

Janet Oates

2021

The Wife and her Lover

For soprano, theorbo and soprano recorder

Duration 3 ½ minutes

*Written for and premiered by the Theorbo Today
project, 2022*

Text translated and paraphrased by Janet Oates from Marie de France (12th c.)

A peasant, one day, was watching:
His eye to the keyhole, was spying.
Now, what did he catch sight of on his bed?
His wife... and another man!
As he said "alas, what did I see?",

Suddenly, his wife appeared at his side:
'And what did you see, husband dear?'
'What? Another man, I'll have you know,
On the bed, wrapped in your arms!"

She burst out angrily:
Oh ho, not again,
You're as stupid as the day I met you!
Oh ho, not again,
You're bonkers if you think
everything you see is the truth

Madame led him by the hand
To a tank of water, full to the brim
And ordered him to look at it, asking him
What he saw there. Well, *of course*, he said
he could see his own image.

'And yet, *of course*, you are not
Under the water fully dressed,
Whatever appearances might suggest!
You mustn't have confidence
In your eyes which so often lie.'

And he said, 'I'm sorry.
Everyone must believe absolutely
In what his wife tells him to be true,
Not what we see with our misleading eyes,
Those masters of folly and error.'

By this example you can clearly see
That having a crafty mind
Is more useful to many people
Than all their morals and upbringing.

The Wife and her Lover

The title could be loudly announced at the start, closely followed by (or overlapping) the theorbo's knocking.

Janet Oates,
based on Marie de France

Janet Oates

Alto Recorder

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 64$

Theorbo

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 64$

knock on wood

knock

6

3 + 2 + 2

Rec.

Th.

drily, not resonant

3 + 2 + 2

10

A SPOKEN (a bit freely) (a tempo)

sop

A pea-sant one day was wat-ching, wat-ching: *audible his inward breath* eye_ to the key-hole, was

Rec.

A sounds 8 va

audible inward breath

Th.

h

15

sop spy - ing.

Rec. h

Th.

B a tempo

19 freely, recit

sop Now, what did he catch sight of on his bed? His wife! and a - no - ther ma - n!

Rec.

B a tempo

Th. sounds 8 va

23

sop (freely) $\text{♩} = 100$ (a tempo)

loosen pitches and timing random pitches and timing and he said "A - las! A -

Rec.

Th. knocking on wood $\text{♩} = 100$ (lower pitches approx.)

SPOKEN

29

S. las! What_ did I see?" Sud-den-ly, his wife ap-peared at his side: h!

Rec. h!

Th. *gliss.* *gliss.* h!

freely *audible inward breath* *audible inward breath* *audible inward breath*

33

S. "And

Rec.

Th. KNOCK ON WOOD

$\text{♩} = 120$

C

37


S. what did you see, hus-band dear, hus - band dear?" "Wwwhat? A-no-ther man, I'll

Rec.

Th. (knock on wood) (as dryly as possible)

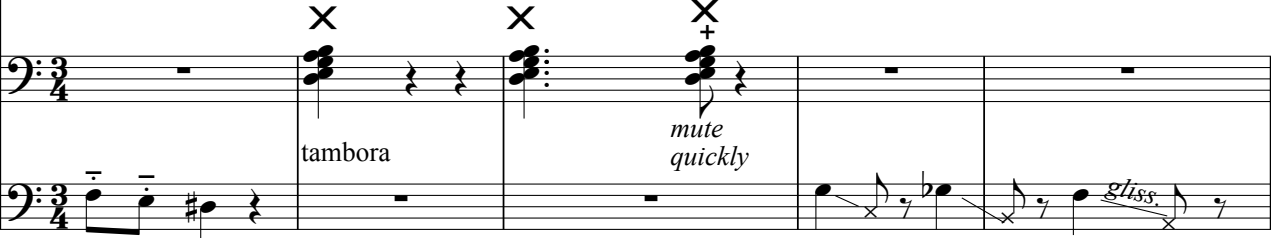
$\text{♩} = 60$

40 SPOKEN


S. 

have you know! On the bed! Wrapped in your arms!" She burst out


Rec. 

Th. 


45 **D** ♩. = 60

Perc. 


ang-ri-ly: Oh ho, not a - gain, you're as stu-pid as the day. I met you! Oh ho, not a-gain, you're

Rec. 

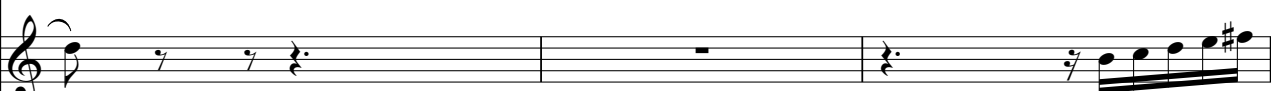
Th. **D** ♩. = 60


near bridge 

50

S. 

bon-kers if you think ev-'ry thing you see is true, you see?

Rec. 

Th. 

53

E SPOKEN: freely...

S. a - ha! a - ha! Ma-dam led him by the hand, to a tank

Rec.

Th. **E** sounds 8 va

58 ...a tempo

S. of wa-ter full_ to the brim, and or-dered him to look at it, ask-ing him what he saw there.

Rec.

Th. knock on wood

62 SONG (SPOKEN) SONG

S. well_ of course, he said, he could see his own i-mage. and

Rec.

Th.

67

S. yet, of course, you're not un - der the wa - ter ful-ly dressed! what - e-ver ap-pear-an-ces might sug-gest!

Rec. near bridge

Th.

71

S. you mus - tn't have con - fi-dence in your eyes, which so — of - ten lie!"

Rec. near bridge

Th.

74 **F** SPOKEN ♩ = c.68

S. and he said: I'm sor-ry. *sigh* Ev-ry one must be- lieve_ ab-so- lute-ly in

Rec. near bridge

Th. **F** sounds 8 va *sigh* ♩ = c.68

81 accel.

S.  what his wife tells him to be true; not what we see with our mis-lead-ing eyes, those mas-ters of fol-ly and

Rec. 

Th.  accel.

87 ♩. = c. 64

S.  er - ror!

Rec. 

Th.  ♩. = c. 64
gliss. *ord.*

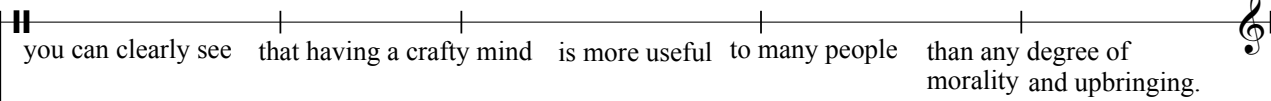
SPOKEN: natural speech rhythms,
keep *roughly* with the instruments


90

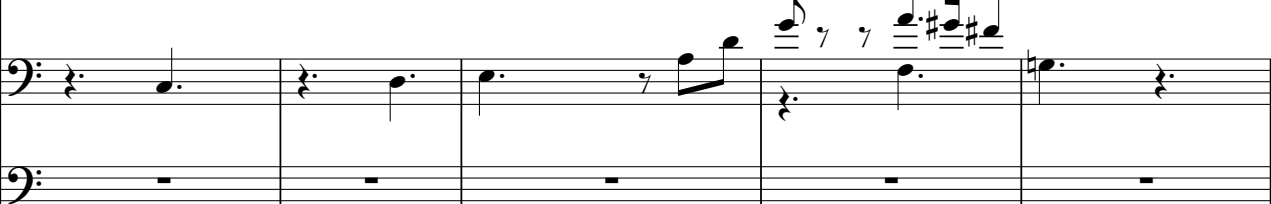
S.  By this example

Rec. 

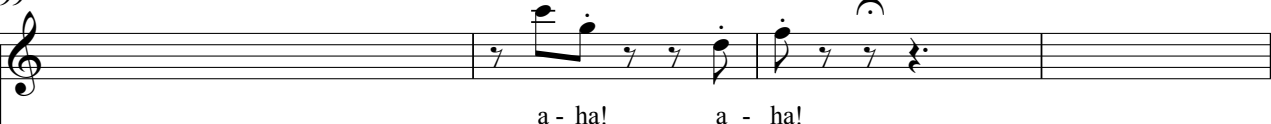
Th. 


S. 


Rec. 

Th. 


99

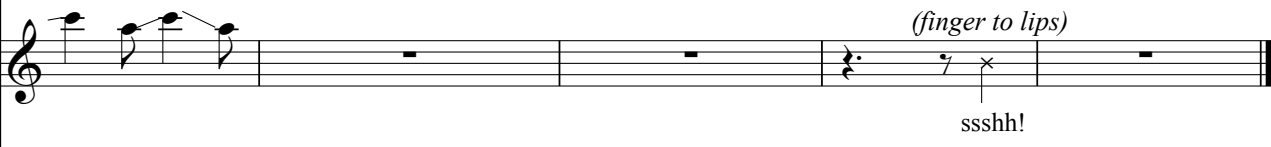
S. 

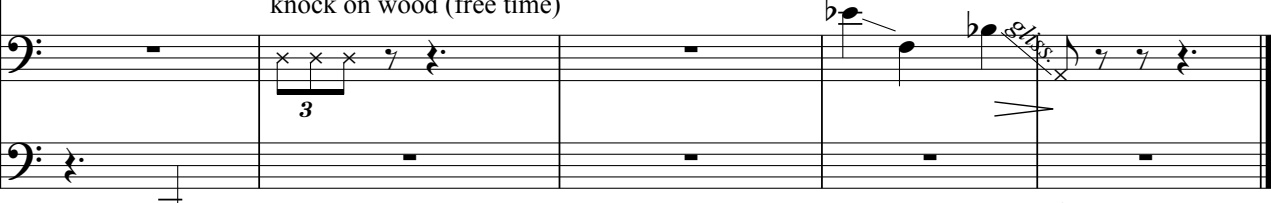
Rec. 

Th. 

103

S. 

Rec. 

Th. 

duration c. 3'30