

Audition Piece for Ezra Chater

The door is opened somewhat violently. Chater enters.

Septimus: Mr Chater! Perhaps my message miscarried. I will be at liberty at a quarter to twelve, if that is convenient.

Chater: It is not convenient, sir. My business will not wait.

Septimus: Then I suppose you have Lord Croom's opinion that your business is more important than his daughter's lesson.

Chater: I do not, but, if you like, I will ask his lordship to settle the point.

Septimus: *(after a pause)* My lady, take Fermat into the music room. There will be an extra spoonful of jam if you find his proof.

Thomasina: There is no proof, Septimus. The thing that is perfectly obvious is that the note in the margin was a joke to make you all mad.

Thomasina leaves

Septimus: Now, sir, what is your business that cannot wait?

Chater: I think you know it, sir. You have insulted my wife.

Septimus: Insulted her? That would deny my nature, my conduct, and the admiration in which I hold Mrs Chater.

Chater: I have heard of your admiration, sir! You insulted my wife in the gazebo yesterday evening!

Septimus: You are mistaken. I made love to your wife in the gazebo. She asked me to meet her there, I have her note somewhere, I dare say I could find it for you, and if someone is putting it about that I did not turn up, by God, sir, it is a slander.

Chater: You damned lecher! You would drag down a lady's reputation to make a refuge for your cowardice. It will not do! I am calling you out!

Septimus: Chater! Chater, Chater, Chater! My dear friend!

Chater: You dare to call me that. I demand satisfaction!

Septimus: Mrs Chater demanded satisfaction and now you are demanding satisfaction. I cannot spend my time day and night satisfying the demands of the Chater family. As for your wife's reputation, it stands where it ever stood.

Chater: You blackguard!