

## The Rivals

A Character Portrayal of Lydia Languish: -

Lydia Languish is a very beautiful enchanting and romantic heroine of Sheridan's play *The Rivals*. She appears to be a foolish woman. She often craves for secret marriage and elopement which were quite common in the age of Sheridan. She is a very sentimental and emotional female character. She seems to be a capricious woman by her nature. It is observed that she is empowered with ideas of romantic adventures and inclinations. She has unflinching belief in love and matrimony. Her anaesthetic and marvellous beauty and wealth for several lovers round her.

According to Captain Absolute's faithful servant, Fag, 'Lydia is a woman of a very singular taste. She likes and admires her witty and humorous lover better as a half pay poor Ensign Beverley. She knows the fact that Captain Absolute is the bonafide son and inheritor of Sir Anthony Absolute, a very rich British Baronet. She can be called a spoilt child as she is fond of reading very cheap and obscene novels and romances for her merriment and aggravation of passionate feelings in her. This ~~is~~ in habit of incessant reading of such books mysteriously has highly influenced her strange conception of love.



Fog says about her prosperity and wealth, Lydia has a lap dog that eats out of gold; she feeds her parrot with small pearls, and all her thread papers are made of bank notes. Her conception of love is extremely thrilling and sensational. She has strong belief in secret love-affair and the wedding, without having the consent of her guardian, Mrs. Malabrop, her aunt; she does not elope with her lover, Captain Absolute because she feels afraid of losing her inheritance if she doesn't get the consent and compliance of her aunt.

Lydia Languish becomes ready to accept Ensign Beverley as her lover in place of Captain Absolute. She feels excessively frustrated when she comes to know his real identity of a Captain, serving in the British Army. She is so much passionate and lustful in



love that she recalls her secret meetings with her lover, Ensign Beverley in an impersonated form of Captain Absolute in the cold nights of January month when the chilling waves are on climax

It can be concluded that Lydia Langrish is a noble woman inclined to fantasy. She is never ensnared by in love by Lucius and Bob Acres. She becomes victorious in her attempt to woo Ensign Beverley in the duel scene in the presence of Sir Anthony Absolute <sup>and</sup> Mrs. Malaprop. She tells <sup>Julia her</sup> ~~her~~ secret love affair to get herself mentally balanced