

NELL. And what does this flimsy whimsy want from life?
Adventure? Respect? No... all she wants is this flopsome fop
cos once he wrote her a poem and compared her to a flower.
Is that what you think women want?

DRYDEN. Well, I –

NELL. No, Mr Dryden! It's not! We're as knotty and tangly as
you are, and yet how do you write us? 'Oh Romeo, Romeo,
lend me your dagger so I can kill myself – for though I'm
young and healthy and have everything to live for – and I
only met you a week ago – my life's not worth living now
you've gone.' Really? It's hogswill. Juliet is a noodle. Who
wrote that twaddle anyway?

DRYDEN. William Shakespeare.

NELL. Well, he should ~~learn~~ to write proper plays. Or let his
wife have a go. Please, Mr Dryden. You can write for a real
woman now. No one has done that before. Write from here –
(*Indicating her guts*!) and write me a character! With skin
and heart and some sense in her head. Celadon says he thinks
he *might* marry her. You think she'd agree – to *that*!?

DRYDEN. Wouldn't she?

GIRLS. No!

DRYDEN. What would she say?

NANCY. You're the writer!

DRYDEN. She bids him... she bids him – 'Wait!'

NELL (*in character*). 'Wait!'

DRYDEN. 'These shallow protestations of love – they're not
sufficient!'

NELL (*in character*). 'Not sufficient!'

DRYDEN. She challenges him! If he's to win her, he must
prove himself. She wants a lover who'd – who'd what?

NELL. Hang himself!

NANCY. Drown himself!