

Lady Mary Montagu Scene  
from

THE PHYSICS FOR POETS CLUB

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*After learning of English poet  
Lady Mary Montagu's  
observations in  
Constantinople, Enya and Brook  
debate her contribution to  
science: the eventual  
eradication of small pox.*

Sounds of Constantinople.

LADY MARY MONTAGU, dressed in  
Turkish-inspired/English dress,  
composes a letter with quill.

LADY MARY MONTAGU

*I am going to tell you a thing that I am sure will make you  
wish yourself here, with me, in Constantinople. Far away and  
safe from the pox that rages through our land. The small  
pox, so fatal and so general amongst us, has here been made  
entirely harmless by the invention of engrafting. There is a  
set of old Women who make it their business to perform the  
Operation. I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this  
useful invention into fashion in England, and I should not  
fail to write to some of our Doctors very particularly about  
it, if I knew anyone of 'em that I thought had Virtue enough  
to destroy such a considerable branch of Revenue for the  
good of Mankind.*

Atmosphere of Turkey is broken.

ENYA

Edward Jenner invented the smallpox vaccine, not Lady  
Montagu!

BROOK

Yeah, but eight year old Edward Jenner might have died from  
smallpox had she not brought inoculation to England when she  
did! And without Jenner's contributions, without his  
observations and curiosity to look into what was considered  
an old wives' tale about milk maids being immune to small  
pox, we may never have wiped it out! Great discoveries come  
about due to the the slow progress of many, remember!?  
Edward Jenner observed lowly milk maids and Lady Mary  
Montagu entered-- where no man could go-- and observed old  
Turkish ladies. Saw it worked and then inoculated her own  
children/

ENYA

She experimented on her own children?! Risked/

BROOK

What was she supposed to do? She wanted to spare her  
children the scars she had! Scars or... worse. She did what  
(MORE)

BROOK (cont'd)

any mother would for her children having seen that it worked! It took time to convince everyone back home, but she persisted and soon, with her connections, the royal family brought it into fashion. And saved Edward Jenner's life.

Lady Mary speaks to the audience.

LADY MARY MONTAGU

As a child, I had the *desire of catching the setting sun* and would run across the meadow to *catch hold of the great golden ball of fire sinking on the horizon*. I've always run after *the impossible*.

ENYA

Lady Mary Montagu wasn't a scientist, she was just a poet!

*\*lines in italics are  
Montagu's own words*