

## The Rape of the Lock Summary

Writer: Alexander Pope | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

**A Small Joke Grows Big:** The poem begins with a mock-epic tone. The poet, Alexander Pope, dedicates the poem to Arabella Fermor. This poem tells a funny and small story. But the poet writes it in a big way. A young boy named the Baron cuts a lock of hair. The hair belongs to a rich girl named Belinda. The boy does this for fun. He thinks it is just a small joke. But Belinda becomes very angry. Her friends also became shocked. The poet illustrates how a seemingly minor act can lead to a significant problem. The poem makes fun of the manners of the rich. They take small things too seriously. Pope writes the poem like a great war story. But the real event is only a stolen curl. This style creates humor. It also shows how silly the people are.

**Dream and Warning:** Belinda is a beautiful and proud girl. She lives in London and is passionate about fashion. She goes to parties and plays games. She is very concerned about her appearance. She wakes up late in the day. While sleeping, she has a strange dream. A tiny spirit named Ariel visits her in that dream. Ariel is a sylph. Sylphs are small air spirits. They protect girls who are proud and love fun. In the dream, Ariel warns her. He says something bad may happen that day. But when she wakes up, Belinda forgets it. She reads love letters and feels a sense of happiness. She thinks nothing bad will happen. She starts her day like always.

**Dressing Like a Queen:** Then, Belinda gets ready for the party. She sits before her mirror like a queen. Her maid, Betty, assists her with her dress. The dressing table looks like a holy altar. It is full of powders, perfumes, and jewels. Even religious books are on the table. Belinda uses beauty tools like gods. She cares more about her looks than her soul. She prays to her makeup instead of to God. She puts on rich clothes and shining gems. Her hair is long and bright. The sylphs also help her dress. They fly around her head and fix her gown. They want her to look perfect. Belinda looks at the mirror and feels a sense of pride.

**Plan to Steal Hair:** On the other side, the Baron is making plans. He is a young man who loves beauty. He likes Belinda's hair the most. Her hair is shiny and golden. He wants to cut one of its locks. He believes it will be a great prize. He thinks this hair will make him famous. He already has gifts from other girls. Now he wants to add Belinda's lock to his list. He does a small prayer to love. He burns love letters, gloves, and perfumes. He asks for help from the gods of love. He promises to take the lock by force if needed. His friend Clarissa gives him a pair of scissors. Now the Baron is ready for the crime.

**Game And The Theft:** Belinda goes to a party at Hampton Court. It is full of rich young men and women. Everyone is dressed in fine clothes. Belinda shines the most in the crowd. She plays a card game named ombre. The game is written like a great battle. Her cards become like weapons in war. The sylphs sit on the cards and help her win. Belinda fights with her cards bravely. After the game, everyone drinks tea and coffee. Now the Baron sees his chance. He hides the scissors in his coat. He moves close to Belinda from behind. The sylphs try to stop him. But Ariel sees Belinda's heart. He sees she has a soft feeling for the Baron. So he leaves her unprotected. The Baron then quickly cuts a lock of her hair. Belinda is shocked. She screams in fear and shame. She feels very hurt and insulted. But the Baron is very happy. He shows the hair to others with pride.

**Sadness and Anger:** Belinda now becomes very sad. She sits with tears in her eyes. She feels lost and ashamed. A dark spirit named Umbriel enters the scene. He is a gnome, a spirit from the earth. He flies to the Cave of Spleen. There, he meets the Queen of Sorrow. She gives him a bag full of sighs and tears. Umbriel brings it back and opens it on Belinda. Now Belinda feels more pain in her heart. Her friend Thalestris becomes angry. She tells Belinda to fight for her honor. Thalestris says the stolen hair will harm her name. She also calls her lover, Sir Plume. Sir Plume talks to the Baron. He tells him to return the lock. But the Baron laughs and says no. He says he has won it fairly and will not return it.

**Fight And A Star:** Belinda cries and asks for her lock. She wants to get it back. She wishes she had not come to the party. At this time, Clarissa gives a short speech. She says beauty is not forever. She says girls should have good minds too. She says smart and calm girls are better. But no one listens to her words. They call her boring and cold. Then Belinda becomes angry. She shouts, "To arms!" The party turns into a small battle. They do not fight with swords. They throw fans, snuff, and sharp looks. Belinda throws snuff on the Baron's face. He sneezes and says he still loves her. Belinda again asks for her lock. But it is not there. People search under tables and chairs. But the lock is gone.

**Message Of The Poem:** In the end, the poet gives a new idea. He says the lock flew to the sky. It became a star above the Earth. Now everyone can see it at night. Lovers will look at it and feel love. It will shine forever in the sky. The poet says Belinda should not be sad. Her beauty and name will live forever. People will remember her in this poem. Art and poetry will keep her name alive.

The message of the poem is very clear. It makes fun of rich people's pride. It shows how they care too much for small things. Belinda cries for one lock of hair. But people are dying in wars elsewhere. The poet uses big words and epic style. He writes about spirits, dreams, and fights.

But the real event is very silly. This makes the poem full of fun and jokes. The poem says beauty does not last long. Looks fade with time. But good manners and kind hearts stay forever. Pope teaches that art is more lasting than beauty. We must not be too proud of our face or fashion. We should learn to stay humble and wise.

LxNotes