

Dédicace de *The Widow Ranter*

Auteur : Jenkins, George

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Les folios

En passant la souris sur une vignette, le titre de l'image apparaît.

2 Fichier(s)

Informations éditoriales

Titre complet de la pièce *The Widow Ranter, or, The History of Bacon in Virginia, a Tragi-Comedy, acted by their Majesty's Servants*

Auteur de la pièce Behn, Aphra

Date 1690

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Langue Anglais

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To the much Honoured
Madam Welldon.

Madam,

K Nowing Mrs. Behn in her Life-time design'd to Dedicate some of her Works to you, you ha'e a Naturall Title, and claim to this and I could not without being unjust to her Memory, but fix your name to it, who ha'e not only a Wit above that of most of your Sex; but a goodness and Affability Extremely Charming, and Engaging beyond Measure, and perhaps there are few to be found like you, that are so Eminent for Hospitality, and a Ready and Generous Assistance to the distressed and Indigent, which are Qualities that carry much more of Divinity with them, then a Puritanicall outward Zeal for Virtue and Religion.

Our Author, Madam, who was so true a Judge of Wit, was (no doubt of it) satisfied in the Patroness she had pitcht upon: If ever she had occasion for a Wit and Sense like yours 'tis now, to Defend this (one of the last of her Works) from the Malice of her Enemies, and the ill Nature of the Criticks, who have had Ingratitude enough not to Consider the Obligations they had to her when Living; but to do those Gentlemen Justice, 'tis not (altogether) to be Imputed to their Criticism, that the Play had not that Success which it deserv'd, and was expected by her Friends; The main fault ought to lye on those who had the management of it. Had our Author been alive she would have Committed it to the Flames rather than have suffer'd it to have been Acted with such Omissions as was made, and on which the Foundation of the Play Depended: For Example, they thought fit to leave out a Whole Scene of the Virginian Court of Judicature, which was a lively resemblance of that Country-Justice; and on which depended a great part of the Plot, and wherein were many unusuall and very Naturall Jestz which would at least have made some sort of People Laugh: In another Part of the Play is Omitted the appearance of the Ghost of the Indian King, Kill'd by Bacon, and tho' the like may have been Represented in other Plays, yet I never heard or found but that the sight was very agreeable to an Audience, and very Awfull: best des the Apparition of the Ghost was necessary, for it was that which struck a Terror

in the Queen, and fright'ned her from heark'ning to the Love of Bacon, believing it a horrid thing to receive the Caresses and Embraces of her Husbands Murderer: And Lastly, many of the Parts being false Cast, and given to those whose Talents and Genius's suited not our Authors Intention: These, Madam, are some of the Reasons that this Play was unsuccessful, and the best Play that ever was writ must prove so: if it have the Fate to be Murder'd like this.

However, Madam, I can't but believe you will find an hours diversion in the reading, and will meet with not only Wit, but true Comedy, (tho' low,) by reason many of the Characters are such only as our Newgate afforded, being Criminals Transported.

This Play, Madam, being left in my hands by the Author to Introduction to the Publick, I thought my self oblig'd to say thus much in its defence, and that it was also a Duty upon me to choose a Patroness proper for it, and the Author having pitcht upon your name to do Honour to some of her Works, I thought your Protection, could be so usefull to none, as to this, whose owning it may Silence the Malice of its Enemies; Your Wit and Judgment being to be Submitted to in all Cases; Besides your Natural Tenderneß and Compassion for the Unfortunate, gives you in a manner another Title to it: The preference which is due to you upon so many Accounts is therefore the Reason of this present Address, for at the worst, if this Play should be so Unfortunate as not to be thought worthy of your Acceptance; Yet it is certain, that its worth any Mans while to have the Honour of subscribing himself,

Madam,

Your Most Obedient Humble

Servant,

G. J.