

EDITED BY
MELANIE R. MEADORS







## HATH NO FURY

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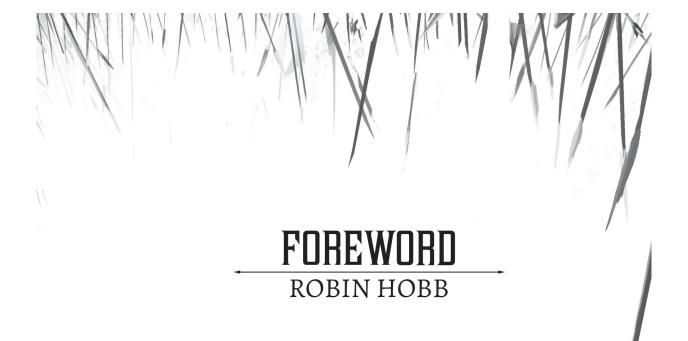
Though we come and go, and pass into the shadows, where we leave behind us stories told—on paper, on the wings of butterflies, on the wind, on the hearts of others—there we are remembered, there we work magic and great change—passing on the fire like a torch—forever and forever. Till the sky falls, and all things are flawless and need no words at all.

—Tanith Lee (September 19, 1947 - May 24, 2015)

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ELL HATH NO FURY LIKE a woman scorned."

Um, no. Take away those quotation marks! This writer has been hacked! He never said that!

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" and "Music has charms to sooth a savage beast" are possibly among our most familiar incorrect quotes in the English language.

(Right up there with "Peace on Earth; goodwill toward men." No. That should be translated, "Peace on earth to men of goodwill." Rather a different sentiment. But here I am, in only paragraph four and already wandering off topic. Melanie can't say I didn't warn you here. Essays are not my forte!

But let's go back to the focus of this piece.

In 1627, William Congreve wrote a play entitled *The Mourning Bride*. A playwright who became known for writing comedy of manners, this five act play is his only tragedy. And here we are, hundreds of years later, still misquoting the poor fellow.

The Mourning Bride is among his lesser works. Congreve is better known for *The Way of the World*. Here I will admit that I've only read portions of *The Mourning Bride*. I am by no means a scholar

of this work! But as a reader, any play that features a kidnapped bride, a shipwreck, a vengeful Queen Zara, a man who is mistakenly executed by his own orders...well, this William Congreve definitely was stirring up some of my favorite ingredients for a tale.

But what were the actual lines he penned that have come down to us in mangled form?

In Act III, it is Perez who declaims:

Heaven has no rage, like love to hatred turned, Nor hell a fury, like a woman scorned.

(Another aside. Wikipedia, in its quaint way, insists that Queen Zara is the one who speaks these lines, and references Act III, Scene VIII. Unfortunately, Act III does not have eight scenes. And the error is now widely repeated across the internet, on many "quotation source" boards. Poor William Congreve. Not only misquoted, but those transcendent lines ascribed to the wrong character in a scene that doesn't exist!)

As in Romeo and Juliet, the princess Almeria has fallen in love with the son of her father's enemy, King Manuel. She is separated from her husband Alphonso during a shipwreck. Then, both he and King Manuel are captured and held as slaves, along with Queen Zara! Manuel is the fellow whose own orders get him executed, and Queen Zara exits via suicide. Alphonso and Almeria survive for a joyous reunion and an overthrow of the government!

I can see why this play was so popular in its time!

As for the other quote, "Music has charms to soothe the savage beast." Well, as long as I'm setting the record straight, let's look at that one, too. In its correct form, it is actually the opening line of the play, spoken by Almeria who is full of grief and apparently seeking solace in music.

"Music has charms to soothe the savage breast, To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak."

Sad to say, not even the music can cheer her from Aphonso's loss! As I so often do when I sit down to write something, the research has distracted me from my original intent!

Is there a lesson to be learned from all of this meandering? Besides, of course, "Never trust Wikipedia" and "Double check all quotations?" Perhaps.

The fury of women, scorned and otherwise, is scarcely a new concept. But within this anthology you will find a collection of tales that present that fury in new lights.

Enjoy!



WAS AN AVID READER when I was young, growing up in the fifties. My family did not go to movies on Saturdays. We went to the library. One of my proudest moments was when I was old enough to have my own library card!

My mother and grandmother introduced me to books featuring strong women characters written by women authors, both sharing their own favorite books with me.

These books were published in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when women were struggling to obtain the right to vote and asserting themselves in other fields. My favorites included *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, *Freckles* and *Girl of the Limberlost* by Gene Stratton-Porter, and the *Anne of Green Gables* series by Lucy Maud Montgomery.

I learned not only from the characters in the novels, but also from the authors. Alcott made her own way in the world, writing novels, poems, magazine articles, and thrillers. Stratton-Porter was a naturalist and photographer who used to go into the Limberlost Swamp carrying her camera and a gun to deal with poisonous snakes. She was one of the first women to start her own movie production