

Bethell, Battle:

Sep: 26. 1816.

My dear Sir.

Let me first thank you for mentioning to Mr. Moore, what, without presuming too much, I may call my Claims upon Drury Lane Theatre — as you mean to lay my statement before him I shall begin without more circumlocution or Apology —

As an Author, of the Prisoner which was played successfully for 17 or 18 nights & was only stop'd then by the indisposition of Mrs Crouch — and of another Piece played since the opening of the present Theatre, though under another name, I consider myself entitled to the freedom of the Theatre by what has been always thought a prescriptive Right —

Thus far for myself — the Case of my daughter is of another kind but in my own Opinion quite as strong — The Prince Regent through the Medium of Mr Pittwood, who was then high in favor at Carlton House, applied to me for a dramatic Compt on the Marriage of the Duke of York — I wrote one, it was called Fairy Favourites: Mr Sheridan approv'd of it — it was put in Rehearsal & much pains bestowed on the Machinery by Johnstone, the property Man — Nothing had been

mentioned about Terms, though it had been long famously advertised,
till the Morning previous to its Appearance - when Mr. Wroughton
officially waited upon me as Manager & as he stated, at the Desire
of Mr. Sheridan, to know how I expected to be remunerated whether
by the Chance of the Theatre or at a stated price - knowing the
then dejected state of the Treasury my answer was, that the
Theatre was very welcome to the Production, but that I must
stipulate for the freedom of the Theatre for my daughter as if
she were the actual Author of it - Mr. W. the next day
expressed Mr. Sheridan's Thanks for what he was pleased to term
my great liberality & added that as my daughter might
wish to visit the house sometimes without Me, she should
be actually free herself & have the liberty of admission
for a Person to accompany her - Mr. Sheridan, whom I
saw in the Evening, personally thanked Me & confirmed his
Message - This freedom as her own, & the liberty of
admitting a friend, she used for some years, until my family
went to reside entirely in the Country & even then she occa-
sionally, though very seldom, availed herself of it -

Of the conversation & agreement, Mr. Wroughton is
perfectly in Remembrance, & so is Mr. Fosbrooke of my daughter's
admission with her friend under it - for I talked with them
on the subject 3 or 4 years ago, when I submitted a Statement

to the Committee through Mr. Ward - & to which I never see? an
answer to the best of my recollection -

This is a long Story for Mr. Moore to read through
but I trust he will forgive me, & accept my Thanks for interfering
in a Cause that I really think myself entitled to make both for
myself as an Author & for my daughter under a solemn stipulated
Promise - if the Act of Parliament, as it is said, destroys all
these prescriptive Privileges; the Theatre may shew itself under
its legal barriers, but I am sure that such Men as now form
the Committee will be ready to say with Lord Ogleby "It is a
debt of honour & must be paid" -

I am, my dear Sir,
Most faithfully yours

John Dods -

Dramatic Censor



For

William D'Almeida Esq
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London.

Mr D'Almeida
26 Sep 1816

Ms. A. 9. 2. 4

John Rose Dramatist