

## **Copies of letters sent from Sarah Churchill [Mrs Freeman] to Queen Anne [Mrs Morley] following her fall from grace (1709)**

*These letters mark the breakdown of a 20-year friendship between Sarah Churchill, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Queen, which Churchill sent to another female acquaintance to defend her position. Masham and the Queen had formerly referred to one another with the affectionate names 'Mrs Freeman' and 'Mrs Morley'. This particular dispute centred on the rise of Churchill's cousin, Abigail Masham, as the Queen's favourite. Masham is of a much lower social status than Churchill and is allied with the Churchill's Tory opponents. Sarah's husband, John, had also fallen out of favour with the Queen following a serious of disastrous campaigns in the Low Countries and France.*

### **Second Paper sent to the Queen from the Duchess of Marlborough Oct. 1709**

An account of several letters & Proceedings of Mrs Morley to Mrs Freeman since she chang'd her name & is very near being undone by Flattery!

When Mrs Morley came to the Crown at first in all appearance she was very kind to Mrs Freeman, & I believe it was a good while after she was Queen before any flattery or artifices took place so as to make any great alteration. She gave her immediately the Lodge in Windsor Park, which is no manner of profit, [...] After that, with a great deal of kindness Mrs Morley desir'd Mrs Freeman to take two thousand pounds a year out of the Privy Purse upon which Mrs Freeman thank'd her extremely for all her Goodness, but said she had enough, & wou'd by no means take it, not never did mention it again or receive any of it

[...] After these particular favours, Mrs Morley very Indifferent to Mrs Freeman in so much, that after the Parliament voted to address her to settle upon the Duke of Marlborough & his family five thousand pounds a year [...] Mrs Morley notwithstanding all her former vows of Friendship & tenderness, never concern'd her self in the settlement, nor inquir'd whether her Dear Dear Mrs Freeman was not to be the better with the rest of her family [...]

[...] & I went on still to serve Mrs Morley in telling her the Truth; & in endeavouring to cure all the Jealousies that people had of her intentions & Mr Morley's to give the Country up to destruction, which was the more suspected [...] but I kept no secret from Mrs Morley, & I writ volumes to shew her the danger she was in, in trust the Jacobites & Torys to which I never had any good return, but coldness & shifting sometimes angry answers, & this is the true reason of my going seldomer to Mrs Morley which is one of my great accusations, because I had not always patience to pursue her when she was strange to me & would talk of nothing but common things, to a friend of 20 years standing, that was only endeavouring to serve her, nay to save her, which was plain to almost every body but the Morleys.

But upon all these differences Mrs Masham, who is much more cunning than Gratefull or honest, took all opportunities to make Mrs Morley believe that she lov'd her passionately, & at the same time that Mrs Freeman was telling her truths to serve her, she flatter'd her Inclinations, which were, & I fear are yet for the Torys, & in hopes of making her Fortune which she has done, never said any thing to Mrs Morley, but what she thought wou'd please her, let the consequences happen as they wou'd she had no other game to play, & thus she work'd a great while in the Dark, I don't doubt cunningly doing what mischief she cou'd to the Freemans & to my Lord Treasurer, or any body that she thought their Friends, & valu'd their advantage & lessen'd their services

[...] And in this manner Mrs Morley & Mrs Freeman liv'd, always differing, but it was for her security & Interest and Mrs Freeman saw her very seldom, which I think was impossible to be otherwise, unless she wou'd for some private gain have betray'd her but in the mean time these differences gave great advantage to Mrs Masham, who humour'd Mrs Morley in all

things, & instead of making a gratefull return to the Freemans, in showing Mrs Morley that she must be safest with those she had so much experience of, [...] but she for her own gain took another way, & rather made Mrs Morley think well of all the Ennemies to those she had obligations to, I mean Mrs Mashams obligations.

[...] Mrs Morley says in a letter lately that she was often reconcil'd, & then Mrs Freeman grew out of humour again, & she never know another reason for it, Mrs Morley must know the reason was Mrs Masham, who by her arts hinder'd her from being really reconcil'd, the particulars of which I need not enlarge upon, because Mrs Morley must remember how often I came to her in vain as to any free commerce & how long she saw Mrs Masham before the secret came out to me. Now 'tis certain if she had made a right use of your favour to her; she would have acted quite another part [...] then if it had not been for the cunning of Mrs Abigail, Mrs Morley wou'd naturally have return'd to the Friendship of her old faithful Freeman, who she cou'd not but see had told her more Truth then any body, & have said without much devotion that she had been in the right & that Mrs Morley had been in many things mistaken and here I will mention what I have heard of some great Kind of whom it was said, that he always own'd his obligations & paid them, & acknowledged his mistakes & that is certainly the best thing that can be said of any mortal, & when Mrs Morley will get the better so much of her passion, as to consider all this History, I hope she will be perswaded that Mrs Freeman's behaviour has been natural & as it ought to be to Mrs Morley, & whenever it is not; I shall be contented to make any penance.

And now I wou'd copy all the Letters I have had with hard & unusual expressions, since this Woman has work'd this change, but I have them not here & the two last letters must be too fresh in your memory to make it at all necessary. I am sure it is not easy for me to forget such words as Inveteracy; malice; hatred & in many conversations when I have humbly represented Truth, you have been pleas'd to answer, it was a Lye & it was false & whatever I said you wou'd give me no answer. Now this does not use to be your manner in redressing of Injuries, & extreamly unusual, & particularly between Friends. To any common acquaintance it is natural to say, upon any seeing wrong, that one hopes it is some mistake, & that one will enquire into it & there is nothing more strange than to say to one that one had made a Friendship with for ones Life, than that one is sure a thing is a Lye that concerns them, & that one could be witness of ones self, as Mrs Morley did in the comaplint I made of Mrs Masham & my Lady Hydes being so offensive to my Lord Marlborough: in a conversation before several in the back stairs. And Mrs Morley can't forget how Mrs Freeman was us'd in the bsuiness of her lodgings at Kensington. First Mrs Masham had none of her Rooms that Mrs Morley was sure of it but then I remark'd she wou'd let no body determine that point. Then when Mrs Masham out of shame cou'd not avoid removing, sending me word she did not know they were my Rooms & afterwards thought fit to make use of them again. When Mrs Freeman [52] complain'd of that, Mrs Morley was again in a passion & said it was false & a Lye.

I think one need add no more to show that this woman has been the cause of all that has happen'd, since the disputes at first were only about Whig & Tory; & those sort of differences can't be irreconcilable, & had it not been for such a woman as I believe was never known, the reconcilements Mrs Morley mentions wou'd have been more lasting, & when she seriously reflects upon all the extraordinary things she has done for a woman that combs her head, & does the lowest offices, & the very hard things she has done to Mrs Freeman, so contrary to all her professions & even to custom, I am confident she must think (as all the world does) that such things can proceed from nothing but extravagant Passion.

### **Third Paper from Sarah Churchill [Mrs Morley] to the Queen [Mrs Freeman] from St Albans**

Oct 29<sup>th</sup> 1709

Most of this Letter is copy'd out of the whole Duty of Man, the Common Prayer Book, & Doctor Taylour to be read after all the other papers & the day before the receiving the Holy Sacrament.

I have said something in answer to the letters I had the honour to receive from your majesty in one of these very long papers, & there remains nothing to observe more, but that your majesty seems very much determin'd to have no more correspondence with me, then as I am the Duke of Marlborough's wife, & your Groom of the stole, I assure your Majesty I will obey that command, & never so much as presume whilst I live to name my cousin Abigail [Masham] if you will be pleas'd to write me word in a very short letter, that you have read this History, which is as short as I could make it) and that you continue still of the same opinion you were, as to your unjust usage of me. You will know that all I have writ is exactly the truth, & I must desire you wou'd be pleas'd to do this the day before you receive the holy sacrament & my reason whether you have ever attempted by the least kind word to make me any amends upon all the just representations I have made of the wrong done me in my office, in Mrs Masham's using my lodging, & all that you said to me upon those occasions. I beg your majesty will please to weight these things attentively, not only with reference to Friendship, but also to Morality and Religion, & that if I ever have said any thing to you of the truth of which you are not convinc'd you will be so favourable to let me know what it is. In the warning before the Communion, in the Common Prayer Book, we are enjoyn'd to search & examine our Consciences that we may come clean & holy to such an heavenly feast, & to reconcile our selves & make restitution to those that we have done the least injury to: & if we have given any real cause of complaint, to acknowledge our faults, in order to regain the Friendship of those we have us'd ill, & not to think it a disparagement to speak first, since it is no more than our duty, & I have read somewhere, that God himself does not forgive the Injuries that are done to us, till we are satisfied and have interceded from those that did them, who are afterwards oblig'd to make suitable returns, by all Offices of Christian Love & Friendships.

[...] If any thing I have written now or at any time, appears too familiar from a subject to a sovereign, I hope your Majesty will think it less wrong, if you consider it coming from Mrs Freeman to Mrs Morley, which names you so long oblig'd me to use, that it is not easy for me even now, quite to forget them, & I still hope I have a better Character in the world, than Mrs Masham tells your Majesty of Inveteracy & malice: as I have mention'd before, for I do not comprehend that one properly can be said to have malice or Inveteracy for a viper, because one endeavours to hinder it from doing mischief for I think that when I know there is such a care & do not acquaint you with it, I should fail of my Duty & I can't see how that can be call'd malicious but since you make so ill returns for all the informations I have given you, which I know to be right by the dear brought experience of that ungratefull woman, I will never mention her more, after I have had the satisfaction I desire at the beginning of this, that you will say upon your word & Honour: you have read these papers in the manner desir'd, & that you are not chang'd Tho' i wish you may not repeat it, & alter your opinion of this wretch as you did of Mr Harley when it was too late .... I have not the least design of recovering what you say is so impossible your kindness ... What I have endeavour'd is only with a view of your own safety & honour & the Preservation of the whole. I have but one request more .... & that is, that you wou'd not burn my narratives but lay them somewhere, that you may see them a second time, because I know that some time or other before you dye, if you are not now, you will be sensible how much you have wrong'd both your self & me [...]

[...] If I continue in your service I will come to you no oftner than just the business of my Office requires, nor never speak to you one single word of anything else [...]