

Lope de Vega's "Mad for Love" translated by John Farndon sample excerpt 1 1

Finea What is love?

Laurencio Love? Love's a longing.

Finea What for?

Laurencio For a beautiful thing...

Finea What thing? A diamond? Or a ruby?
Or a kitten? I think they're lovely.

Laurencio No, for a beautiful woman like you –
Yes, a beautiful woman who,
As God ordains, is destined
To yield herself to the right end.
So, it is this thing which you possess
That engenders longing in me. Yes?

Finea And me? What do I have to do?

Laurencio Long for me. has no-one told you
Love is repaid by love?

Finea Oh dear
I don't know how to, I fear
I've really never 'longed' before.
It's not in my spelling book, I'm sure.
And mother never showed me how.
Perhaps I'll ask my father now.

Laurencio Wait! Let me explain.

Finea Explain what?

Laurencio From my two eyes come living rays
Darting blood red and ablaze
Like visual spirits, fiery and hot
To enter into your two eyes.

Finea I don't think you should play with fire.

Laurencio It is our spirits that must be afire.
They must burn as one and atomize
And mix in one sweet perfect flame,
Until combined in utter peace

Lope de Vega's "Mad for Love" translated by John Farndon sample excerpt 1 2

And Ecstasy that may not cease.
Two souls are then one and the same -
Joined in a matchless union
Which culminates in marriage.
This blessed state is love's true image -
A spiritual communion
That must surely bear my pure soul
At last into your very heart.

Finea All this happens when you get married?

Pedro I'm gripped by forces beyond control.
Like him, I'm dying now for love -
Except, of course, I'm dying for you.

Clara What do you say love? Tell me do.

Pedro Love? Madness. Rage!

Clara Heavens above!
So you have to be mad for love?

Pedro It is such a sweet madness, see,
That men of sense will gladly
Swap their sanity for love.

Clara It sounds like a rather poor exchange.

Pedro When a love affair commences
The will falls ill and then the senses
Succumb to sweet sickness.

Clara How strange.
Well don't you give me this disease;
All I've ever had is chill-blains.

Finea Oh, I see now. Yes, that explains it.
So you 'look after' me.

Laurencio If you please.

Finea And then you take me to your place
And look after me there as well.

Laurencio Yes.

