



Anne Seymour Damer

(1749–1828)
Hannah Chalker

Three Witches from Macbeth by Daniel Gardner (1775)
Elizabeth Lamb, Georgiana Cavendish, Anne Damer

Early Life

Anne Seymour Damer was the only child of Henry Seymour Conway, a Field Marshal in the British army and Whig MP, and his wife Caroline, daughter of the fourth Duke of Argyll. Damer lived with her family in Kent at Park Place.

Damer's father's secretary, David Hume, encouraged Damer to pursue a skill in the art of sculpture. She was exceptional at sculpting and was an honorary exhibitor at the Royal Academy. At this point in history it was rare for women to be sculptors. It is said that she was exceptionally skilled at sculpting animals, according to Horace Walpole. Damer's sculptures were of people who were fairly aristocratic, like herself.



Portrait of Anne Damer

Sculptures



Elizabeth Lamb



Snuffbox given to Damer from Napoleon



Princess Caroline of
Wales

Marriage

Anne Seymour Conway married the Honorable John Damer on June 14, 1767. John Damer was considered a felon and a rake, but Anne's father accepted his proposal due to Damer's inheritance of his father's income of 30,000 pounds a year. As it turns out Damer's father did not make that large of an income, but rather 5,000 pounds a year.

During their marriage, John Damer owed more than 70,000 pounds to various creditors, placing a strain on his and Anne's marriage. Anne became appearing less and less with her husband, and while they never officially divorced, the couple was separated until Damer committed suicide due to his accumulating debts.

After her husband's death, Anne no longer cared for male companionship, instead preferring the comfort of women.

Horace Walpole

Horace Walpole was Anne's cousin, but also her godfather, but his interest in her was not always fatherlike. At times he would refer to her as a wife and other times as a child.

Walpole was later infatuated with the Berry sisters. His obsession with the sisters hurt Anne, as she once held his attention. Part of her anxiety was due to her own interest in Mary.

After his death, Walpole left his home, Strawberry Hill, to Anne.



Strawberry Hill



Horace
Walpole

Mary Berry

Mary Berry became a close friend of Damer's through Horace Walpole. Both Mary and her sister Agnes had an epistolary "marriage" with Walpole. Of course, Walpole thought the two sisters were as infatuated with him as he was with them, but Mary saw their relationship as merely fatherlike.

Mary Berry's one true romance was with a man named Charles O'Hara, which may have been ruined by Damer.



Bust of Mary Berry by Anne Damer

Rumors

Because of her preference for female company, Anne Seymour Damer was suspected of being a lesbian. Piozzi wrote,

“Mrs. Damer, a lady much suspected for liking her own Sex in a criminal Way, had Miss Farren the fine comic Actress often about her last year; and Mrs. Siddon’s husband made the following Verses on them.

Her little Stock of private Fame

Will fall a Wreck to public Clamour,

If Farren leagues with one whose Name

Comes near - Aye very near - to *damn her*” (Gross 128).

References

- Gross, Jonathan David. *The Life of Anne Damer : Portrait of a Regency Artist*. Lanham : Lexington, 2014. Web.
- “Anne Seymour Damer.” *Rebeccariverslitblog*, 21 Oct. 2013,
<https://rebeccariverslitblog.wordpress.com/characters/anne-seymour-damer/>.
- Knowles, Rachel. “Anne Seymour Damer, Sculptor (1749-1828).” *Regency History*, 16 Jan. 2015,
<https://www.regencyhistory.net/2015/01/anne-seymour-damer-sculptor-1749-1828.html>.
- “The Britain That Women Made, Anne Seymour Damer and Sculpture.” *BBC Two*, BBC,
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0206s38>.