.

*Amintas and Meleager.*

AMINTAS What ! Thirsis, ever sighing out Complaints ?  
If Love provokes them, see my equal Fate,  
And let my Griefs, in part, relieve your own.  
I hourly languish for a beauteous Maid,  
Who, with like Ardour, once return'd my Vows,  
But now not heeds those Vows, and mocks my Faith.

Comment [C3]: There are several more instances of obvious verbal transposition, for which I blame the printer.

MELEAGER Oh! that by seeing one who bears like Pains,  
I cou'd alleviate mine ! My Fair too flies  
My ardent Flame, and yet I'm forc'd to love.

### SCENA III.

Comment [C4]: sic

*To them Irene.*

IRENE (Amintas here ! then to my wonted Arts —)  
Thirsis, dear Shepherd, why thus here unarm'd?  
Come, gentle Youth, come let us haste away ;  
Haste to the Chace, and launch the fatal Dart.  
And you, inactive Swain, in am'rous Ease, *[To Amintas]*  
With the soft Nymphs divert the tedious Day.

*[Seeming to go out with Thirsis.]*

AMINTAS Stay, cruel Fair, and you kind Shepherd stay ;  
This is the lovely Cause of all my Woe.

IRENE Come, Thirsis, let's away.

MELEAGER No, no, the Duty to a Friend forbids.

IRENE Discourteous Youth, are thus my Favours paid ?

MELEAGER Be kinder, Nymph, he lives but in your Smiles.

IRENE (This ineffectual proves, yet will I try  
Again my needful Arts.)

MELEAGER [ARIA]

Fly not, fair Shepherdess, away,  
But with thy Presence bless the Swain :  
Leave me alone to hunt the Prey,  
Or tread the solitary Plain.  
Be not to so much Truth unkind,  
Let gentler Thoughts possess thy Mind,  
And sooth his amorous Pain.

Fly not, &c. *[Parte.]*

Comment [C5]: Sic

## SCENE IV.

*Irene and Amintas.*

IRENE Here shall I stay ! No first —  
AMINTAS Suspend such cruel Sounds. Ah! do not load  
My faithful Heart with a new Weight of Woe.  
IRENE Thy bounded Love **not merits** my Regard.  
AMINTAS Say, what unwitting Crime has wak'd your Rage ?  
Did I not urge your Father to bestow  
You, beauteous Maid, to my desiring Arms ?  
IRENE Was I alone the Object of your Wish ?  
Why then were Herds, and spreading Fields requir'd ?  
My Virtue had not Power enough to bind,  
And Beauty seem'd but an exterior Good !  
AMINTAS Oh hear, and do not wrongfully accuse —  
IRENE Was this your boasted Love ? Go sigh and mourn  
'Till you have learn'd a more deserving Passion.

**Comment [C6]:** See previous comment on transposition.

AMINTAS [ARIA]

Irene, if my latest Breath,  
Can only shew my Love,  
I go the settled Faith to prove,  
And grasp a willing Death.  
Yet O remember, when I'm gone,  
Your Rigour was the fatal Cause alone.

Irene, if, &c. [Parte.]

**Comment [C7]:** sic

## SCENE V.

*Nicander and Irene.*

NICANDER Why with a Look thus fraught with musing Cares,  
When your Amintas kindly calls, and burns  
To fix you ever his by sacred Ties ?  
IRENE I'm Witness, dearest Father, of his Suit,  
But still wou'd try —  
NICANDER Say what.  
IRENE Alas I dare not.  
NICANDER Why?  
IRENE I must obey whatever you enjoin.  
NICANDER Shall you unwillingly receive his Vows ?  
IRENE I say not so — Forgive a Virgin's Shame.  
First I wou'd try the Temper of his Heart,  
And prove his Faith.  
NICANDER [ARIA] Learn, silly Maid, to be more kind  
To one who asks your Love ;  
One whom you always faithful find,  
Tho' you so cruel prove :  
And while he strives your Heart to gain,  
Take Pleasure in his Pain.  
Learn, &c. [Exit.]

## SCENE VI.

IRENE *alone.*

Ah, dear Amintas ! while I torture you,  
The equal Pain recoils upon my self :  
My Fears will claim this Trial of your Truth :  
But when the Date of all your Griefs is o'er,  
The former Sufferings will increase the Bliss.

[ARIA] In tender Coatings, as the Dove  
Sits near his Mate, and tells his Love;  
So near me does my gentle Swain,  
His own, in Sighs as soft, explain.  
These Complaints shall have an End, and you  
To Sighs and Tears shall bid adieu ;  
But you must for a while endure  
The Pain, before the promis'd Cure.  
In tender, &c. [Exit.

## SCENE VII.

*Atalanta, under the Name of Amarillis,  
follow'd by Meleager, and other Shepherds.*

ATALANTA [CAVATINA]

Ye Shepherds, near yon Brake  
The grisly Monster lies.

Thirsis, and every generous Swain,  
That beats the Woods in Search of Fame,  
And here is come to urge the noble Fight,  
And prove the Strength of his unerring Arm,  
(Tho' I the Danger with my Swain wou'd share)  
Guard you this Pass, I'll to another Stand,  
And wait the coming of the foaming Beast.

MELEAGER Let me, O lovely Shepherdess, with you !  
To watch the Foe, and be for ever near,  
To quell his Rage, and guard your Life from Harm.

ATALANTA No, Shepherd, no; keep you yon rising Ground.  
(What secret Anguish from this Pride I feel.)

## SCENE VIII.

*To them Irene, following Amintas.*

IRENE *from within* You seek for Death in vain —

AMINTAS In your Despight I'll grasp the pleasing Friend.  
Leave me that I —

IRENE From your own Hands, is an ignoble Deed :  
Despair is Cowardice; yet stay and hear,  
At length you'll find —

*[A Wild Boar is seen at a Distance ; Amintas rushes furiously towards him,  
but is held by the Shepherds. The Chace begins to Musick.*

ATALANTA Stay, my Companions, let me alone to go —  
*Atalanta going towards the Boar.*

MELEAGER My Breast shall be thy Shield.

*[Meleager throws a Spear at the Boar, but misses him.*

**Comment [C8]:** This speech is so mangled as to be incomprehensible (and there's more to come). Atalanta is the second Handel opera libretto to have a purely English introduction - was the maker of the translation a non-Italian speaker ?

ATALANTA My Dart shall bring the Monster to the Ground.

*Atalanta wounds him, when the Shepherds come in and kill him.*

MELEAGER Oh inauspicious Fate! the Task was mine.  
Yet let your Heart confess the tender Sex,  
Tho' to your mighty Arm our Prowess yields.

ATALANTA [ARIA] Tho' I the Palm have gain'd in Fight,  
The Vict'ry gives me no Delight :  
Me still a Foe more restless does pursue,  
And doubtful 'tis if I shall him subdue.  
Tho' I, &c.

*[Exit, follow'd by all but Meleager.]*

## SCENE IX.

MELEAGER *alone.*

You dearest Atalanta, are to me  
Fierce and untameable as Forest Beasts,  
And restless seek to give fresh bleeding Wounds.  
Now fear distracts, again a Gleam of Hope  
Breaks in, and promises a due Reward  
For so much Constancy and Love.

[ARIA] My faithful Passion sure will draw  
The Fair to pity, and to sooth  
My Griefs, at least with Hopes of Peace.  
Such Sufferings past will shew my Love  
Worthy a more kind Regard,  
And make me bless'd at last.  
My faithful, &c.

**Comment [C9]:** lit be see previous notes

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.

*Atalanta attended by Nymphs and Shepherds.*

#### CHORUS.

Let the Woods and the Hills,  
Let the Plains and the Rills,  
Let the Nymphs and the Swains,  
With a general Voice  
In our Triumphs rejoice.      Let, &c.

### SCENE II.

*Atalanta in a musing Posture, Meleager at a Distance.*

ATALANTA    Once I am freed from the intruding Crowd,  
Yet Peaceful Solitude I cannot boast ;  
My amorous Thoughts still haunt and break my Rest.

MELEAGER    (Does Atalanta love? ah ! grievous Sounds !)

ATALANTA    My Thirsis, O my all, my only Wish.  
My Soul is full of thee, for thee these Sighs  
In such fast Tides break from my panting Breast.

MELEAGER    (Am I awake ! sure 'tis **Allusion** all !)

Comment [C10]: Sic

ATALANTA    But oh my cruel Fate! why was he born  
A Shepherd Swain, or I of royal Race ;  
Honour commands that I conceal my Love,  
And to the Court in Sorrow I shall go  
And ne'er must say to the dear lovely Youth  
How much my Heart inclines to call him mine.

[ARIA]        From me is dear Liberty flown,  
I'm lost like a Bird in a Snare ;  
In vain my sad Fate I bemoan,  
There will ne'er be an End to my Care.  
From me, &c.

*[Going out, meets Meleager.]*

### SCENE III.

*Meleager and Atalanta.*

MELEAGER    Dear Amarillis, O my only Joy !

ATALANTA    (Ah me, what Thirsis here !)  
Speak Shepherd, Thirsis, what do you request?

MELEAGER    I ask your tender Pity of my Pains.

ATALANTA    (Sure he has heard the Fondness of my Soul !)  
No, Shepherd, I must hence.

MELEAGER    Stay, Fair, beneath this grateful spreading Shade,  
And I will tell —

ATALANTA    Quick Shepherd, what ?

MELEAGER    Soon you shall know.

ATALANTA    Speak.

MELEAGER    Know, Amarillis, that I owe my Birth  
To a great Shepherd of illustrious Race —

**ATALANTA** But yet you are a Shepherd.  
**MELEAGER** By chance I saw and lov'd a noble Maid —  
**ATALANTA** Born in a lowly Cot.  
**MELEAGER** I urg'd my Suit, and press'd to wed the Fair ;  
 But she disdainful, scorn'd my proffer'd Vows,  
 And fled Love's Joys, to hunt in desert Wilds —  
**ATALANTA** (Such once was I !)  
**MELEAGER** But faithful and unwearied I pursu'd,  
 Under another Name, the flying Nymph,  
 When she at length perceiv'd Love's mighty Power,  
 Which Female Pride forbad her to reveal,  
 As then she thought me but a rural Hind —  
**ATALANTA** Enough, enough.  
**MELEAGER** O Amarillis, whither wou'd you turn ?  
 Stay, stay and hear —  
**ATALANTA** At leisure I will listen to your Tale.  
 [DUETTO]  
**MELEAGER** O Amarillis !  
**ATALANTA** What wou'd you, Swain?  
**MELEAGER** Teach me to know the various Turns  
 Of your inconstant Mind.  
**ATALANTA** Ask not to know the secret Cause  
 Of all my Rigour and Disdain.  
**MELEAGER** What Reason bids you suppress,  
 That which suppress'd gives Pain.  
**ATALANTA** The stifled Grief that swells my Heart,  
 None but myself shall know.

O Amarillis, &c. [Exit *Atalanta*.]

**Comment [C11]:**  
Supplied from the Italian.

#### SCENE IV.

*Meleager, and then Irene.*

**MELEAGER** Yes, yes, I know it !  
 But here Irene comes, and she shall bear  
 This Present to my Love.  
**IRENE** (Still will I feign.)  
 O my dear Thirsis, give my Griefs some Ease.  
**MELEAGER** That Ease the fond Amintas asks of you.  
**IRENE** In vain he asks, but you, my only Joy —  
**MELEAGER** First hear me Fair, and grant me my Request.  
**IRENE** Promise your Love, and all my Power is yours.  
**MELEAGER** My earnest Suit is, that you haste away,  
 And lay this at my Amarillis' Feet.  
**IRENE** You love her then?  
**MELEAGER** I do avow my Flame. But —  
**IRENE** I know my Task.  
 You would with this that I should plead.  
**MELEAGER** Rather —

IRENE (Oh pleasing Task!)  
Be you assured of all my Power to serve you ;  
Yet O remember 'tis Irene's Love  
Bids her obey what ever you command.

MELEAGER [ARIA] Yes, if you earnest plead my Cause,  
And melt the Fair to Love,  
My Gratitude will ne'er have End :  
And when thus happy I shall prove,  
Then shall you bear a better Name than Friend.  
Yes, &c. [Exit.

## SCENE V.

*Irene and Amintas apart.*

Irene See, my dear Shepherd hither bends his Way ;  
Yet in my rigid Arts I'll persevere —  
O precious Gift !

*[Looking, and kissing the Scarf Meleager gave her.*

More precious, coming from so dear a Youth.

AMINTAS (Ah me ! what do I hear !)

IRENE (Distracting Jealousy now rends his Soul.)

AMINTAS Ah false Irene !  
Then is my love —

IRENE Whence this Intrusion on my lonely Walks !  
Audacious Shepherd, can you boast of Love,  
That scorn'd my Person? now a gentler Swain  
Has brib'd me with this Token of his Truth.

[ARIA] Since you slighted once my Love,  
Elsewhere go speak your Pains :  
What Maid will pardon when once scorn'd !  
We joy in Love but when return'd.  
Since, &c. [Exit.

## SCENE VI.

*Amintas, and then Atalanta.*

AMINTAS Will ne'er my Sorrows end this hated Life !

ATALANTA Courteous Amintas, help a wretched Maid.

AMINTAS What Help can one, forlorn, like me, afford ?

ATALANTA For Thirsis I in secret hourly sigh :  
To him I fain wou'd send this well-wrought Dart :  
Bear it, Amintas, but conceal my Name —

AMINTAS I'll haste to obey your Will.

ATALANTA Say 'tis a Token of a Virgin's Love.

AMINTAS This poor Return is all I claim from you.

[ARIA] Go to Irene and upbraid —  
Call her cruel, false, ingrate —  
Ah! no — Go tell her that my Heart  
Can own no other Sway.  
Say to the barbarous Maid —  
No no, it is enough for me  
Once to have seen the fair one smile  
Propitious on my Love.  
Go to, &c. [Exit.

## SCENE VII.

*Atalanta, and then Meleager.*

ATALANTA    Hither my lovely Shepherd turns ;  
                  His Look and Motion deals unnerring Love.

MELEAGER    Fair Amarillis will you deign at last  
                  To hear the unfinish'd Tale ?  
                  Say, matchless Maid, on what you are employ'd ?

ATALANTA    (To hide the Passion that yourself has rais'd.)  
                  Back to the Woods, and leave me here alone.

MELEAGER    Thy Presence roots me to the Earth —

ATALANTA    Break off such Talk —

MELEAGER    Know that I —

ATALANTA    No more, no more, but instant from this Place,  
                  Least you should kindle my long-stifled Rage.

MELEAGER    (O strange Effect of a capricious Flame !)

          [ARIA]    I leave you a while,  
                  But hope, in return,  
                  In your Words, and your Eyes,  
                  To meet with less Scorn.  
                  I leave, &c.            *[Exit.*

## SCENE VIII.

*ATALANTA sola.*

How is the tender Passion of my Soul  
Rack'd and divided by malicious Fate !  
Love leads me on to Pity and to Joys,  
But native Pride commands the shew of Hate.

[ARIA]

As a River from its Sourse  
To the Sea directs its Course ;  
So to him by whom it rose,  
As direct my Passion flows.  
But compell'd aside to turn,  
O'er its way-ward Course I mourn.  
                  As, &c.

THE END OF THE SECOND ACT.

### ACT III.

#### SCENE I.

*Atalanta and Irene.*

ATALANTA Does this dear Present come from Thirsis' Hands?  
And did he with it recommend his Love ?

IRENE Just so he said. The Shepherd's gentle Nature  
Surely deserves the kindest, best Rewards.

ATALANTA I know it well. But yet —

IRENE What wou'd you mean ?  
What Answer shall I give ?

ATALANTA Tell him I will — ah no — What shall I say?  
Amintas bears the Secret of my Heart,  
And this new Contest will remove all Doubt.

[ARIA] Tho' I know not whence it rises,  
Sudden Comfort sooths my Heart :  
Pleasing Hope my Soul surprises,  
And kills more than half its Smart.  
Tho' I, &c. *[Exit.]*

#### SCENE II.

*Irene, and afterwards Amintas with the Dart that Atalanta gave to be presented to Meleager.*

IRENE Am I awake, and did I hear these Words !  
What did the gentle Amarillis say,  
My Shepherd bore the Secret of her Heart ?  
Am I betray'd ! O Pangs of Jealousy !

AMINTAS (See the Ingrate: now must I strive to feign.)  
At length, Irene, weary'd with your Scorn,  
And daily harrass'd out with some new Grief,  
I've sought, and found a more indulgent Fair.

[ARIA] Another, and a fairer Maid,  
Does now my Heart possess,  
When for a kind Return I pray'd,  
She did not give me less.  
She hears when Love and Faith I plight,  
And answers with the like Delight.  
Another, &c.

*[Going cut, Irene holds him.]*

#### SCENE III.

*Amintas, Irene, and Meleager apart.*

IRENE Oh Torture ! Say, my dear Amintas, say,  
The Beauty that has wrought this Change.

*[Amintas whispers [to] Irene.]*

MELEAGER (Sure Love's the Subject of their secret Talk.)

IRENE Can it be true ?  
Did Amarillis boldly speak her Flame ?

AMINTAS And vow'd eternal Truth.

MELEAGER (My Amarillis ! ah what do I hear !)

**AMINTAS** This costly Arrow was a Gift from her,  
 A Pledge of her inviolable Love.  
 Adieu, I must with Haste to her return,  
 And now am yours no more. *[Exit.]*

**MELEAGER** Irene ! oh Irene !

**IRENE** Ah me !

**MELEAGER** Oh barbarous Fate !

**IRENE** Hear, Thirsis, hear,  
 I, luckless Maid, once feign'd a Love for you,  
 To grieve Amintas, and to try his Faith ;  
 But ah ! at length, despairing to recall  
 My wandring Heart with Amarillis —

**MELEAGER** Enough; I have already heard too much,  
 And that I am supplanted in her Love.

**IRENE** [ARIA] Pining Anguish, sad Despair,  
 Hopeless Jealousy and Care,  
 Fix their Empire in my Breast :  
 Smiling Peace flies fast away,  
 And leaves my Soul with gnawing Grief opprest.  
 Pining, &c. *[Exit.]*

#### SCENE IV.

**MELEAGER** *alone.*

How my false Thoughts, that gleam'd deceitful Hope,  
 And promis'd future Blessings from my Love !  
 Oh Atalanta, dear, yet faithless Fair !  
 Oh unkind Powers ! Ye fatal Sisters strike,  
 Sever my Thread, and shut me out from Day !

*[Throws himself on the Ground to Sleep.]*

#### SCENE V.

*Atalanta, to Meleager asleep.*

**ATALANTA** The more I view thee, thou dear lovely Gift  
*[Looking on the Scarf.]*  
 Of my kind Thirsis, still the more I seem  
 To see the same my Royal Father gave  
 To Meleager — Yet it cannot be.  
 Ah me, my Swain! sweet Sleep has clos'd his Eyes.

**MELEAGER** *in a Dream.* No, Faithless, — I have been too long deceiv'd.

**ATALANTA** Hence frightful Fantoms, with unpleasing Dreams,  
 Vex not his slumb'ring Mind.

**MELEAGER** *still dreaming.* Say, cruel Shepherdess, what is my Crime ?

**ATALANTA** [Arioso] Pleasing Dreams, around him wait  
 And spread your downy Wings.

**MELEAGER** I go to Death, — I fly — *[Waking suddenly.]*

**ATALANTA** My Shepherd —

**MELEAGER** What Amarillis, here !  
 I thought to find you with your lov'd Amintas.

ATALANTA    What does my Thirsis mean ?  
                   I with Amintas !  
                   No, no, my Life, 'tis you alone I seek.

MELEAGER    What charming Sounds fall on my ravish'd Ear !  
                   But still —

ATALANTA    My dearest Thirsis, 'twas a Virgin's Shame  
                   That has conceal'd my Love to you so long :  
                   I wish'd to speak, but decent Pride forbad.

MELEAGER    Had it been longer hid, perhaps Despair  
                   Might have pursu'd me to the Verge of Life.

*[While they embrace, enter Nicander, Irene and Amintas.]*

## SCENE VI.

*Atalanta, Meleager, Nicander, with Irene and Amintas Hand in Hand.*

NICANDER    Great Meleager, and you, mighty Princess,  
                   'Tis fitting now the Secret be reveal'd  
                   Of your high State, that blazes thro' the Veil.  
                   Your Birth and Souls alike, your mutual Flame  
                   Call to be ty'd in everlasting Bands.  
                   Let Hymen's Self then tie the sacred Knot.

ATALANTA    Oh Force of Destiny !

[& MELEAGER] A. 2. Oh happy Fate !  
                   I bind thee, Dearest, to my longing Heart.

IRENE        Now farewell Art, Amintas, I am thine.

[& AMINTAS] A. 2.    And may the Fates ne'er, ne'er divide our Loves.

MELEAGER [ARIA]    A Ship that long the Storm has born,  
                   And been by boist'rous Billows torn,  
                   Reaches, with some kind Star, to friend  
                   The Port, where all its Perils end.  
                   So I, my sweet Contentment gain'd,  
                   Forget the Troubles I sustain'd ;  
                   And Joy so fast o'erwhelms my Breast,  
                   'Tis not by Words to be express'd.  
                   A Ship, &c.

## SCENE THE LAST.

MERCURY *descends on a Cloud, attended by the Loves and Graces.*

[SINFONIA AND ACCOMPAGNATO]

From the bright Seats above,  
 I come, the Messenger of Jove,  
 To publish to this under World  
 The Fates indissoluble Will.  
 The mighty Thund'rer heard the ardent Pray'rs  
 Of the glad People of this Realm,  
 That rose from every Side, t' implore the God ;  
 To grant, and bless this glorious Hymeneal.  
 Propitious he has sent the God of Love,  
 With his soft Darts to wound their Princely Breasts,  
 And join their Hearts in one.  
 The World shall now  
 Receive a Pattern of Heroick Deeds ;  
 Their Fame thro' all the Earth shall fly,

And where they rule, sweet Peace shall spread its Wings.  
Envy shall die beneath their Laurel's Shade.  
And that the General Good may ne'er decay,  
Their Offspring shall be great like them,  
And with like Virtues, bless the World.

[ARIA] True Content we only find  
In a noble Lover's Mind,  
In that ever happy Breast,  
Which with Constancy is blest.  
To Virtue a Reward is given,  
Amid the starry Seats in Heav'n.  
True, &c.

CHORUS.

From the Hero never springs  
A Race of base unworthy Kings.  
From Sires like this illustrious Pair's divine,  
Great Souls are form'd to bless the Royal Line.  
From, etc.

Comment [C12]: sic (and in the Italian) but no dc

MERCURY. With Songs of Joy then fill the Air.

CHORUS. And sing, Long live the happy Pair.

*The Scene opens and discovers Illuminations and Bonfires,  
accompanied by loud Instrumental Musick.*

CHORUS.

Lasting be the Nuptial Flame,  
Ever be their Love the same :  
Joy and Gladness wing their Hours,  
Bless'd by the Propitious Powers.  
May sweet Peace the Blessings crown  
Of two Hearts that now are one.  
Lasting, &c.

Comment [C13]: sic, but no dc

GAVOTTA

*This Gavotta is repeated by turns with the Chorus,  
and then the final Chorus follows.*

CHORUS.

With Songs of Joy then fill the Air,  
And sing, Long live the happy Pair.

THE END.