

Characters:

Mary Springer – Theresa

Heloise – Shari

Abelard – Kevin

Sign holder – to be recruited, or can Teresa do this too?

- Props: 3 chairs,
- CD of lovey songs, book
- monk suit
- nunny hat, shiny cross

[thumbs up}

THEME MUSIC - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h85gAOSmL9U>

Mary: Welcome to our audience and thank you for being with us here in the studio today. As you know, I'm Mary Springer and my show is broadcast live. To enhance your own enjoyment and help make things more exciting for our viewers at home, please follow my thumb signs -- thumbs-up for cheers, thumbs-down for boo's. [practice]

By special time-machine arrangement, on our show today we have an unusual guest – that complicated character known to history only as Heloise! Heloise – promising young student, passionate lover of Peter Abelard, unwed mother, outed wife, reluctant nun, pining partner, and brilliant abbess.

Tragic heroine or codependent fool? You be the judge! Heloise, come on out!

[Heloise enters]

Mary: Heloise, welcome to the Mary Springer show!

Heloise: Thanks Mary. It's a pleasure to be with you. You know I would never forsake an opportunity to testify to my love.

[cheer sign]

Mary: Alright Heloise. Now some of our readers may not know the astonishing story of how your loyalty to your ideals, and to the love of your life, brought a lifetime of suffering. You were born around 1100 CE in France, and were raised in a convent. What happened next?

Heloise: Well my uncle Fulbert saw a talent in me, and he took me into his home in Paris when I was but a virginal 17 and encouraged my education.

Mary: Fulbert was a canon, or mucky-muck, at Notre Dame Cathedral.

Heloise: That's right. He valued education, and had a soft spot for me. That's why he asked Peter Abelard to join our household and tutor me privately.

Mary: Was he a good teacher?

Heloise: Oh he was wonderful! His talent for teaching was unmatched. He was an exceptional scholar even then, in his mid-30s. Despite everything that happened, we did manage to make sure that his gifts were not wasted.

Mary: I'll be playing a clip for you Ok, so brilliant, 30s – still in his prime – did you think he was cute?

[cheer sign]

Heloise: Don't mock me, Mary. You know full well that I fell headlong in love with Peter Abelard. And this was no surface attraction. We shared our ideas, our love of contemplation, our commitment to living according to our own intentions, and not the conventions of society. And yes, as lovers we were inseparable – at least, at first. [sniff sniff]

Mary: So you were all living in the same house, passionate lovers sneaking around, keeping it from your powerful uncle. Let's see that clip.

[show film clip (audio off?):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9FnhNUspfo&feature=related]

Heloise: Uncle Fulbert discovered our relationship and tried to separate us, but then we found out I was with child. Abelard wanted to get married, but I knew the scandal of it would spoil his reputation and his career, so I refused. He proposed to keep it secret – but I knew this would not appease Uncle Fulbert. Besides, marriage would've betrayed the ideal to which we were both committed – of a philosopher as one focused on contemplation, without the distractions of domestic life. I told him I wanted to be bound by free love and true friendship, not by the legal obligations of marriage.

Mary: But Abelard didn't go for it.

[boo sign]

Heloise: No. He wanted me for himself, and so insisted to uncle and me that we be secretly wed. We left the baby, Astrolabe, with his sister and returned to Paris, living separately but meeting all the time in private.

Mary: But Uncle Fulbert couldn't keep his mouth shut, could he.

Heloise: No, uncle blabbed about our marriage.

[boo sign]

Mary: It sounds like our audience is really disturbed by the possible negative impacts on Abelard's career! What did you do about it?

Heloise: Well Abelard took me to the convent nearby where I had grown up, out of uncle's reach. Abelard, of course, could not stay away.

Mary: How did that work out?

Heloise: It might've been alright, except Abelard was going to extremes – he had me wear a beginner nun's habit, though I didn't need one to stay in the nunnery. Uncle thought he was trying to get rid of me by passing me off as a nun. He arranged the most horrible crime in revenge... [covers face]

Mary: it's Ok, you can tell us

Heloise: he had his servants break into Abelard's room at night and... he was never the same again.

[boo sign]

Mary: These extremely passionate lovers, Heloise's first and only love, were separated for over a decade. Abelard entered an abbey, and later built his own oratory. This scoundrel basically abandoned Heloise in her grief! Audience, do you agree with me?

[boo sign]

Mary: Well I have a surprise for you and for our audience, Heloise. Folks, please welcome to the show, the one and only, Peter Abelard!

[boo sign as Abelard walks on]

[Heloise and Abelard greet each other. French mutual kiss-on-each cheek greeting?]

Mary: Welcome, Abelard. Now we've heard Heloise's version of the early days. Were you as taken with her as she obviously was with you?

Abelard: To tell you the truth, Mary, I had chosen Heloise to be my lover before I ever set foot in Fulbert's house - Not only was she beautiful, she stood above all women in the kingdom by her abundant knowledge of letters, a virtue so rare among women.

I determined to unite with [Heloise in] the bonds of love, and indeed the thing seemed to me very easy to be done, so distinguished was my name, and I possessed such advantages of youth and comeliness, ...I dreaded [not her] rejection.

But little did I know that my love of this educated and charming woman would overtake me so completely. I lost control. I could hardly teach my other students, I couldn't eat or sleep or concentrate on my scholarship, I paid no attention to the gossip going around about us, I could think only of Heloise, ...and of our delights together.

Mary: You expressed your love through music, didn't you? Let's hear one of your hits, Abelard.

Abelard: Well alright, if you insist. [Hold up CD] I'll sing a little something from my CD, "How Deep is our Love: Chants for Heloise," available on iTunes.

Let's see...the end of one love chant went like this:

"when my nights were sleepless with lovemaking...

Our desires left no stage of lovemaking untried,

and if love could devise something new, we welcomed it."

(we were both new at it, Mary, we tried everything)

[love chat]

Heloise: Do you remember that time in the refectory at the convent?

Abelard: That time on the dining room table? During Lent? Oh, God, yes...

Mary: Um, guys. <rolls her eyes> You're giving us all cavities here, with your sweetness.

[cheers]

Mary: On the table? You were still partaking in marital bliss?

Abelard: Oh, yes... Are you kidding? Some our most amazing... I mean ...some of our most sinful conduct (as I came to view it) happened while we were married, she at the convent.

[cheers]

Mary: But you aren't still together... What happened?

Abelard: It's still difficult and shameful to talk about it. Heloise's Uncle Fulbert was so much more angry than I thought. That night they broke into my house while I was sleeping? Well, they....I don't think I can bring myself to say it. [reveal]

Let's just say... that I don't have to worry about "evil sperm" any more. I will not be bringing any more original sin into the world.

Eventually, I came to see this as my just rewards, and an act of God's mercy – releasing me from the torments of the flesh and allowing me to focus my energy on my scholarship and teaching. It was a roller coaster of a ride afterwards though - oh the shame, all the paparazzi at my house the next morning, being holed up out in the boonies for years, convincing the Pope to accept my doctrine of Infant Limbo, always surrounded by tiresomely adoring students, oh, and publishing my best selling books (available at Heresy.com), being forced to burn one of my own books then, because somebody didn't like my rationalist

take on the trinity. I've written about all of it - the sex, the lies, the.....burning. You can read about all of it in my book, *The History of my Calamities* - available now in the Kindle edition.

Heloise: How little thought you gave to me, dear Abelard!

Abelard: Heloise, what choice did I have? How could I ever again hold up my head among men, when every finger should be pointed at me in scorn, every tongue speaking my blistering shame? I confess, here on this show, Mary, that it was the overwhelming sense of disgrace that drove me to seek the seclusion of the monastic cloister, rather than any ardour for conversion to the religious life. But it was God's will, and it's all turned out for the best. And Heloise, dear Heloise, ...*You know how I prayed – that though parted on earth, we would be united in heaven.*

Mary: Now history records that both of you took monastic vows after this tragic event.

Heloise: Yes, though my heart was not in it. I had made my vows to Abelard, not to God. He prompted me to take my vows before he did, once again ensuring that no other could have me – even though he himself would not have me, either. You didn't trust me! And then you gave me not one word of consolation, or of gratitude for my sacrifice, or of love – not one word for over ten years. It's not as if you were short on words! Why couldn't you have spared a few for me?

Mary: Makes you wonder if it was love or just lust, eh Heloise?

Abelard: But we had both converted! Why should you have needed me? You became a nun, a prioress, an abbess – excelling in a vocation to which all your intellectual gifts, your tender disposition, your practical skills were so well suited.

Heloise: That is behavior. But my behavior did not match my intention. I was a hypocrite. I wanted you, only you, and you denied me.

Abelard: Heloise, God saw how entangled we were with each other through our carnal love, which had become a distraction and a barrier to our love of Christ. And besides [cross legs] ...things had changed.

Mary: Both of you were living and working in cloister, right?

Abelard: Yes. I advised Heloise, and she made her own adaptations to the (perfectly good) rule that I gave her, all serving the education of the nuns and the work of the church.

Mary: So you became partners in love of God, if not the love of man and woman. Well, thank you for coming today. Even if we don't agree with all of it, we can appreciate and respect your devotion. Can't we, audience?

Mary sums up the conclusion of their careers.

As you can see audience, the course of true love never runs smooth. Abelard was able to maintain his academic career, even though he had a wife, a child, and the attachment of deep love. And, Heloise, where do I begin? A brilliant, passionate woman who ended up with a broken heart, separated from the man she loved. It seems as though no obstacle could, in the end, keep them from fulfilling their duties to the church.

Mary: Any last words from each of you?

Heloise: "You know, beloved, as the whole world knows, how much I have lost in you... [but] the more I have made you feel secure in me,

the more I have to bear with your neglect... I say again, farewell, my only love.”

Abelard: I believe that the greater the burden we bear, Heloise, the greater the good that can come. (And oh, didn't we come?) The great goodness of God permits nothing to be done without reason, and brings to good end whatsoever may seem to happen wrongfully. Wherefore rightly do we both - do we all - say, “Thy will be done.”

[HELOISE AND ABELARD WALK OFF HOLDING HANDS]