

COMMON CORE

RL 4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

# The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Poem by Christopher Marlowe

# The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

Poem by Sir Walter Raleigh

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML12-312A

## Meet the Authors

### Christopher Marlowe

1564–1593



Christopher Marlowe was the first great English playwright. In his brief career, he transformed theater by showing the potential power and beauty of blank verse dialogue.

**Rise to Fame** The son of a poor shoemaker, Marlowe attended Cambridge University on a scholarship. By age 23, he was the best-known playwright in England. His most famous play, *Dr. Faustus*, is about a scholar who sells his soul to the devil in return for knowledge, power, and pleasure. Marlowe also distinguished himself as a poet; his poem “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” was so popular that it inspired responses

in verse, including Raleigh’s “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd.” The two poems present sharply contrasting views on love.

**Freethinker . . . and Criminal?** Marlowe was a freethinker who questioned established authority and religious teaching, which gained him enemies in Elizabethan England. He was accused of being an atheist, a spy, a counterfeiter, a traitor, and a murderer. Although he spent time in prison, he was never convicted of any crime. He died from a stab wound in a tavern brawl at age 29. Some biographers speculate that he was murdered for political reasons.

### Sir Walter Raleigh

1552?–1618



Like his friend Christopher Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh met a violent end. He was beheaded by an axe, which he called “sharp medicine.” A soldier, explorer, and writer who enjoyed wealth and power under Queen Elizabeth I, Raleigh was imprisoned and executed by her successor, King James I.

**The Queen’s Favorite** According to legend, Raleigh attracted Elizabeth’s attention by taking off an expensive cloak and spreading it over the ground so she would not have to walk through mud. Raleigh became the queen’s favorite, gaining a mansion and a monopoly on licensing wine. She also made him a knight and captain of her guard.

**Losing It All** When the queen found out that Raleigh had secretly married without her permission, she imprisoned him and his wife in the Tower of London. Raleigh bought his way out of prison and subsequently led several expeditions to the New World. But the queen’s death in 1603 sealed his fate. King James distrusted Raleigh, who was imprisoned for 13 years on a charge of treason. The king released him to lead a gold-finding expedition to South America. But after that expedition ended in failure, Raleigh was executed.

Author Online



Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com). KEYWORD: HML12-312B

## ● POETIC FORM: PASTORAL

A **pastoral** is a poem that presents shepherds in idealized rural settings. Renaissance poets like Marlowe and Raleigh used the pastoral form to express their feelings and thoughts about love and other subjects. Shepherds in pastorals tend to use courtly speech. The poems usually have metrical patterns and rhyme schemes that help give them a musical or songlike quality. The imagery derives from commonplace country settings, as the following lines suggest:

*And we will sit upon the rocks,  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks.*

As you read these poems, look for details of pastoral life and for the use of nature imagery to convey emotions and ideas.

## ● READING SKILL: COMPARE SPEAKERS

The **speaker** in a poem is the voice that addresses the reader, much like the narrator in a work of fiction. Poets use the speakers they create to express ideas or tell a story from a specific point of view. The speaker and the poet are not necessarily identical, even when the words *I* and *me* are used.

The speakers in the following poems—the shepherd and the nymph—express very different attitudes about the topic of love. To identify the differences, consider

- whom the speaker is addressing
- the speaker's choice of words
- evidence of the speaker's attitude toward the poem's subject

As you read both poems, use a chart like the one shown to make notes on the speakers' differing attitudes toward love. Look for specific words and phrases that indicate their feelings.

<i>Shepherd's Line</i>	<i>Nymph's Reply</i>
<i>"I will make thee beds of roses"</i>	<i>"flowers do fade"</i>



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

## *Is* PASSION *overrated?*

Throughout the ages, writers have composed poems and songs describing the ardor of new love. But have people placed too much emphasis on passion in romantic love? Are other aspects of love—such as friendship, respect, and trust—more important?

**QUICKWRITE** Make a list of qualities that you think are important in a romantic relationship. Rank the items, and then write a paragraph explaining the reasons for your ranking.



# The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Christopher Marlowe

Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

2 **prove**: experience.

5 And we will sit upon the rocks,  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,  
By shallow rivers to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

8 **madrigals**: songs of a type popular during the Renaissance.

And I will make thee beds of roses  
10 And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle  
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

11 **kirtle**: skirt or dress.

A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull; **A**  
15 Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold;

**A PASTORAL**  
What characteristics of **pastoral** poems do you find in lines 9–14?

A belt of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps and amber studs:  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
20 Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May morning:  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me and be my love.

21 **swains**: companions.







# The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

Sir Walter Raleigh

If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

5 Time drives the flocks from field to fold  
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,  
And Philomel becometh dumb;  
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields  
10 To wayward winter reckoning yields;  
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,  
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,  
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies  
15 Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten—  
In folly ripe, in reason rotten. **B**

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,  
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,  
All these in me no means can move  
20 To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,  
Had joys no date nor age no need,  
Then these delights my mind might move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

**5 fold:** a pen for animals, especially sheep.

**7 Philomel:** the nightingale; **dumb:** silent.

**9 wanton:** here, producing abundant crops; luxuriant.

## **B** COMPARE SPEAKERS

Reread lines 13–16. How does the nymph directly refute the shepherd's promises?

**22 date:** ending.

## Comprehension

1. **Recall** What gifts does the shepherd offer his beloved in Marlowe’s poem?
2. **Recall** What does the shepherd ask from his love in return?
3. **Clarify** In Raleigh’s poem, under what conditions might the nymph agree to live with the shepherd?



**RL 4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

## Text Analysis

4. **Identify Pastoral Elements** What details does Marlowe use to create an idealized portrait of the rural life of shepherds?
5. **Make Inferences** Reread lines 1–4 of “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd.” What does this statement suggest about the nymph’s attitude toward the shepherd?
6. **Draw Conclusions** How would you describe the nymph’s view of each of the following subjects? Cite evidence from Raleigh’s poem.
  - lovers’ words
  - the value of love tokens
  - planning for the future
7. **Analyze Imagery** In “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd,” note Raleigh’s use of imagery that reflects seasonal change. What idea is conveyed through this imagery?
8. **Compare Speakers** There are many lines in “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd” that parallel lines in “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love.” Refer to the chart you made as you read these poems. What do the statements reveal about each poet’s perspective on passion?
9. **Make Judgments** Raleigh was not the only Elizabethan poet who was inspired by “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love.” What qualities do you think made Marlowe’s poem so popular and intriguing? Support your opinion with evidence from the poem.

## Text Criticism

10. **Critical Interpretations** One critic has suggested that Raleigh’s “witty and sardonic” response to Marlowe’s poem is a comment on “the human propensity for self-delusion.” Do you agree or disagree? Consider the subject of both poems—idealized love—and what the speakers have to say about it.

### *Is **PASSION** overrated?*

From your own perspective, how much emphasis should be placed on strong emotions or feelings? What role should logic play in love? What hints of logic or rational thought can you find in these poems?