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Date: 11.02.22 "The Rivals"

Question: Discuss the material of the main plot of the play 'The Rivals'.

Answer: Certain aspects of main plot run parallel to the life of Sheridan himself. This is no fault. Personal experience is the basis of all real literature. A great book grows directly out of life and is fundamentally an expression of personal experiences of the author. We find the same as the source of the plot. The romantic love between Lydia and Captain Absolute is derived from the love affair of Sheridan and Miss Elizabeth Linley, the beautiful daughter of a musician. Sheridan eloped with her and subsequently married her after fighting duels on her behalf. Another fact of Sheridan's life might have led him to put into Lydia's mouth incidental remark, "I have heard of girls persecuted as I am

Who have appealed in behalf of their favoured lover to the generosity of his rival?" here the reference is perhaps to the fact that an elderly gentleman, one Mr. Long had actually given up his suit in response to the girl's appeal to his generosity and bequeathed a sum of £300 on her. These are the significant personal experiences of Sheridan which we find paralleled in his 'The Rivals'.

The end.

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