

Sir Gaylord of Flouncy
in
Flouncy's Fancy

a 10-minute slap & tickle for a fop and his fancy

by Jeff Goode
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*(The terraced lawn of a lavish estate. The manor house in the background.
Enter SIR GAYLORD OF FLOUNCY with rapier and champagne, followed by
SIR TWILLING OF BREEDLE, incensed.)*

TWILLING

You go too far, Sir Gaylord!

FLOUNCY

And you go not quite far enough, Sir Twilling. Ah, but here's a lovely spot.

(SIR GAYLORD opens his champagne at a small garden table.)

TWILLING

You have behaved in a most unmannerly and unmanly manner, and have affronted me in front of countless counts and countesses and sundry other witnesses, at a gala social gathering, whereat you are the host.

FLOUNCY

And you, a guest at my gathering, have accused me all too openly of being unmanly in front of those selfsame witnesses. And one wonders which is worse? To be girlish at a gala or be accused thereof, thereat.

TWILLING

Well... you are right about that. I suppose I owe you an apology.

FLOUNCY

It is too late for apologetics. You've impugned my masculinity to all in the vicinity. You have demeaned my manhood in a manner most scandalous. Every gossip at the gala has heard your despicable disparagements.

TWILLING

I fear that they have. Perhaps I should have kept my voice down.

FLOUNCY

Indeed, you should have, for such insinuations should only be issued in whispers.

TWILLING

(outraged) But you endeavored to kiss me!

FLOUNCY

Have you never kissed a man before??

TWILLING

No!

FLOUNCY

Nor had one kiss you in return?

TWILLING

Of course not!

FLOUNCY

Then how would you know that's what I was trying to do?

TWILLING

I may not be as worldly-wise as a well-travelled gallant like yourself – the stories of whose escapades have left ladies blushing all over Bristol – but though I am ignorant in the ways of the world – or at least the French-controlled parts of Europe – the gist of the gesture was more than self-explanatory.

FLOUNCY

Then why did you so loudly demand an explanation?

TWILLING

Well, obviously, because your behavior was completely inexplicable.

FLOUNCY

And therefore far from obvious.

TWILLING

Well, that's true.

FLOUNCY

Given the uncertainty of the circumstances, perhaps the imagined affection was in fact your own projection of inward inclinations upon an innocent mentor who had leaned in merely to whisper discreet financial advice in your ear.

TWILLING

That would explain it. *(embarrassed)* Perhaps I overreacted a bit prematurely.

FLOUNCY

Indeed you did. For now I have no recourse but to demand satisfaction.

TWILLING

But what sort of satisfaction could you have of me on a moonlit terrace overlooking the rear of your sumptuous estate on a bracingly cold winter night?

FLOUNCY

It is sumptuous, isn't it?

TWILLING

If you don't mind my saying.

(SIR GAYLORD draws his rapier.)

FLOUNCY

As an avowed effete, it pains me to do this to one so well-dressed as yourself.

TWILLING

Why, thank you. I should like to know your tailor as well.

FLOUNCY

But you leave me little leeway, Sir Twilling! You have backed me into a corner, as it were. Therefore I have been forced to lead you onto the lawn in the chill of winter to settle this affair like men.

TWILLING

A carriage race? At this hour?

FLOUNCY

No.

TWILLING

Cockfighting?

FLOUNCY

No. I mean through means martial. Rapier and repartee.

TWILLING

A duel?

FLOUNCY

To the death! Or until at least one of us squeals for mercy.

TWILLING

Oh, must we quarrel? The gala was going so swimmingly.

FLOUNCY

Well, it's all ruined now! First, you refuse to kiss me. Then you accuse me of trying to kiss you.

TWILLING

But you did! Didn't you?

FLOUNCY

Still you revile my virility! I am incensed beyond words at your query. Therefore, prepare to feel the sting of my withering rebuttal.

(SIR GAYLORD attacks. They fight, grunting and thrusting. After awhile...)

FLOUNCY

Respite?

TWILLING

Of course.

(They pause politely to catch their breaths. SIR GAYLORD drinks champagne. SIR TWILLING notices that SIR GAYLORD is not nearly as winded as he.)

TWILLING

If I may say, Sir Gaylord...

FLOUNCY

Say on, Sir Twilling.

TWILLING

For a notorious fop, you fight quite effectively.

FLOUNCY

One does not come to be the nation's preeminent effeminate without knowing how to defend what's left of one's honor from the inevitable occurrence of slanderous aspersions.

(They resume fighting.)

FLOUNCY

Your bladesmanship is likewise admirable, Sir Twilling. You have a keen grip. A wide stance. Your thrusts are haphazard, but that's not uncommon in a young man.

TWILLING

What I lack in precision, I make up in exuberance.

FLOUNCY

So I've heard. But there is one thing I find perplexing in your prowess.

TWILLING

Do go on. I should be grateful for any tips you may tender.

FLOUNCY

For a person opposed to public displays of amorousness, I am surprised that you defend yourself so vigorously.

TWILLING

Well...we are dueling, aren't we? Why would I be less than competitive?

FLOUNCY

Because, of course, if you win, you shall have to kiss me. And that is a conclusion to which you attest to be averse.

TWILLING

What? Why would I have to do that?

FLOUNCY

Well, it stands to reason, doesn't it? The thrust of our conflict is to establish the nature of my manliness. Therefore I am dueling in the affirmative: "Sir Gaylord is a man's man, and manly as one might expect of a man of his approximate stature, girth and boot size." Whereas you are dueling in the contrary, to wit: "Sir Gaylord is neither a man's man, nor a man and is, in fact, altogether feminine to the point of being utterly delectable. And more to the point, were he a woman, and not a man as he so falsely professes, I should like nothing more than to kiss him." Which, if you win, you surely must, as there could be no more empirical proof of your proposition.

TWILLING

That does stand to reason.

FLOUNCY

Which places you on a bit of a philosophical pickle. You cannot prevail without availing yourself of the opportunity to take advantage.

TWILLING

It would be the manly thing to do.

FLOUNCY

And yet you cannot fail to prevail if you continue to fight so fiercely for my effeminacy.

TWILLING

Very well, then. Since I cannot in good conscience, defeat you... I surrender.

(SIR TWILLING abruptly lowers his weapon.)

FLOUNCY

Accepted!

(SIR GAYLORD kisses him.)

TWILLING

What was that?!

FLOUNCY

You surrendered. I took advantage of you. Didn't we agree that was the masculine thing?

TWILLING

But now, my masculinity shall come into question!

FLOUNCY

Oh, poppycock! Your lapse was barely fleeting at best. And it occurred in the darkness and privacy of my front lawn. For all the world knows, you are still as much a man as when we left the gala together to come out onto this tree-lined terrace. No one inside could suspect that this was anything but a simple disagreement between gentlemen, which we have settled like gentlemen. And a lady.

TWILLING

Then poppycock yourself, Sir Gaylord!

FLOUNCY

Your tongue, Sir Twilling!

TWILLING

For surely, a man of your impeccable sense of design cannot have so soon forgotten the enormous bay windows you had installed in the hall overlooking the garden. *(He gestures toward the house.)* The view from that vantage is magnificent.

FLOUNCY

(waves to the house) Hello, Mrs. Calumet!

TWILLING

We've drawn quite a throng.

FLOUNCY

Well, you did do a bit of screaming as we stormed out of the ballroom.

TWILLING

I should have kept my voice down.

FLOUNCY

I suppose there is nothing for it, but for you to duel me again to prove your manhood.

TWILLING

I suppose not.

FLOUNCY

And remember, this time it is imperative that you prevail.

TWILLING

Do not fret for that. I shall defend my reputation like a male tigress defending the reputation of its young.

FLOUNCY

To your guard, then.

(They fight.)

FLOUNCY

(pleased) Oh. Oh, yes. Very nice. Well thrusted.

TWILLING

Sir Gaylord?

FLOUNCY

Yes, Sir Twilling?

TWILLING

I complimented you earlier on your skill at arms, but now it seems you fight noticeably better than you did even a few moments ago.

FLOUNCY

I am considerably better than I was then, for this is our second duel. One does not like to overexert oneself in the preliminaries. It leaves so little to the imagination.

TWILLING

So you were simply toying with me before?

FLOUNCY

Does that offend you?

TWILLING

I think it rather does. I begin to suspect that you have lured me out onto the lawn and into these duels, wherein I cannot hope to prevail, under false pretenses.

FLOUNCY

Did I? I should be chagrined to think I had defeated you fraudulently.

TWILLING

How do you expect to rectify the unsportsmanlike advantage?

FLOUNCY

Well, naturally, by allowing you to prevail. Therefore... I surrender.

(On SIR TWILLING's next pass, SIR GAYLORD lowers his weapon and promptly finds himself in a comprising position.)

TWILLING

Aha! Victory! *(to the house)* You see?!

(SIR GAYLORD seizes SIR TWILLING and kisses him.)

TWILLING

What? You kissed me!

FLOUNCY

Not in the least! You were the victor, you kissed me.

TWILLING

I did not!

FLOUNCY

I remember kissing.

TWILLING

I did not desire to.

FLOUNCY

Then why did you bother to best me?

TWILLING

Because you surrendered.

FLOUNCY

You asked me to surrender.

TWILLING

I did not want you to surrender completely.

FLOUNCY

Oh.

TWILLING

Not all the way!

FLOUNCY

I do apologize. It is my first time surrendering.

TWILLING

Obviously!

FLOUNCY

But I am only trying to be a compliant host. To precisely what extent did you desire to overpower and take advantage of me?

TWILLING

To what extent?!

FLOUNCY

Is this more what you had in mind?

(SIR GAYLORD kisses SIR TWILLING again.)

TWILLING

No!

FLOUNCY

Or was it more like this?

(SIR GAYLORD kisses SIR TWILLING yet again.)

TWILLING

I do wish you would stop that!

FLOUNCY

Why?

TWILLING

Because you are making me rather light headed. And the night air is rather thin. And I seem to be suffering a sudden shortness of breath.

FLOUNCY

Here, have some champagne, to clear your head.

TWILLING

And now I think on it, I am not entirely certain I remember precisely what it is we are quarreling about.

FLOUNCY

It is really very simple: The two of us had a tiff over some piffle and stormed out of the ballroom and onto the lawn, bandying our blades about like schoolboys on a first date – our swashes unbuckled, if you will – in front of a gala full of witnesses.

TWILLING

I remember that part.

FLOUNCY

And as it is midwinter and therefore chilly, before very long, we shall have to storm back in and explain what exactly transpired on this moonlit terrace, or people shall begin to wonder. And you know that their imaginings are always far more sordid than the innocent incidents they gossip about. So it seems to me that regardless of the initial incitement for this excitement, you and I must agree to relate that having had a few words and more than a few blows, it came to pass that either you were victorious – as you just were – and took advantage of me.

TWILLING

No, that didn't happen.

FLOUNCY

Or I, less plausibly, was victorious and took advantage of you – as I did previously.

TWILLING

Well, no, that's not it, either.

FLOUNCY

Or we were both victorious and took advantage of each other.

TWILLING

Cannot we both be defeated and remain un-taken-advantage of?

FLOUNCY

You must be lightheaded, for now you are coupling defeat with retention of honor, which is rather an oxymoron.

TWILLING

A what?

FLOUNCY

Have some more champagne.

TWILLING

And must we talk of coupling? I am still rather woozy and the night is still rather moonlit. And I am still rather trying to keep my thoughts straight in my head.

FLOUNCY

You are right! There is no time for talk. A crowd is gathering at the windows. We must duel again definitively. Winner take all. Is that straightforward enough?

TWILLING

Agreed.

(They fight.)

TWILLING

Wait, what do you mean “winner take all”?

FLOUNCY

I hadn't thought about that. I suppose that should be up to the winner.

TWILLING

But we are endeavoring to ascertain each other's manhood. Are we not?

FLOUNCY

Ascertainment, yes! That is what we are striving for. Getting a grip on our respective manhoods, as it were. Shall we stipulate also that the winner pay for dinner?

TWILLING

Why would he do that?

FLOUNCY

What, have you never made love to a man before?

TWILLING

Made love?!

FLOUNCY

You've never heard the term?

TWILLING

Of course, I've heard it.

FLOUNCY

(becoming enraged) But only in tawdy French romances and Turkish prison novels, is that it? Are you calling me Continental?

TWILLING

Not in the least! But as the owner of several hundred head of livestock, I have only hitherto heard the phrase affiliated with the field of animal husbandry. Or as it pertains to the weaker sex.

FLOUNCY

We shall see who is a member of the weaker sex!

(SIR GAYLORD presses the attack.)

TWILLING

No! Please! Don't! Be gentle! Ow!

(SIR GAYLORD thrashes SIR TWILLING, until he is groveling on the ground.)

TWILLING

Mercy! Have mercy!

FLOUNCY

Now, who is unmanly and who is paying for dinner?

TWILLING

You are! You are!

(SIR TWILLING prepares for the worst.)

FLOUNCY

Very well then. I'm glad that's settled. Now come back into the house before you catch cold.

(SIR GAYLORD starts back toward the house.)

TWILLING

So you're not going to kiss me?

(SIR GAYLORD OF FLOUNCY comes back.)

FLOUNCY

(outraged) Kiss you? Kiss you?! *(shrugs)* Well, since you asked.

(SIR GAYLORD grabs him and kisses him again.)

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