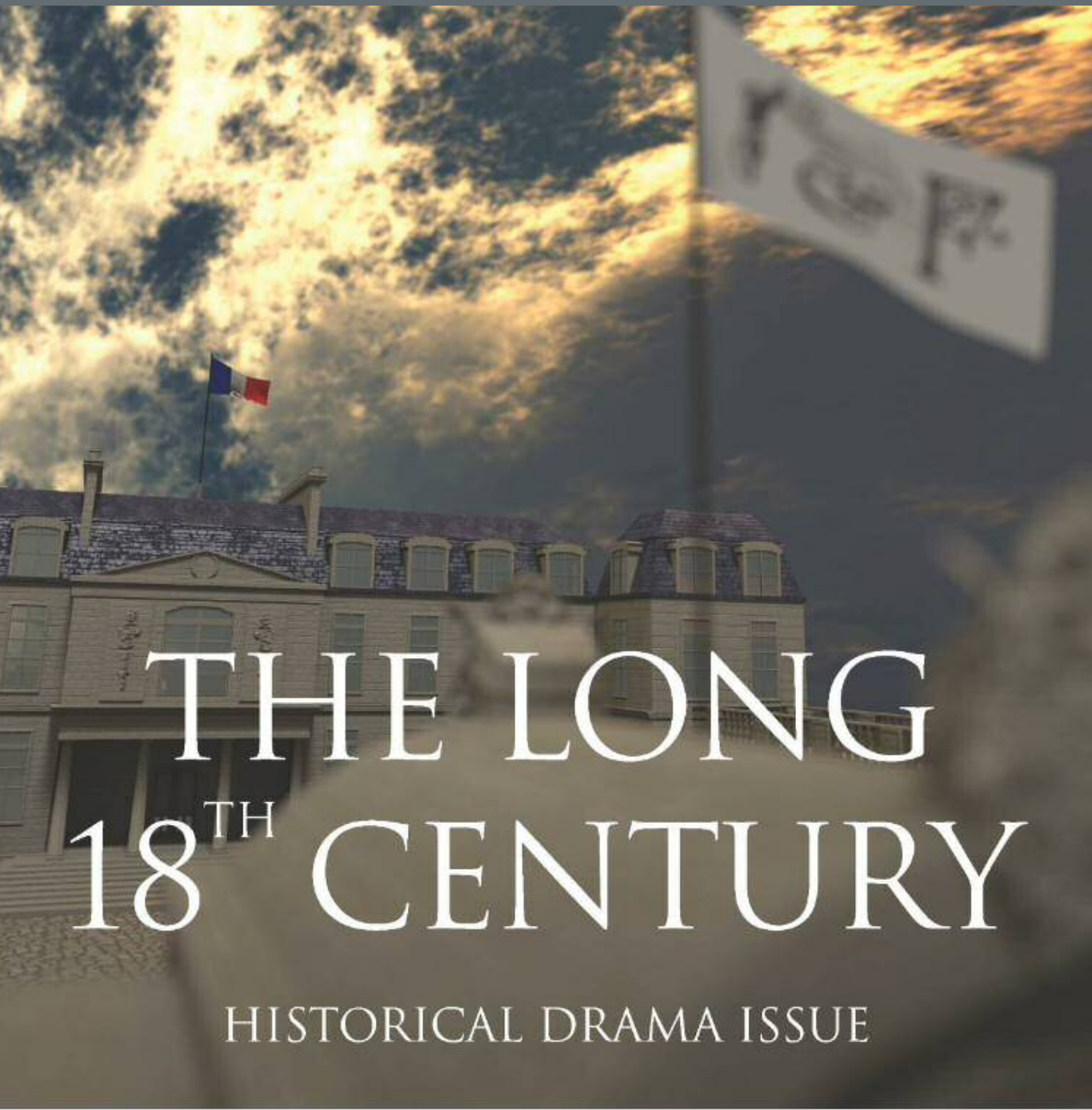


# Fellowship & Fairydust



## THE LONG 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

HISTORICAL DRAMA ISSUE

# *Fellowship & Fairydust*

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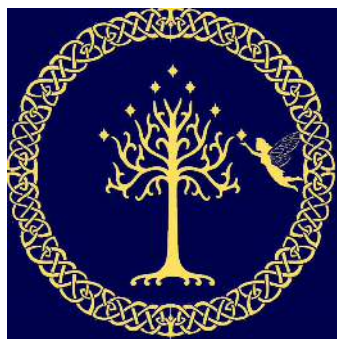
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## Editor's Note

Since a young age, through my introduction to the cartoon series *Liberty's Kids* and the adventures of Felicity Merriman from *American Girl*, I found myself fascinated by the American Revolution, and by extension, the Long 18<sup>th</sup> Century. As a Britophile, I was immersed in both sides of the conflict, the multifaceted characters, and their complex connections to one another.

By age twelve, I was busy writing the first drafts of a novel-in-the-making, *The Third Charge of Crimson*, set in Colonial Boston on the eve of the revolution. It featured Tillie Sinclair, a Scottish servant girl, caught between her loyalties to the Patriot Shaw family she serves and Major John Pitcairn, the British officer who is quartered in their home and has a long-lost connection with her late father, whom he served alongside during the French and Indian War.

The era entranced me. Perhaps part of the appeal was the lack of photography, leaving us to imagine what life was like through a colorful panoply of paintings awash with both elegance and sometimes startling humanity, especially in the expression of the subjects' eyes. Beneath the dignity, I sensed passion, and relished the exploration of the symbolism that was used to convey the essence of the subject.

Folk music was another inspiration for me. There was something profoundly simple and moving in the old songs of love and war, life and death, tragedy and transcendence. They touched on the core of the human experience, and conjured up images of an older time and place when stories served as the bread-and-butter of people's daily lives. Before the coming of fad franchises or pop music sensations, these arts were largely homegrown and homespun. They were made to endure through the generations because they taught timeless truths.

Classic literature adaptations and biopics onscreen furnished me with further fuel to expand my interest in the period, among them *The Firefly* (1937), *War and Peace* (1956), *The Miracle* (1959), *Damn the Defiant* (1962), *Barry Lyndon* (1975), *Waterloo* (1970), *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1982), *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *Kidnapped* (1995), *Lorna Doone* (2001), *Master and Commander* (2003), *Amazing Grace* (2006), *Bright Star* (2009), *Belle* (2014), etc.

These dramatizations and many more took us from the balls to the battlefields of the age, enchanting us with tales of adventure, romance, tragedy, suffering, faith, heroism, redemption, and much more. From Georgian Britain to Czarist Russia, the backdrops opened up worlds for us to enter into and by doing so, learn more about ourselves and our heritage.

These settings may even have prompted us to write down our own imaginings in new stories to be told. We could easily people them with characters resplendent in their period fashion, the embroidered bodices and scarlet tunic, the wimple caps and tri-corner hats. And we found ourselves crossing the divide of time and sharing in their ever more compelling internal worlds as they struggled over the big and small hurdles of life, as do we.

And so, fair ladies and distinguished gentlemen, I take particular delight in welcoming you to our period drama parlor, complete with a little bit of everything for your reading pleasure. Here you will be able to indulge in essays and fiction on all aspects of the Long 18<sup>th</sup> Century, covering popular fandom varieties such as Jane Austen adaptations, *Poldark*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *The Patriot*, *Felicity: An American Girl*, *Sharpe*, and many others.

So step into your time-travel carriage, and enjoy the ride!  
Eternal Felicitations,  
Avellina Balestri, Editor-in-Chief of F&F Publications



# Department of Indian Affairs



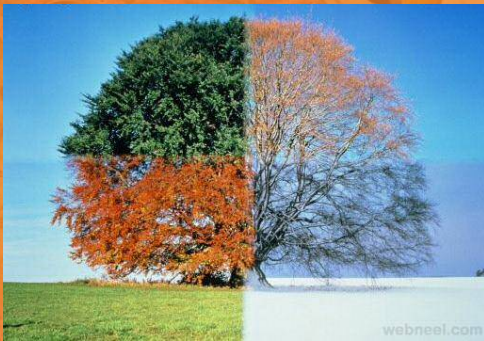


# What's New at F&F



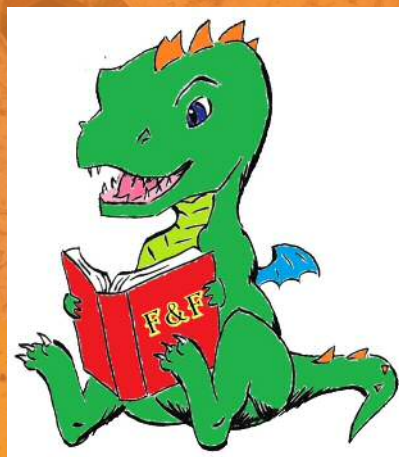
## We Now Have a Shop!

Well, sort of. We have created an official online store for F&F, which we have dubbed "Fellowdust". You can check it out by clicking "Shop" on the top menu of our website, or by going to [Fellowdust.com](http://Fellowdust.com). At the moment, we are still working out the kinks, but stay tuned by watching our homepage and our Facebook!



## I&F is Now Seasonal

In an effort to give you the best themed issues and not run ourselves into the ground, we have decided to publish Ink and Fairydust on a seasonal basis, instead of every other month.



## More About Clive

Last issue you met Clive, our baby Tyrannosaurus Dragon mascot. Since then, he has been drawn by multiple different artists. See them all at [fellowshipandfairydust.com/meet-clive](http://fellowshipandfairydust.com/meet-clive)! If you are an artist of any type, we would love to see your version of our mascot!



# Jane Austen

## & Me

By Sarah Levesque



*Pride and Prejudice* was the first period drama novel I had ever read. It was on the summer reading list for my high school (I usually read every book on the list each year, though only two were required). I enjoyed the book immensely. While Lizzy was practically me, I had Jane's optimistic view of every person in my acquaintance. Kitty was understandable as well, as I, too, rarely got to do anything before my younger sibling. We did everything together, and sometimes that was good, and sometimes it was extremely annoying. Lydia was the hardest to identify with - she was silly and emotion-driven, while I have always tried to be sensible and logical. But I enjoyed the book and the movies (yes, both the 1995 Colin Firth version and the 2005 Keira Knightly version). I still do - I have reread and re-watched them many times. And I'm glad it landed me in the world of period drama.

*Sense and Sensibility* was my second Austen novel. For some reason I've never been able to put my finger on, I didn't like it quite as much as *Pride and Prejudice*, though I certainly enjoyed it. Maybe it was Willoughby that tainted it. Or the two Steele girls. Or Sir John and Mrs. Jennings. Wow, I didn't realize how many characters missed my A-list! But there's a sense of realism to each of them that makes the book a good one. Who hasn't met a jealous fiancée, or a meddling-with-the-best-intentions family member? Not to mention a total airhead. I did like the human perspective. I was Elinor, cautious and logical and



opposed to the emotional, tumultuous and fast-paced relationship between Marianne and Willoughby. I wasn't such a fan of the age gap between Marianne and Colonel Brandon, either, but I honestly enjoyed the book and whichever movie I watched (2008?) – the people, situations, and emotions are still very relevant today, which is why I've read and watched *Sense and Sensibility* multiple times.

As for *Emma*, I didn't like Emma Woodhouse, and if you don't like the main character, it's hard to like the book. To me, Emma seemed a stuck up, nosy, pushy, busybody who took advantage of her younger, less wellborn, more naïve friend Harriet Smith, convincing her that she should marry a guy she had never met instead of the man she actually loved. Poor Harriet! I'm glad it didn't work out. And SO much flirting between Emma and Frank Churchill, when neither meant anything by it! I've only just learned that before starting the book, Jane Austen wrote, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like" (*A Memoir of Jane Austen* by James Edward Austen-Leigh). And when Emma does realize who she really loves, there's an enormous age gap! And I found it really creepy that he loved her since she was only thirteen or so. So yeah, I didn't like *Emma*. Would that change if I reread the book? After all, I'm not sixteen and extremely naïve any more. But I doubt my opinion would change.

I will be honest – it has been years since the one time I read *Northanger Abbey*, and it didn't stick with me with the same amount of annoyance as *Emma* had. I recall not liking it, but all I really remember was one part: the main character, Catherine, was invited to an acquaintance's house, and when she arrived, she explored it far more than was acceptable, then decided her friend's mother had been had been murdered by the friend's father. A blatantly false and hurtful accusation or rumor. My sympathetic embarrassment rendered me as mortified as Catherine when this idea was proved untrue (yes, sympathetic embarrassment gets me a lot – *Anne of Green Gables* and *Princess Diaries* are nightmares). Wikipedia tells me that *Northanger Abbey* is actually a lighthearted parody of the Gothic novels that were popular at the time. Maybe I should reread it. Maybe I'll like it better now that I'm older. Or maybe the secondhand embarrassment would kill me.

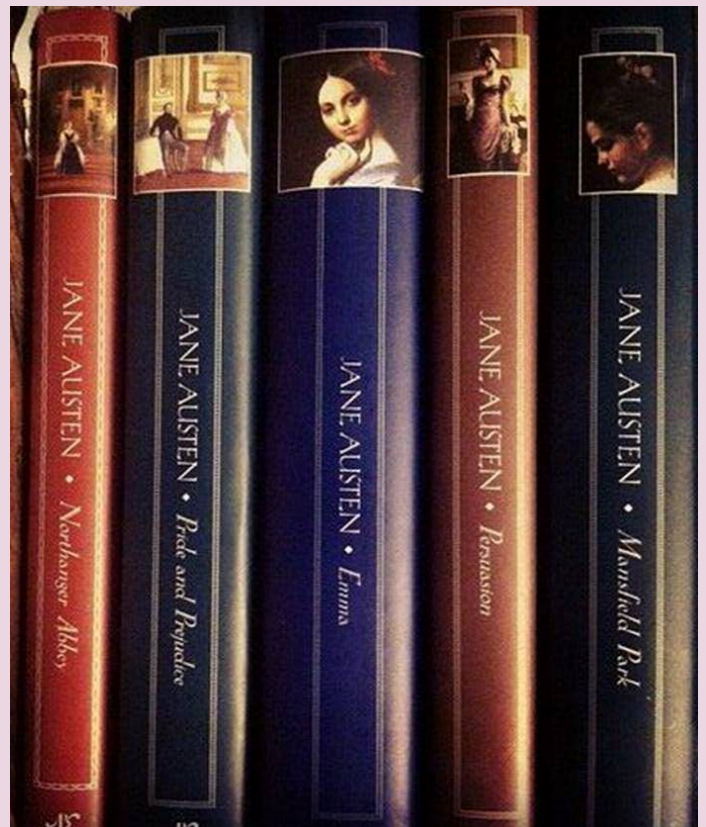
*Mansfield Park* was another book I did not like when I first read it. I thought there was altogether too much flirting, and most of it insincere or leading towards sin. But more recently I listened to the radio drama performed by David Tennant and



Benedict Cumberbatch (with others) – a must listen for any Whovian or Sherlockian! And I enjoyed it. Maybe it was the actors, or the fact that it was a radio drama, or that I was older. There were still certain things I disliked, but Fanny Price was not so different from my younger self – a shy, naive girl whose opinions counted for very little among her acquaintances, who could not ignore her moral compass.

From the start, I loved *Persuasion*. I read it later than the others, not knowing of its existence until a few years later, when I bought the Austen collection on my Nook, if I remember correctly. Again there were some annoying characters, like Anne's sister Mary, a complainer of the highest degree. But they were all true to life, and may be found to this day. But the best thing about *Persuasion* was that Anne got a second chance at love, despite her mistakes. And other characters got second chances despite tragedy. I identified strongly with Anne – logical and true to herself, despite the silliness and/or logic of those dear to her. Above all, I loved the unconditional love found in the book in various forms and relationships. But I won't give away any more – go and read it if you never have, or at least watch the movie.

And as a bonus, I'm going to tell you how much I loved *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell. She's another author who knows exactly how to put real people into her work – any of her characters could be found today, I think. And the struggles are real as well, and can also be seen today – how is a young lady to view an eligible man who doesn't seem to treat his employees well? And how is that man supposed to pay his employees living wages if the market is so low he can barely keep his mill running? And what are the employees to do without living wages? Very good questions, all, and very well asked and answered through this novel. The 2004 TV series adaptation was very good, as well, and did not stray far from the books, which I liked!





# Lady with Parasol

Original Photo & Colouring Page by Bard Judith, Graphictional Design, 2016



AN INTRODUCTION:  
A JANE AUSTEN STORY  
BY NADIA C. SHOSHANA

Ballrooms are known to bring the greatest of pleasures or disappointments and certainly the highest expectations from many different quarters in London. A particularly grand ballroom found itself employed for an evening during the height of the season by one Mr. Gardiner and his wife. Mrs. Gardiner had seen her two favorite nieces so handsomely established, and with the favorites taken care of, it was but natural that the last two of her unmarried nieces should excite some speculation. Mr. Gardiner had his own reasons, and while perhaps not unaware of his wife's thoughts towards his two nieces, agreed that celebrations were indeed in order. Success had showered him with blessings as of late and he felt it quite prudent, even for a man of his circumspection, to hire for a night the handsome ballroom that would become the stage for the events which then occurred for this short chapter.

The Misses Mary and Catherine Bennett were the two unmarried nieces mentioned above. Mrs. Gardiner felt Miss Catherine would be quite easy to secure as she had been living with her sisters, Mrs. Darcy and Mrs. Bingley, who had assured their aunt of attending. Miss Mary Bennett would be more difficult to secure as Mr. and Mrs. Bennett hardly ever came to London. While Mrs. Bennett would rejoice to come if she could, her husband felt a dread opposite but equal in passion to his wife's delight in the prospect. But as Mary was a very proper girl and Mrs. Darcy and Mrs. Bingley were assured of being there, the great attachment Mr. Bennett felt to his daughters and the great urging of his wife overcame Mr. Bennett's natural dislike. London could be viewed with less dread than on former occasions and so an acceptance was sent and the Gardiners spared no expense in the preparations.

After the proper preparations were made, the night finally arrived when the ballroom was lit and the dances begun. The room proved quite full, for the Gardiners had many persons they were familiar with and numerous acquaintances as would be expected from a man so successful. Everyone who was anyone was there and many more besides.

The Darcys and Bingleys arrived in good time, followed quickly by the Bennetts. "What a very delightful ball, my dear brother! Though it is no wonder, as you are so very well off! So much finery and so many good looking young people!" These were some initial remarks made by Mrs. Bennett to her brother as she was let in. The Darcys, Bingleys, and Bennetts were accompanied by Colonel Fitzwilliam, who made a very happy discovery of an old and dear friend whom he had not expected to see that evening.



Colonel Brandon, with his wife and party, had also arrived and a great many introductions were made. Let this prove the point that with one acquaintance a great many may be established, especially in London at the height of the season over the course of a single evening. Among Colonel Brandon's party, Mr. and Mrs. Collins were included, for Mr. Collins knew Mr. Edward Ferrars in the holy profession they both labored in, though it must be said the acquaintance was felt more particularly on one side than the other. Mrs. Jennings was also among their party with Miss Margaret Dashwood, now a fine young lady of seventeen years. She soon got on very well with Mrs. Bennett, and the others followed in good time. Mrs. Darcy found a fellow lively spirit in Mrs. Brandon with animation enough to pass the evening happily--so long as their husbands were ascertained to take them round the room at least a few times. Mrs. Bingley and Mrs. Ferrars exchanged quiet pleasantries and could find nothing displeasing but everything lovely in the evening spent between them. Mr. Collins spent the night assuring his relations that all was well with his esteemed patronage and generally cut in where no one wanted him. The men conducted themselves as expected and had a great deal to say about the upcoming parliament and hunting season, which was accompanied by so many excellent drinks to immediately credit Mr. Gardiner with hosting the best ball of the season.

While it is tempting to dwell all evening on such warm and familiar characters, this short story wishes to point to the lesser known but no less equally important persons overlooked. It is with the new and untested that greater interest and amusements at ballrooms tend to lie. So let us leave the happily married to mingle and enjoy themselves in their newfound acquaintances, and turn to those whose destinies had not yet been decided.

The Misses Bennett and Miss Darcy happily made Miss Dashwood's acquaintance and had discussed each one's accomplishments to form very favorable impressions all around. Miss Catherine Bennett and Miss Georgiana Darcy had grown into fine young ladies of twenty and nineteen since the marriage of their brother and sister. Under their influence, Catherine had lost her silliness while applying her liveliness to womanly pursuits, and Miss Georgiana had learnt from Catherine how to be gay while imparting a great deal of gentleness and thoughtfulness to her companion in turn. Miss Margaret Dashwood had grown into a fine blend under the direction of her two sisters, and while she was not so elegant as Miss Darcy, nor so lively as Miss Catherine, she possessed a great deal of smart observations and human feeling to deepen



the understanding between the three young ladies much more than a ten minute introduction would at first suggest.

Miss Mary Bennett, a young lady of twenty and two years, had grown more soft with time but still lacked the easiness of her sisters while having the disadvantage of not possessing the quiet elegance of Miss Darcy or Miss Dashwood. Being the only daughter for Mrs. Bennett to dote on for the past three years had helped her develop more social graces than she had before, but she struggled to express and feel human sentiments easily. Her mother's silliness had firmly rooted in her a desire and desperation *not* to be silly. So Miss Mary Bennett remained silent among her companions except for a few rare moments. She did try. Whenever an opportunity arose for her to quote a moral maxim or say something quite safe, Mary did exert herself, but it did nothing to heal the natural gap between her and her companions.

Of the four young ladies, Miss Mary Bennett would seem the least likely to be the focus for the forthcoming evening. She had connections but no fortune, was considered the least pretty of the four recommended for our consideration, and lacked almost all hopes of pleasantness for the evening, to say nothing of romance. Mary had never enjoyed a ball in her life, and she held no hopes that this one would change her sentiments. But there must come a time in every person's life when their long held sentiments must be shaken when they will not work for a story.

As the time for dancing drew closer, Colonel Fitzwilliam, after having made a happy reunion with Colonel Brandon, found another reunion in another quarter no less dear than the first. Captains Croft and Wentworth were espied by him across the room with their wives and two young people who, by the looks of them, must be brother and sister. On introduction, Colonel Fitzwilliam met Captain William Price and his sister, Miss Susan Price. Captain William Price, a fine young man of twenty and five, had once been the lieutenant of Captain Wentworth and advanced so far in his estimation that he was himself made captain. There is nothing quite like the military life to endear total acquaintances to each other almost at once, and Colonel Fitzwilliam was quite delighted by the pretty smiles of Miss Price, which made him feel half his age.

Upon noting a few glances cast upon the three beauties and one lady across the room by Captain Price, Colonel Fitzwilliam enquired if he had secured a partner partner for the first dance. Captain Price admitted he had not, and this presented an opportunity for Colonel Fitzwilliam to not only introduce Captain Price to



Miss Darcy, Miss Dashwood, and the Misses Bennett, but to also secure for himself Miss Price for the first dance.

Captain Price found himself in the very fortunate place of having many fine, sensible young ladies from whom he could select his partner. He had made no less difficult decisions during his eight years at sea, and it would have been nearly impossible if Miss Dashwood had not observed that she adored the sea and immediately drew him into conversation about it. It was a weak point for the both of them, him in his occupation and her in her favorite landscapes. Miss Catherine tried to join, for she still held a secret weakness for men in uniform, and Captain Price was a very fine specimen from among the navy's best. But her lack of ever having seen the sea except in drawings only permitted her to add very little, while Miss Dashwood and Captain Price found they could not say enough.

"Cousin?! Is that you?" Captain Price broke off quite suddenly, seeing his eldest cousin and heir to Mansfield Park, Mr. Tom Bertram, passing by.

"Yes, William. I am sorry, I only just arrived and was looking for you," Mr. Bertram replied. He was a more subdued man than society remembered him five years ago when he had narrowly escaped a great illness and misfortune, though still plenty handsome for thirty and one. He had been in town and been discussing business with Mr. Gardiner and landed an invitation in the same afternoon.

Mr. Bertram was drawn into their circle and found himself placed between Miss Darcy and Miss Dashwood, and as the one was already employed by Captain Price, it fell to Mr. Bertram to strike up a conversation with the quieter but certainly not less charming Miss Georgiana Darcy. Mr. Bertram had, to his future credit and estimation, the knowledge of her immediate merits without the corresponding knowledge of her thirty thousand pounds. He thought her the most charming and exquisite girl he had ever met, which was a great deal to admit with his history, and she blushed to encourage him while speaking enough to show her worth. They were easily set apart as a couple for the first dance, so the Misses Bennett were left without partners for that turn. Mary felt relief in escaping the immediate danger, but could not quite bring herself to abandon her sister. Catherine was not used to having no partner for the first turn, and while she held herself bravely, Mary did note a single tear on her cheek halfway through.

The Misses Bennett would have remained without partners for the second turn had not Mr. Collins intruded with a single and rather silent young man. Mr. James Morland was introduced as a fellow clergyman of Mr. Collins, who had recently been awarded his own parish in the past month. Miss Catherine, who very badly wanted a dance, talked so lively and happily to Mr. Morland that he found himself asking, as much to get away from Mr. Collins as to please the lady. Catherine was happy to have a partner, and while she had always thought clergymen the least romantic prospects for husbands--Mr. Collins may have had some hand in this very unjust summation--she found herself thinking how clergymen may be the most unsung of the romantic type, for their uniforms were the unseen but spiritual uniforms, and Mr. Morland displayed the fine colors of good sense and handsomeness in all their finesse.

This arrangement left Mary to contend with Mr. Collins for the next three or four dances when the ever perceptive Mrs. Gardner intervened. "My dear Mary! There you are! I have someone I would like you to meet..." Mary was thankful to be saved by her aunt. It was particularly mortifying to talk with her cousin, as Mary knew she tended toward moralizing. Bad traits are never seen as so bad until reflected in another.

Her aunt led Mary into a quieter part of the ballroom where there was more room and plenty of places to be out of the way in, much to Mary's gratitude. She discovered a young man observing the festivities near her uncle, but not so near to be included in his conversation. "Mr. Howard, may I introduce you to my niece, Miss Mary Bennett," Mrs. Gardiner began and any hopes Mary had for spending a few moments for herself vanished.



"How do you do, Miss Bennett," Mr. Howard replied, having an openness and lightness about him that put her at ease. He smiled agreeably and carried the conversation easily. He was what many would consider very handsome, and Mary was quite sure that there were many other young ladies he could choose from to be pleasant with, but he did not seem inclined to move.

Mr. Howard was at first unsure of Mrs. Gardiner's intention. He had planned on dropping in to pay his respects and please his employer. He was very surprised and felt truly grateful to Mrs. Gardiner, but he did not intend to stay longer



than he could help. The past four years had found Mr. Howard acting as Mr. Gardiner's clerk and he had shown great promise and played a large part in Mr. Gardiner's current success, but he refused to take part in a great many social events, leaving Mrs. Gardiner to believe he was suffering from a broken heart.

Mary was not perhaps the best balm for a broken heart in all of London, but Mrs. Gardiner had already attempted so many introductions among her numerous lady acquaintances with the man, and all had proved so futile that she could not help but hope. Mary was different and Mrs. Gardiner had nothing to lose and everything to gain in introducing the two. At the very least, she hoped it would help him to stay out among people a little longer than five minutes. It was not healthy to remain as cooped up and cramped as he had been, no matter the condition of his heart.

At first Mary answered tritely and wanted any excuse to go away. She found herself surprised that Mr. Howard lingered after fifteen minutes of nothings had been said. She found she could not quite place him. He looked like any other handsome young man, but he had stayed far longer than most and seemed less inclined to mingle than even she did. She did notice there was something in his eyes, which if she had dared to look a little deeper she would have thought was a sadness, but Mary had never been thrown in with men before, certainly not as the only young, eligible lady, and she looked down at her feet.

Mr. Howard noticed the conversation was in dire straits. He was reduced to remarking on the most obvious such as-- "What a lot of people the Gardiners know!" or "What do you think of the weather?" Finally they were left with nothing more to say and neither one found it comfortable.

"Is there any way you can forgive me?" Mr. Howard suddenly spoke. Mary had been about to make her exit with the excuse that her mother must need her, but stopped at this extraordinary request.

"Forgive? What is there for me to forgive? We have barely known each other ten minutes!" Mary exclaimed.

Mr. Howard seemed surprised at Mary's reply and the vacancy that had been in his eyes was exchanged for embarrassment. "Forgive me, Miss Bennett, I seem to have spoken out of turn. You happen to remind me of someone and the warmth in here must have made me drift off."

Mary considered if she should leave or not, but Mr. Howard straightened and looked at her with more scrutiny. "You do remind me of her in a way. Your looks

are different. She had fair hair with curls while yours is darker and straighter."

"Forgive *me*, Mr. Howard, but do you normally compare the lady you are engaged with to another in the course of your conversations?" Mary said rather bitterly. She was no beauty and knew it, but to have it talked of so openly with a stranger hurt her tenderly and made her far bolder than she was wont to be.

Mr. Howard hung his head at her reproof. "You are right. It was very rude of me just now. I do not normally compare the ladies except in my own mind," here he chuckled, but seeing her face grow darker, he decided against making light of it. "Truthfully, you are of equal beauty in different ways. Your temperament was what brought her to mind and I am sorry if I offended you by it. She had a mind as pure and upright as all the saints! If you could but meet her, you would be assured I was comparing you to perfection itself."

Mary was not sure what to make of this. She had never been called a beauty before and certainly never compared to perfection herself. Even though the opportunity to leave had presented itself, Mary suddenly had no inclination to go. She determined to hear more.

When Mr. Howard saw that she had, in fact, remained where she was instead of fleeing to her mother, he realized she expected more and debated what he should divulge. In a moment he decided he did not care. He would tell her just as if she were the real lady he wished to address. This might be the only time he could tell someone so freely ever again, and the thought of going through life and continuing as he was felt unbearable, even if it was selfish and weak.

Mr. Howard looked ahead at nothing in particular because Mary's eyes had become too difficult to face. "Miss Bennett, do you think there is such a thing as forgiveness and redemption?"

She did not answer right away although a thousand different quotes and maxims came to mind, but somehow Mary realized that was not what he wanted to hear. It was very strange not to give them just when someone asked directly for such a thing. Mary, for once, did not give advice though it would have been the easiest in the world to give. This night had suddenly turned into a very different ball than Mary had been expecting, after all.

"I do," Mary said very quietly, looking down. She had never answered something so simply or with so much personal conviction, "Though I would say some things are far easier to forgive and redeem than others, and even some require more than us mere mortals can give. That is why we have religion, sir."



"May I tell you more particulars then, and see if you would judge if I am forgivable-- redeemable--or not?" Mr. Howard pressed. He knew it was a great deal to ask of a mere acquaintance, but he also feared losing such an opportunity. Here was a girl whose opinion he valued more than any for the past five weary years!

"I will listen to all you wish to tell, so long as it does no injury to anyone but yourself," Mary granted.

"Very well then, I want you as my judge and am sure you will do me justice. I deserve much, I am afraid, and you will hate me for what I have to tell, but I am willing so long as another soul knows the truth of what I suffer. Please think of me sometimes, Miss Bennett, and pray for me! I am truly miserable!" Mr. Howard said with true feeling and genuine remorse. "Pity me, for I cannot even abide my true name. Do not worry, your uncle knows he has employed all these years not Mr. Howard but someone who wishes to be known as Mr. Howard because he despises his name! My real name is Mr. Henry Crawford." Seeing as it made no impression or look of recognition on Mary's face, he went on. "I was sincerely in love with the girl I earlier compared you with. I swore I loved her at the time, but it was not until I had lost all hopes of winning her that I knew how deeply true that was! I made a mistake--a horrid mistake! I had a moment of weakness and let my vanity rule my better judgment. I took advantage of her cousin, who was already married and I had already dangerously flirted with, and so I lost any chances with her. I spent a year convincing myself that it was not so bad a thing to lose her, but the thing is, truth always wins out in the end! Every other conquest I made was empty, null, void, meaningless. I began to see my own moral wretchedness. I could never go to her and explain. There is no explanation. There is only weakness and everything vile in me! And once she was married to another, the blow hit me so hard, I had to run away from myself. That is where I found your uncle and begged him to employ me, to hide me from the world so I could forget and seek redemption these past four years. But I have not found it, Miss Bennett. All I have found is my own emptiness and weakness. There--now do you say I am forgivable and redeemable?"

Mary truly did not know what to say. It was all quite shocking. She knew that what Mr. Howard had told was terrible. What he had done was unthinkable and he knew it. She remembered now vaguely hearing about such an event five years ago. Five years ago she would have said such sins could never be forgiven. But then her sister, Lydia, had been forgiven and things made up while she was unaware of having done so much wrong! She had seen her other sister, Lizzy,

turned from finding Mr. Darcy the most horrid of men to finding she wanted him as a husband! And yet another sister, Jane, in forgiving all those that had torn Mr. Bingley away and caused so much pain!

"Mr. Howard," Mary said after considering and pondering for perhaps the longest moment of his life. "Or rather, Mr. Crawford, while what you have said and done is certainly horrid, there is one thing I have observed, though I am young, and that is people change. We are fickle, changeable creatures, capable of great good and great evil, but perhaps that is why we were made to change. So that when we fall into such terribleness, we can the more easily change to the good. I say 'easily' but that can only happen if we distrust our own strength and place all our hopes in the One Who never changes."

Mr. Crawford listened eagerly to her reply and all his apparent confidence left him and Mary saw the man he really was: worn, weary, and nearly despairing. He did not dare look at Mary again and turned his face away so she could not see, but she was certain there must be tears in his heart if not his eyes when he said, "Thank you, Miss Mary Bennett. Thank you." He left quickly.

Mary was surprised to find Mr. Bertram in quite a distressed state coming up next to her after Mr. Crawford's hasty departure. He looked quite troubled. "I am sorry for imposing on you, Miss Bennett," he began in a low whisper to her, "I know our acquaintance has been short, but I must make particularly painful matters aware to you concerning that man you were just with, in justice."

"You need not concern yourself, Mr. Bertram, for he has already told me of the pain he has caused others. Please be assured, he has told me of his own accord, and while I would not dwell on such a painful subject, is it not beyond the frailness and strength of men to change, whether from good to ill or the reverse? Do not think I am asking you to forgive him. I am not sure the human will can, but there is a higher power that may forgive if it finds the soul willing. That is what all of my learning on morals has ultimately lead, but what good is it if it remains only learned, never applied? Oh! I am sorry! I had forgotten you were there," Mary stammered and blushed quite red. Never before had she uttered her own musings aloud. New things were happening to her tonight and new considerations. Mr. Bertram looked a little startled at her, and if Mary were not so overcome with the newness of her feelings, she might have caught the glance Of recognition or knowledge in his eyes. Had not he hoped and believed the same thing, that what is worst in man may be changed into something better, or that past wrongs could be amended? Had he not regretted and felt such



bitter remorse for his past life and sought to implement the changes suffering and thoughtfulness had taught him in his worst hour?

"Past wrongs may be overcome if one has the willingness and the strength, not in himself, I know. But with help from a different quarter, there is certainly hope," Mr. Bertram remarked. Then he smiled and added to Mary, "Please tell him I said that." He and Miss Bennett exchanged glances of understanding, and parted ways, he having done his duty and finding a lighter spring to his step, a burden he never expected to leave lifted, as he sought Miss Darcy for another turn, and Mary having realized so many feelings she had never experienced before and finding her moral theories had always desired to show how they could be applied and not just theorized.

Mary was not a girl who ever ran, but to her credit she walked faster than she ever had in her search for Mr. Crawford to tell him such words that would lighten what he had felt these past four years. She found him nearly ready to leave the place, hat in hand, coat and gloves donned, simply waiting for his horse to be brought. He had suspected coming for the evening was a terrible mistake, despite Mr. Gardiner's strong desires and promises he would not happen upon Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bertram or Sir Thomas, as they had declined due to Mrs. Bertram's health or preference in staying at home. Dances could hold no more for him with all the guilt and loss he still felt. He was surprised when Mary came up to him and stopped him, out of breath, and even looking rosy. She did not consider her words for once in her life, and could never remember what she said, but she was assured Mr. Crawford understood the heart of what she had to tell. He was taken aback, and saw in that moment a new life opening up before him. He knew Mary could not lie. He knew Mary and Fanny both held the same moral principles and maxims. It was a truth he had immediately recognized and enabled him to pour his heart out. Maybe he could someday return to the family whom he had caused such suffering, maybe even seek forgiveness of her he had taken advantage of--maybe with time. But Mary, through Mr. Bertram, had offered the first true hope of forgiveness and with his next breath, he asked her for a dance.

No one was more surprised to see them stand up and take a turn than the two young people themselves. Henry found a great deal more joy in paying attention to a single woman of worth in one dance than he had ever before in all the dances where his main purpose had been to turn as many pretty faces as he could. Having been away from dances for so long, his memory failed him once or

twice, but he found he had learned enough of humility to laugh at himself rather than find it unpardonable, and afterwards blessed the occasion because it caused Miss Mary Bennett to attempt her first smile. On her side, she began stiff and uncertain, but at her partner's blunders, she was put at ease and found the smile creep on quite unintentionally. It had an uplifting and freeing feeling to it so she repeated it throughout the dance as an application not only of human virtue but human feeling. It was one she very much hoped repeated, and can therefore be excused for accepting to turn about the room twice more with her partner. That night the two young people who have been dwelt on the most in this little story learned a lesson they hoped would be repeated many times throughout their friendship--and who knows if it might not be transformed into something more?

Mrs. Bennett even made a note of her most silent daughter seeming to come alive that night, to Mrs. Jennings, "Why, I do believe there may be a little of Jane's beauty in her, after all! I have never seen her look so well! She may yet get married. She could never do so well as my Jane, but perhaps she has something of my Lizzy's luck."

And Mrs. Jennings could add truthfully, "Is that the same girl you introduced me to earlier? She seems a different creature. You may yet marry her in a twelvemonth as it is the height of the season."

With love though, when there is no objection in connections or fortune, and when there is only a little more chiseling of personalities that are open to it, it

need take very less time than a twelvemonth to secure a match. I am sure I can leave you to imagine all the happiness that must have been left to follow such an evening's events in the many new acquaintances made, and how the Gardiners were held in even dearer estimation by more people than they had ever been before, but this is, after all, only an introduction.







## The Industrial Life

By Lucy Rutherford

Clanging, clanging evermore  
 The assembly line is right on time  
 As children scurry through the fog  
 Of cotton fibers in the air  
 And clamber through the narrow gates  
 To fix the many gears and springs  
 Until the lateness of the night.

And then to school if possible  
 Or else to climb the steep, steep stairs  
 And shiver in the drafty room  
 Where all are huddled for the warmth  
 Of precious coal and priceless broth.

Perhaps someday we all shall find  
 The gold this land was said to give  
 But now the baby coughs and cries  
 And mama hardly ever sings  
 And all we have is faith in God  
 And potatoes from the threadbare  
 priest

Who I am sure must be a saint  
 It's precious rare he ever eats.

And every day we rise too soon  
 To go to work for other men  
 Who pay us some but not enough  
 For toiling at their hateful looms  
 In heat and dust like Hell's dark lands  
 They drive and prod and push us on  
 As though we are but soulless beasts  
 Not worthy of a kindly hand.



# *A Confession*

*A Scarlet Pimpernel Fan-fiction Story*

*By LadyBlakh*

*Dear friend!*

*I hope that this letter finds you well. When it comes to myself, it seems to me that I am in heaven, and at the same time in hell. To put it simply - I have fallen in love. There is no way of denying it, even if I tried to in the beginning. And now, at last, I simply had to let someone know.*

*You are aware that I have spent a lot of time with Mademoiselle Marguerite St. Just and her brother these past months, after Fate let me be of assistance to him when he was attacked by the thugs of St. Cyr. And now I have fallen in love - hopelessly and irrecoverably. I have never believed in love at first sight, and that is far from what has happened to me now. How many times have I not seen Mademoiselle St. Just onstage? But then she was only a brilliant actress - beautiful and captivating - but nothing more. No one could deny her beauty, nor her talent. But it is not love to be enchanted by a woman's beauty or a romantic illusion onstage. I have had the privilege of making her acquaintance, and have come to know her - and God knows that I could spend the rest of my life to get to know her soul!*

*It is ironic, is it not? I came to Paris to leave behind the fiasco of my broken engagement with Mary de Courcy - and then, before even spending a week in Paris, I met the woman who I have now lost my heart to, utterly and completely. How strange Fate is! I must tell you about it. The simple truth is that I now have no greater desire or ambition in life than to make her my wife. However, the thought that it is all an*



impossible dream fills me with despair. I wonder why on earth she would fall in love with an English fop who could not write her a poem if his life depended on it.

Position and great wealth hold no attraction for her – rather the opposite. She is a republican who believes in equality, and she judges a man by his character, his talents, and intelligence rather than his social position. Therefore, she is not impressed with my position, and it is not my wealth that would make her consider my proposal, if I ever dared to utter the words to her. But for that I am glad. You know better than anyone else that I am absolutely repulsed by the thought that a woman would accept me as her husband solely because of my fortune and position, like Mary de Courcy did. You know the utter humiliation I experienced when I realised her true motives. She is a spoiled girl, but Marguerite is a woman, with a good heart and a gentle soul, and the only way I can hope to win her is through the honesty of my heart. One could say that we could not be any more different – and still, my heart tells me differently because it has found kinship in hers.

I feel blessed to have been accepted into her circle, even if I am truly out of my element among these intellectuals and artists, brilliant minds discussing art, music, and philosophy. However, I am happy just to be in her presence, though I yearn to be alone with her, so that I may perhaps give her a glimpse into my soul, in the hope of awaking the same feelings in her as I harbour in my own heart. I want to let her look deeper into my nature, but at the same time I fear it. I want to talk to her about important things, to utter words that come from my heart, and I want to talk about unimportant, silly things, just to make her laugh. I so love to make her laugh!

I have become her friend – and I shall be her friend until my dying day, if she wishes. If I could ever be more to her, I cannot know. But friendship, I think, must always be part of love. That is what I have come to realise. For the first time in my life I have met a woman in whom I can see a life companion, to share both joy and sorrow. That is what a marriage should

be, but alas, for many of us it is just an impossible dream. Some men are forced to marry, and some men are free to choose but make the same mistake that I was so close to making - to marry the wrong woman, forever casting away the possibility of happiness.

And if we do find true love, but are spurned - could there be a greater despair? As I said, I feel like I am in heaven, and in the same time in hell. To be in her presence is the highest joy, but still it is torture. What good is love if it is only kept in one's own heart? What is the meaning of worshipping a saint in heaven who you cannot touch, who will never rest in your arms? And yet, I could not bear my hopes being shattered if she turned me down, so I stay silent. God only knows how long this could go on!

Please, do not think that I have gone mad - although love is indeed a form of madness. I know that you, more than any other, will understand me. I may have acted like a fool in the recent past, but I consider myself a wiser man after that bitter lesson. And now, without a doubt, I can say that I know what it is to love. God help me!

Yours sincerely,

Sir Percy Blakeney







# A Kingdom Unites:

## How England and Scotland Became Great Britain

By Wesley Hutchins (alias Earl Chatham)

Great Britain was born on the first of May, 310 years ago.

Of course, the ancient kingdoms of England and Scotland had been in existence on the island of Great Britain for nearly a thousand years, and for a substantial part of that time, the kings, queens, and peoples of each country fought – sometimes with each other, but often against each other in several conflicts.

Then on March 24, 1603, Elizabeth I of England and Ireland died without an heir, and her closest blood relation was her cousin James VI of Scotland, who journeyed from Edinburgh to London to peacefully (and amid much celebration) take his place as James I of England and Ireland. With Wales having been annexed into the Kingdom of England during the reign of Henry VIII, King James was now the first person to rule over all Britain in an arrangement that has become known as the Union of the Crowns.

However, the kingdoms over which he reigned remained separate and distinct from each other, and they had their own parliaments, along with their own national interests. James VI & I sought to change that by attempting to persuade the parliaments of England and Scotland to agree to a full political and economic union, which would create a new kingdom under the name of Great Britain.

Indeed, King James was a passionate supporter of the concept. In his Accession speech to his first English Parliament, James made references to his great-great grandfather, Henry VII of England, who united the warring royal houses of York and Lancaster under the Tudor dynasty, which had brought peace to England following the Wars of the Roses. He went on to say that “union of these two princely houses is nothing comparable to the union of two ancient and famous kingdoms, which is the other inward peace annexed to my person.”

With this message, he saw himself and his Stuart dynasty as bringing peace to the

whole of Britain by ending the ancient Anglo-Scottish feuding. He also emphasized the similarities between the English and Scots “in language, religion, and similitude of manners”, and believed that God had meant for the kingdoms to be united in such a way as to make the border between the two indistinguishable. (“What God has conjoined then, let no man separate.”) Persons opposed to bringing the countries together were “blinded with ignorance, or else transported with malice.”

James continued on his theme of a destiny towards union by reminding his audience that England was once divided into seven kingdoms (known as the Heptarchy) and Wales, and that Scotland was also an amalgamation of Picts, Scots, Gaels, and others. With unification to become Great Britain, the peoples of this new country would become part of a stronger entity, where they could work with a common purpose and toward a common cause. In other words, they were better together.

This was all very well, but on both sides of the border, there was lukewarm reaction as well as outright hostility to the concept of union – some of it driven by xenophobia. There was already some consternation amongst the English political elite at the fact that they were now being ruled over by a Scot, whilst some in Scotland were fearful of their country being annexed into England as a mere province or county. In addition, there were other nagging questions on trade, commerce, religion, and political representation.

During the remainder of James’ reign, the differences and fears between the two kingdoms proved insurmountable and the union did not come to pass. However, he did enact the merger symbolically by using his powers under the Royal Prerogative to proclaim himself as “King of Great Britain”, combine the royal arms of England and Scotland (with the English lion balancing the Scottish unicorn), and to mesh the flags of St. George (England) and St. Andrew (Scotland) into a new Union Flag.

Over the next hundred years, there were other attempts to create an official union, but one country or the other had reasons to resist. Then in 1702, Queen Anne ascended to the thrones of England, Scotland, and Ireland, succeeding her childless brother-in-law, William III & II.

Like her predecessors going back to James VI & I, Anne was a believer in the political integration of Britain, but what finally made the circumstances favorable to union on both sides during her reign was a mixture of religion, monarchical succession, politics, and economics.

For starters, it had been nearly fourteen years since Anne’s father – James VII & II, a Catholic – had been deposed in the Protestant-led Glorious Revolution, in which the





Dutch prince, William of Orange, invaded Britain. William, along with his wife (and Anne's older sister) Mary were eventually declared joint monarchs of England, Scotland, and Ireland, but they failed to produce a healthy heir to the throne by the time Mary died in 1694.

Then in 1700, Anne's only child to survive infancy – Prince William, Duke of Gloucester – died at age eleven. This meant that loyalty to the House of Stuart could only lead to one thing – the return of the Stuart male line, embodied by the ex-King James, and following his death in 1701, his son (and Anne's half-brother) James Francis Edward Stuart, living in exile in France.

In England, parliamentarians were determined not to have a Catholic back on the throne, so they passed – and King William granted Royal Assent to – the Act of Settlement in 1701, which barred Catholics from the succession, and handed it to Sophia of Hanover in Germany. She was a granddaughter of James VI & I, and though there were about 50 other claimants ahead of her, she was the first Protestant on the list.

Meanwhile in Scotland, there were similar feelings against having a Catholic king, but there was also a sense of loyalty to the Stuart family, who had originated from Scotland and reigned in that country since 1371. Perhaps more fundamentally, some Scottish parliamentarians felt incensed at not being consulted on the shared succession; they wished to exert Scotland's right as an independent kingdom and not simply go along with whatever England wanted.

In response to the English, the Parliament of Scotland passed – and Queen Anne granted Royal Assent to – the Act of Security in 1703, which declared that the next monarch of Scotland should be Protestant and of the royal line, but should not be the same person who succeeded Anne to the Crown of England. This gave Parliament the power to choose the next monarch along those lines (probably in the hope that James Stuart would convert), unless the English granted freedom of trade to Scottish merchants within England,

Ireland, and the overseas colonies.

With the ball back in England's court, it then passed – with Anne's assent – the Aliens Act of 1705, which declared that all Scots were to be treated as aliens in England (save

for those already living there) unless Scotland either repealed the Act of Security or agreed to a union with England. The Scots chose the latter option, and a set of commissioners from both countries were appointed by the Queen, who met in London to hash out an agreement.

From April to July 1706 at the Cockpit-in-Court (a remnant of the old Palace of Whitehall), the commissioners worked out a Treaty of Union, which contained the following key provisions:

1. That from May 1, 1707, the kingdoms of Scotland and England were to be “united into one kingdom by the name of Great Britain”, with the flags of St. George and St. Andrew to be combined,
2. That the succession to the monarchy of Great Britain would be vested in the House of Hanover, and to the exclusion of Catholics, as well as people marrying Catholics, and
3. That the people of the United Kingdom of Great Britain were to be represented by one and the same parliament, known as the Parliament of Great Britain.

These were main objectives of the English commissioners. On the other side, the Scots replied that they would agree to them in exchange for free trade throughout the United Kingdom and access to the combined colonies of a British Empire. The English promptly accepted this on the principle that such free trade – including a customs and monetary union – was necessary for a full and complete union, and indeed, the creation of a new nation-state.

There were other provisions as well, including ones for common taxation, currency, laws, regulations, and free movement and trade for citizens who were to be on equal terms, as well as for Scottish representation in the House of Commons and the House of Lords within the new British Parliament, where MP’s and peers from both sides of the border were afforded equal rights and privileges.

Language was eventually added in the parliamentary debates on both sides of the border which guaranteed the independence of the Scottish legal system and the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland (the Kirk), whilst the Scottish Crown Jewels were to remain in Edinburgh. Similar language would also protect the independence and status of the Anglican Church of England.

On July 23, 1706, the articles of the Treaty were presented to Queen Anne at St. James’s Palace, and from there, they had to be ratified by the Parliament of England in



England's Flag

Scotland's Flag





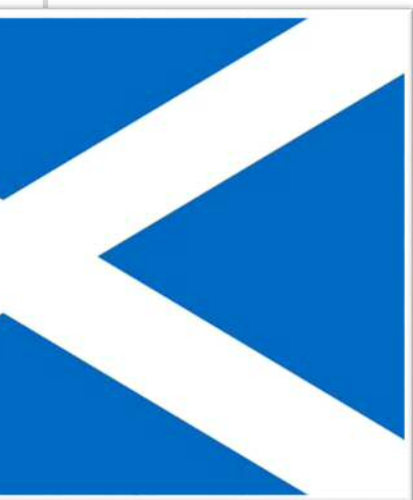
London and the Parliament of Scotland in Edinburgh.

The Scottish Parliament took up the Treaty first in October, and clause-by-clause debates were held through the rest of year and into January, when the last article was approved and a formal bill was presented to the assembly. That bill, known as the Union with England Act, was passed by a healthy majority of 110 to 69 on January 16<sup>th</sup>.



g of St. George

g of St. Andrew



To this day, there has been debate on the extent to which members of the parliament were bribed to ensure passage of the Act. It is known that the Treaty and the Act basically provided for the compensation of losses in the Darien scheme, which was Scotland's failed attempt to establish a colony in Central America.

However there were also some backroom deals regarding pensions, honors, titles, and appointments which has given rise to the idea that Scotland was "sold out" by its own politicians at a time when there was considerable opposition amongst Scots toward the Union (famously reflected upon years later by poet Robert Burns, who wrote: "We're bought and sold for English Gold / Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation"), and it is a debate which may never fully be settled.

With the Scots Parliament having done its work, the English Parliament took up the issue of the Union in February 1707, where the Commons required only two sessions to pass the articles.

But in the House of Lords, some members of the Tory Party held up the proceedings by voicing concerns over some provisions, especially with regard to the status of the Church of England, and they also had issues with the confirmation of the Scottish Kirk.

Objections were raised on every article, but the opposition did not gain much traction, and the articles were approved at the end of February.

The Commons then drafted and passed the Union with Scotland Act, which was passed by the Lords and received Royal Assent from Queen Anne in the Lords' chamber on March 6, 1707.

Almost two months later, the date of April 30, 1707 marked the last day of England and Scotland being separate and independent sovereign states. On the following day of May 1<sup>st</sup>, Anne came to St. Paul's Cathedral to attend a service of thanksgiving in honor of the Acts of Union that had taken effect.

It was a grand celebration involving 400 horse-drawn coaches, and the Queen herself wore the combined honors of the English Order of the Garter and the Scottish Order of the Thistle. A Scottish nobleman who attended the service wrote: “nobody on this occasion appeared more sincerely devout and thankful than the Queen herself.”

Indeed, she told her cheering subjects that this day marked the true happiness of her reign – the day that England and Scotland became the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN.

To this day, England and Scotland have remained together as part of a country – now the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – that has profoundly shaped the development of the modern world over the last 310 years. Its combined and diverse heritage, culture, history, institutions, and people has made it my favorite country in the world after my own, and the monarchy is a living symbol of the unity that has made the UK what it is today. Indeed, it has been better to be together. Long may this Union continue.



Badges of the Orders of the Garter (L) & Thistle (R)



# Always Belonged To You

## *A Pirates of the Caribbean Story*

By Rachel Atterholt

What is it like to love someone? To give something away that you've hidden deep inside you so it wouldn't be broken again? Is loving someone like taking a leap of faith or perhaps is it more of a fall?

What if you believed it was a leap and took that jump over that great cavernous land and found yourself somehow on the other side, alive and safe?

But oh, but when I landed, you turn and the one you love was on the other side? Not because they were too afraid to jump, but because you were never supposed to? What if you *were* supposed to fall? Did I, in my haste, travel somewhere she could never join me? Travel beyond life in search of love? I think I sacrificed myself for her without knowing it. Questions like these wrestle in my heart, in my mind, like a great storm upon the ocean.

I thought we jumped together, but I was wrong. She had stayed behind to save that man, a good man, but still... and, of course I had gone with her. I would sail across the world for her and die for her.

And I did. I did sail and die but somehow death was not as lasting as I imagined. The good man had saved me, sacrificing something he wanted. But there was a price to pay, as is always the case.

Hence, that was the jump I should have never taken. But maybe it was not my doing. My love was standing on the edge, ready to go anywhere with me, and without a word from me, I was thrown to some unknown world, across a million miles of ocean and death. I had to build a bridge back to her somehow, a way for me to find her again.

There was a reprieve within this. My beloved and I had a day. *One* day. Can all that one wants to say be said in a day? Can all love be expressed that must? I don't think so.

And then I was across again. And I had to wait *ten* years to return. Ten agonizing years, but I survived, somehow I did. And another waited for me, a son. And I had yet another day...one more glorious



day that tore my soul to shreds.

So I went back to work on my bridge between life and death, so I could *stay*, hoping one day to find someone to take my responsibilities and give me back my heart.

Does one know what it's like to not have a *heart*? It's like a shadow, an invisible feeling that isn't there but can be felt, that sometimes, when all is silent and you lie in bed staring at the wooden ceiling, the steady sound of a rhythmic beat makes you believe you still have a heart. But, the one I was building a bridge towards held it, which is poetic in an odd way. She always held my heart even before I placed it in a box and put it in her hands.

Years passed and I built the bridge, built it until I was so close I could touch her, could smell her skin, like the sea so bright and wild, but...as I built, I stopped all else. I was supposed to take the dead to other side. And I stopped. And I started to become like the sea, death beginning to show on my face. And my bridge fell and I was tossed back to the other side. And I didn't try to rebuild or try to care. My heart stopped feeling like it was there.

The phantom beats started again one night. For he was there, my son. My own. He had traversed, had leaped over and was here. My son was here! But he couldn't stay. I would never let him. So with a push, I sent him back, my heartbeats leaving with him.

And for years all was silent. A dreadful silence that never wearied, never tired. Nothing changed, and I never came back. She was dead, I convinced myself. And if she was alive, I would not let her see the monster I had become. So even when I could step onto land, I never did.

Why would you want to go back when the ones you want to see would not even recognize you?

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I was convinced I would never return. I would never see her, never see the one I loved more than life, an odd thing to say since I had no life to sacrifice anymore. I had become like the great ocean, always traveling, always trying for land but never reaching. I belonged to the sea now, or perhaps in a way, I always had.

I stood on the edge of my ship. I stared into the deep darkness, no stars willing to shine through the hell I and my crew had found ourselves in. My father had gone, the last piece of my humanity. I had not brought him back; he deserved to sleep and rest finally, no matter how much I needed him.

I closed my eyes and imagined stars. I imagined a breeze. I imagined seeing her face, touching her skin, brushing her dark hair off her cheeks. I imagined rebuilding my bridge and creating a plank instead. I jumped off it and found myself in her arms...yet her arms were too cold, too wet, and it was nothing more than a wish.

Water suddenly splashed my face; maybe the world had burst with tears for me. Or maybe I wasn't dreaming. The wind was gone, leaving an icy flood in its wake. I opened my eyes...I was in the sea. I flailed my arms, pushing myself to the surface.

The shore was there. So close, closer than it had been in years. Could I? Would I? I glanced behind me. There was the ship, my home for so many years, but land lay ahead and I focused on it. I waded in the water for longer than I expected. Could I go to shore? Was I even allowed? Or would this curse, this dreadful thing stop me at the very edge, destroying the last remnants of hope in my heart?

It was then that I stopped. My heart, pulsing and beating like a great drum, beat inside my chest. I gripped my chest as if, by reaching inside me, I could confirm what I could not believe. I touched my face; no sign of death rested there, no reminder of the monster I had become.

I let myself smile then, but not for long, for this must be a dream, a twisted joke of hell. Yet I had dared to swim to shore. Dared to set foot on land. Land, that solid, strong thing that I could not feel for eons of eternities.

A young man stood there, familiar and yet a stranger. With a smile, he showed me a necklace and I recognized it, the twistings of its rope, the familiar touch of the pendants. I had given it to my son and so I knew my son stood before me.

It was at that moment that I began to accept that I was alive. I never had to build the bridge, for my son had thrown a rope and pulled me back. Gripped me out of my abyss.

Do you know what it's like to laugh? To express happiness when for what seems like ages you felt nothing but pain and death? To *feel* life? It's the strangest thing, and I have never loved it more. I held my son, as he told me



he had a tale. My son had stories of his own. A woman stood not far off, with a smile that reminded me of my beloved.

The world seemed to pause, as if it no longer wished me to smile and wanted me back in the fiery abyss I had languished in. She wasn't there. The one who held my heart all those years, the one who still did, though not the same as before. I could not find the woman I had sacrificed everything for and would again in a single heartbeat, which now means far more than it ever did.

To turn your eyes to something, expecting nothing, yet hoping for everything, is the most profound and terrible feeling in all the world. The briefest moment of wanting to return to the dark shore of my grave passed over me before I gripped my son's shoulder and reminded myself that here was a reminder of her, an image I could hold that was far greater than any portrait.

And then...she came over the hill. That was the first time I truly knew my heart rested soundly within me. For it pulsed ever loudly, tapping to a steady beat.

She was here, my true heart, the heart I would gladly trade for this instrument of flesh inside me. Beauty does not describe her. Nor do any words ever created or that ever will be said. She was a different word, an altogether new one.

I glanced upon my son again, as if to be certain that this was true. He stood here still, so perhaps my wish had come to pass.

And so I hurried to her, my legs weak on this new land, but another force pushed me forward, making me strong, making me run. I stopped for the briefest of moments, or maybe she did, maybe we were both wondering if the other was real and not some twisted dream. Then I could hold back no longer, and I reached out to embrace her, my home, my world, the very reason for my life in my arms. She was real, she was here, through it all she had come back to me.

I never thought I would find her again. Through all the ages, all the sleepless nights, I had never let myself dream. For if I dreamed, I would destroy myself utterly. But as I breathed her in, as I gripped her tight and felt our heartbeats become one, I knew I had not dreamed this.

As I pulled back, she gazed at me, and I gazed back. We did not speak, but her name was on my tongue, in my head, the only word swirling through my soul.. *Elizabeth*. And she kissed me, like waves crashing against a broken shore, we kissed and all was right. At last I had made peace with the demons and had survived my monsters to find my way to her, find my shelter from the bitter world.

Far off I knew that the man who had saved me first, who was the reason for my life, was here. And, whether or not he could see me or knew I was even alive, I made sure to smile his way, for he was a hero, after all.

\*\*\*

Can something dead be saved? Something lost forever be brought back? And what happens if, by some miracle, it is? Could someone else take hold of the rope my son threw, or was it just the nightmares I had kept at bay for years breaking the dams of my mind?

For in the dark, I felt him more than saw. I felt the water dripping off his deadness, smelled the sea on his clothes. I heard the *snip* of his great claw. Oh what if something had followed me from the abyss?

And then I awoke and there was nothing but the rolling thunder outside. Outside our home, a home I never believed I would have, never expected. With my darling beside me, my Elizabeth, sleeping quietly. *Oh my love, if only you knew of the things I have seen, or the broken, twisted thing I had become, would you still love me? Would you still hold me like you have?*

I wrapped my arms around her, like a child hiding in the only safe place he knows. I buried my head in her shoulder, listening to her heartbeat. And, wonders of all wonders never ceasing, never ending, she held me back. What is it like to love someone? I think I know the answer now. It is to find your missing heart, the lost treasure, the long forgotten piece to put back all your broken ones. It is to find your home. And I have found my home, my shelter, my broken pieces. I've found them all. I have returned to them once more and I will not lose them. For a while I believed I belonged to the sea, but my curse made me forget the truth. For I belonged to her, to my life, to my home. And no nightmare would take me away, ever again.





SO I JUST RECENTLY WATCHED *PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE BLACK PEARL* FOR THE FIRST TIME. YES, I KNOW, WHERE HAVE I BEEN? WELL, THAT'S A VERY LONG STORY, ONE WHICH I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR. BUT IT GOT ME THINKING ABOUT PIRACY, AND PIRATE LIFE. WHAT KID HASN'T THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE AS A PIRATE ON THE HIGH SEAS, AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIFE? THE FREEDOM, THE DANGER, THE ROMANCE - BUT IS THAT AT ALL WHAT PIRATE LIFE WAS LIKE? I MEAN, OBVIOUSLY, CURSED TREASURE AND GHOST SHIPS ARE PURE FICTION, BUT WHAT ABOUT OTHER ASPECTS OF PIRATE LIFE? SHIVER ME TIMBERS, WALK THE PLANK, AND ALL THAT. WELL, I'M GOING TO APPLY MY SKILLS AS AN (ARMCHAIR) HISTORIAN, AND MY ENCYCLOPEDIC KNOWLEDGE OF SEA SHANTIES TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH.

FIRST OF ALL, AS ANY HISTORIAN (ARMCHAIR OR OTHERWISE) WILL TELL YOU, REAL LIFE IS NOT NEARLY AS GLAMOROUS AS HOLLYWOOD PORTRAYS IT. THE IMAGE WE HAVE OF PIRATES WAS ESSENTIALLY CONCOCTED BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON AND WALT DISNEY. EXPRESSIONS LIKE "YO-HO-HO" AND "SHIVER ME TIMBERS" AND, OF COURSE, "ARR" WERE NOT IN COMMON USAGE DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF PIRACY. FURTHERMORE, THE "PIRATE ACCENT" IS PURELY FICTION. PIRATES CAME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND HAD A VARIETY OF ACCENTS AND DIALECTS. IN THE WALT DISNEY MOVIE ADAPTATION OF *TREASURE ISLAND*, ROBERT NEWTON PORTRAYED LONG JOHN SILVER. ROBERT NEWTON CAME FROM THE WEST COUNTRY, A PORTION OF ENGLAND LOCATED JUST SOUTH OF WALES, AND LENT HIS DISTINCTIVE WEST COUNTRY ACCENT TO THE CHARACTER. SO, SORRY TO DISILLUSION YOU, BUT NOT ALL PIRATES TALKED LIKE THAT. BY THE WAY, YOU KNOW WHO ELSE WAS FROM WEST COUNTRY? DAVID PROWSE, THE "BODY" OF DARTH VADER. BUT I DIGRESS.

HOLLYWOOD PIRATES ARE COMMONLY SEEN SEEKING GOLD AND GLORY, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, PIRATE BOOTY WAS USUALLY SIGNIFICANTLY LESS GLAMOROUS. THE MAIN GOAL OF A PIRATE VESSEL WAS JUST TO STAY AFLOAT, AND IT'S AWFULLY HARD TO DO THAT IF YOUR CREW IS STARVING. MOST OF WHAT PIRATES STOLE WAS PRETTY COMMONPLACE STUFF, LIKE FOOD, OR IN MANY CASES, RUM. MANY, MANY CASES.



GETTING BACK TO THE PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN, WE SEE JACK SPARROW AS MASTER OF HIS SHIP, AND HE CONSISTENTLY REFERS TO IT AS *HIS* SHIP, AS THOUGH HE OWNED IT. MANY FICTIONAL PIRATE CAPTAINS ARE PORTRAYED AS AUTHORITARIAN LEADERS, SUCH AS CAPTAIN HOOK, BUT PIRATE SHIPS JUST WEREN'T RUN LIKE THAT. PIRATE SHIPS WERE MORE LIKE JOINT STOCK COMPANIES; EACH MEMBER OF THE CREW OWNED A STAKE IN THE SHIP, AND WAS ENTITLED TO A VOTE ON HOW THE SHIP WAS MANAGED. BECAUSE PIRATE SHIPS WERE RUN IN THIS MANNER, EVERY MEMBER OF THE CREW WAS ENTITLED TO A PART OF THE LOOT, SO NO GIANT CHESTS OF BURIED TREASURE. THE CAPTAIN WAS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL; HE COULD BE VOTED IN OR VOTED OUT AT ANY TIME. PIRATES WERE MUCH MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN HOLLYWOOD WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE.

TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CASE OF BARTHOLOMEW ROBERTS, THE DREADED PIRATE. YES, THAT'S RIGHT, DREAD PIRATE ROBERTS WAS A REAL PERSON, AND POSSIBLY THE BEST PIRATE OF ALL TIME. ROBERTS WORKED ON A MERCHANT VESSEL AS A YOUTH, WHICH WAS CAPTURED BY PIRATES. THE PIRATES NOTICED HIS SKILL AS A NAVIGATOR, AND EVENTUALLY VOTED HIM IN AS CAPTAIN. YES, JUST LIKE WESTLEY IN PRINCESS BRIDE.

ONE OF THE PROMINENT FEATURES OF THE PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN IS THE PIRATE'S CODE. WHEN I SAW THE BLACK PEARL, I HONESTLY THOUGHT THIS WAS YET ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF HISTORICAL ERRORS, BUT I CAME TO FIND OUT THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST ACCURATE PART OF THE MOVIE. SEVERAL PIRATE SHIPS HAD THEIR OWN SETS OF RULES INCLUDING BARTHOLOMEW ROBERTS' SHIP. THESE CODES USUALLY COVERED HOW THE TREASURE WAS DIVIDED UP, OR HOW PIRATES SETTLED DISPUTES AMONG THE CREW. MOST OFFENCES WERE PUNISHABLE BY BEING MAROONED ON AN UNINHABITED ISLAND.

ALL THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT I DID NOT ENJOY PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN; I FOUND THE MOVIE VERY ENTERTAINING. I'M CERTAINLY NOT ONE OF THOSE STICKS IN THE MUD THAT HAS TO RUIN EVERYTHING BECAUSE IT'S NOT ACCURATE. I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD INDEED INDULGE IN FANTASY. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD REALIZE THAT IT IS FANTASY, AND SHOULD NOT THINK THAT IT IS ANY REFLECTION ON WHAT REAL A PIRATE'S LIFE WAS LIKE. SO GO AHEAD AND ENJOY YOURSELVES, BUT NEVER FORGET THAT YOU'RE WATCHING A FANTASY.

PIRATE CAPTAIN  
BARTHOLOMEW ROBERTS  
BORN MAY 17 1682  
DIED FEBRUARY 10 1722





## People of the Past Pod-casts, with Hope Rachael

By Keturah Lamb

**Date:** August 28, 2020

**Subject:** Private Zechariah Adams.

**Pod-cast:** TTTD #34 "What Have We Become?"

**Report:** My father's and my experiment succeeded. Back in 2019, we finished work on the first time travel transportation device (TTTD). As of yet we can only bring random people from the past, and return them once we are done with them.

We are still working on being able to duplicate individuals' travel and even travel ourselves.

One thing of interest; a majority of the subjects have been pulled from the Revolutionary War period. And even those that haven't, have appeared horrified at our culture. Not shocked - horrified. Even ashamed.

Because of their words, the federal and state governments are trying to close this operation. For that reason, my father and I are always on the move.

### Press Play

*Static.*

**Woman's voice:** Hello. This is Hope Rachael speaking. Today I have Private Zechariah Adams with me. I will be asking him some questions that I hope will produce a better result in our understanding of our technology.

*Shuffling.*

**Hope Rachael:** Thank you for joining me today, Private Adams.

**Private Zechariah Adams:** Thank you for having me, Miss Tr-

**Hope Rachael:** You can call me Hope Rachael.

**Private Zechariah Adams:** Ah, yes.

**Hope Rachael:** We don't have much time, so we better get to it. Can you tell me about yourself? When you were born? And how you came to be in this room with me today?

**Private Zechariah Adams:** It's a long story -

**Hope Rachael:** Remember, time. Could you shorten it?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* (nervous laughter) I shall try. I was born March 14, 1760. I am a private under -

*Hope Rachael:* What year was that?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* 1760.

*Hope Rachael:* Can you tell me today's date?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* I believe I was told it is August 28, 2020.

*Hope Rachael:* How old are you?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* Twenty-one.

*Hope Rachael:* So, you are telling me you were born in 1760. The year is now 2020. And you are twenty-one?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* Correct.

*Hope Rachael:* Please explain?

*Background noise.*

*Hope Rachael:* (anxious) We need to hurry.

*Private Zechariah Adams:* I am not sure. All I know is this: I was excited. Our Constitution had been signed and read. We had proclaimed our freedom and laws. I saw hope - I knew there was still much work ahead of us. But I was happy - we had won the war! And then I was no longer in the room of my cheering comrades, but here in the future.

*Hope Rachael:* Do you know how this came about?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* I have been told, by you and your father, Miss - Hope Rachael. But I do not understand it. In some way you pulled me from my time into your time.

*Hope Rachael:* What do you think about our time?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* I detest it. I can not fathom how so many have not even read the Constitution, or the Bible for that matter, yet consider themselves educated in matters of importance. It makes me want to weep for shame.

*Hope Rachael:* Can you please explain?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* There was so much hope. Times were hard. But there was hope - we were making a better nation. We, the people, were standing against the oppressor. But what have we the people become? I am depressed - the war. The blood. My uncle, my cousins... all we fought for, what they died for - it's all in vain. For our descendants have taken our good work to use in their own selfish pursuits.

*Hope Rachael:* What has made you come to this conclusion?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* Everything. The economic system. Jefferson warned the nation that public debt was to be feared as the greatest danger - yet



it would seem this is encouraged? Vile habits are practiced openly and shown on moving images. As if this beautiful country has become one huge brothel. So many people are crude, selfish, and caught up in materialism. I see few real women - only females rejecting their natural beauty. I see few real men. Only males rejecting their inborn strength or using it to commit abhorrent acts. I see little love, and much ignorance. I see many turning to drugs and crime, and prisons filled to overflowing.

*Hope Rachael:* How long have you been in the future?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* Six weeks. It's been too long - I just want to go home.

*Hope Rachael:* Don't worry - we will be sending you back shortly. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* Yes, that I am sick. I wish this were not true - to think that all that I and my comrades have done is a waste? I can not grasp it.

*Hope Rachael:* What would you do?

*Private Zechariah Adams:* I would weigh the odds. Decide if we were better left under a tyrant's hands, or left to our own vices. Either way I believe we would lose. To be taxed by the King? Or tax our own? To be killed by the enemy? Or kill our own young and old? I do not know. If it were at all possible, I would encourage a group of men to come with me to your time and set the world straight by our own fashion. This way I could die in my own time knowing that my relations' blood was not shed in vain.

*Hope Rachael:* Our time is up. Thank you very much for speaking with me.

*Private Zechariah Adams:* (sigh) I only hope it does some good - that we change our ways and start reading the Constitution that this century claims to live by.

End recording



# WASHINGTON TAKES COMMAND

A Felicity Story

By Hannah Skipper



Having run all the way from home, Felicity sank back against the wall at her father's store to catch her breath as Mr. Merriman attended to a customer. Watching and listening to the goings-on with keen interest, she caught sight of Ben stocking shelves and stiffened to attention.

She'd know that gleam in his eyes anywhere. Something big had happened!

"So, what is it?" she asked, bouncing up behind him.

"Don't you know better than to scare me while I'm working?" he chided gently. "I could've dropped something and maybe broken it."

"Don't put me off!" she retorted, unfazed. "What's happened?"

"What are you talking about, girl?" he asked sternly, hands on his hips, even though he couldn't suppress a smile.

"You tell me, Benjamin Davidson! You can't even keep a straight face!"

He blushed and his shoulders slumped in defeat. "Alright, fine—" But his mouth clamped shut as Annabelle and Elizabeth Cole entered the store.

"*What?*" she prompted, shaking his arm to get his attention. "Ben, what is it?"

He shook himself, grabbed her by the arm, and half-dragged her into the storage room at the back of the store.

"What, Ben?" she asked again, practically begging, thrilled by his secrecy.

"I-I just didn't want to cause your father any trouble if someone overhears us," he answered, hastily explaining his actions. "I know the Coles don't share our opinions on the--"

Felicity gasped, "There's news from Philadelphia, then? What is it? What is it?" She could barely contain herself.

"*Calm down, Lizzie!*" he hissed, grabbing her shoulders and shaking her, fire momentarily blazing in his eyes. "We can't be caught back here! People will think—"

"Okay, okay." She understood.

"Now, listen to *this*," he said, his eyes twinkling and his voice brimming with excitement again. "The delegates have voted to create an army *and* they unanimously chose Mr. Washington to be the commanding general!"

She gasped again. "*What?* How do you know?"

“One of his men came in about an hour ago,” he answered. “He was heading back to Mount Vernon with a letter for the general’s wife. He said Mr. Washington is already on his way north to take over.”

“The vote was unanimous?” she questioned. “*Really?*”

He nodded. “His man said that Mr. John Adams of Massachusetts nominated him, and the motion was approved unanimously.”

“But why would a man from Massachusetts nominate a Virginian?” she demanded.

“I asked him that myself,” Ben affirmed. “He said that Mr. Adams argued that if the colonies didn’t unite around the cause, then they’d lose. By nominating Mr. Washington, Mr. Adams said that they’d not only get a man with great military experience, but that he hoped the southern colonies would support the cause more fully if it was led by one of their own.”

“Father really respects Mr. Washington,” Felicity said proudly, “and so do I.”

“I don’t know anyone in Virginia who doesn’t,” he smiled, “and I’m glad to hear that the leading men in the other colonies think him worthy of such a great position.”

Then he stopped and cautiously peeked around the corner into the store. “I think we ought to get back out there. I need to get back to work.”

“But, Ben!” she protested, wild for more information. “There *must* be more news! *Tell me! Tell me!*”

“No, Lizzie!” he hissed. “Remember—”

Checking once more, he shoved her out of the storage room and she quickly moved away so that he could also return.

“So, what were you doing back there with Ben?”

“*Elizabeth Cole!*” Felicity whirled around to meet her best friend’s almost scandalous expression, “It’s not at all like *that!* How could you even think--”

“Then what was it?” Elizabeth asked teasingly, baiting her friend.

Felicity’s eyes widened. “Only that the men meeting in Philadelphia approved the creation of an army and appointed one of *our* own delegates, Mr. Washington, as commanding general. *That’s* all, Elizabeth Cole!”

Elizabeth’s teasing demeanor vanished in an instant, her face turning white with shock and sadness. “*Why?*” she asked, staggered by the news.

Felicity blushed and turned away, sorry that she’d let her friend tease her into blurting the news out. “Ben said that they want to unite the colonies to strengthen their position,” she answered softly, embarrassed that their conversation had turned to politics. “Since most of the men who are currently fighting are from the northern colonies, they thought that by putting a southerner into a leadership role the fight wouldn’t seem so regionalized.”

“How *provincial,*” Annabelle sneered, coming up behind them. “Just imagine the colonists standing up to His Majesty’s men!”

“Annabelle, please...” Elizabeth warned, not wanting to carry the conversation any further; the whole idea made her sick.

“But it’s so foolish, Bitsy,” Annabelle lectured, ignoring her sister’s wishes. “Just think, they believe that this *one* man holds enough sway that





his appointment to lead their *little* army will unite the rebels and they'll beat His Majesty's men when *our* army and navy is the most accomplished in the world. Why, this will only be to their own ruin!"

"That's what I'm afraid of," Elizabeth muttered softly, pressing her lips together when her sister used her despised nickname. "I'm sorry, Lizzie. I've got to go home."

Felicity nodded, feeling the rising tension between herself and the Coles as Annabelle's argument held weight in practical Elizabeth's mind. "Right, I better go see if Father needs me to do something."

The two friends separated quickly and soon Felicity was headed for home, having not been needed at the store. She felt sure that her friendship with Elizabeth would survive this incident, but as she walked along, Annabelle's words came back to her. Could Mr. Washington's appointment really unite the colonies and would their unity really be enough to defeat the English juggernaut?

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### A Look Back:

The Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1775. At first, they continued to seek a peaceful end to the growing rebellion. The Olive Branch Petition was an appeal directly to King George III to intervene on behalf of his colonial subjects against the aggressions of Parliament. In sending such a document, the colonists were assuming that the king's goodwill was with them and they wanted to reciprocate by assuring him of their loyalty.

However, when the king failed to even give their Olive Branch petition an audience, the mood shifted and they began moving toward independence by approving a salaried army led by Washington and the Declaration of Independence.



King George III



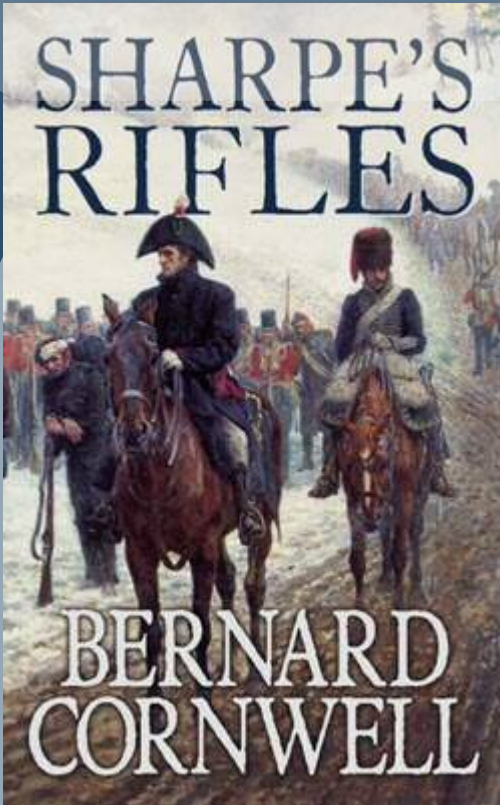
## TRIO WITH MOUNTAIN DULCIMER

ORIGINAL PHOTO AND COLOURING SHEET BY BARD JUDITH OF GRAPHICTIONAL DESIGN, 2016



# Sharpe: The Rise of a Natural Born Leader

By Graeme Restorick (alias Matthew Hill-spur)



The Sharpe Series, based on Bernard Cornwell's books, was a popular period drama series set during the Napoleonic Wars that was originally screened on ITV in the UK between 1993 and 1997 (with one-off episodes based in India in 2006 and 2008 respectively).

Richard Sharpe, the protagonist, is an officer in the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles promoted from the ranks for saving Sir Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington) from being killed or captured by French Horsemen in 1809 during the Episode 'Sharpe's Rifles'.

Though a natural leader, Sharpe is handicapped by the English class system of the time. Having been born in humble circumstances to a prostitute in Keighly, Yorkshire, England, he joined the army like many of his station to avoid the absolute poverty endemic in Britain at that time. The attitude of the upper classes to the common soldiery of the time is best illustrated by the comment from the real Duke of Wellington who once described the average British soldier as 'the scum of the Earth

enlisted for drink', an attitude that makes it seem somewhat implausible that he would have promoted someone like Sharpe from the rank of Sergeant to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant simply for saving his life.

Because of his humble origins and the contemporary class system, Sharpe has to work harder than most to earn the respect of both his social 'betters' and his 'peers'. The former despise him for his lack of 'breeding' and frequently view him as a low-born, uneducated brute who does not belong in their exalted ranks. This snobbery is matched by the attitude of the lower ranks themselves, who view him as being 'jumped up' and seeing himself as 'better than he should be'. This reflects a common attitude of the time in Britain that one should defer to one's social superiors and not get ideas above their station.

The first episode deals with Sharpe's struggles to earn the respect of his peers after he is left as the only surviving officer when his unit is decimated during a mission to link up with a banker and assist a force of Spanish guerrillas. The Riflemen in Sharpe's platoon include Harper, a large and powerfully built Irishman; Hagman, a former poacher from Cheshire and a crack shot; and Harris, a somewhat enigmatic well-educated former servant (based loosely on Benjamin Harris, a real former rifleman who fought in the Peninsula campaign and published a memoir of his experiences in 1848 that Cornwell used as source material for many of his novels).

As the only surviving officer, Sharpe pushes to continue the riflemen's mission to link up with the Spanish guerrillas, led by the beautiful but fierce Teresa Munro, and assist them in fomenting a rebellion against the French occupiers. However, the Riflemen, who do not view Sharpe as a 'proper' officer because he is of humble origins like themselves, suggest that with all the 'real' officers dead, they should



abandon their mission and make their way back to British lines, instead. When Sharpe refuses and tries to impose his authority as an officer on them, they plot to take matters into their own hands and murder him, with the formidable Harper chosen for the task. After a ferocious fight, Sharpe manages to overpower Harper and put him under arrest, causing the other Riflemen to fall back into line and obey his orders.

Harper later redeems himself by preventing the capture of a valuable relic by the enemy, despite being given the opportunity for a reward, in addition to his freedom, for standing aside. In the action, he kills two French cavalymen and drives off the primary antagonist with his rifle. Sharpe, whilst pretending to be unimpressed, allows Harper to fall back into the ranks and the two eventually become firm friends, with Harper becoming his second-in-command in later episodes.

Although he has earned the respect of his peers in this episode, Sharpe has to deal with the snobbery of his social superiors throughout the series, although he also earns the respect of many of them through his leadership and courage, and is steadily promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel by the time of Sharpe's Waterloo, set in 1815.

All in all, it is an enthralling and primarily action-oriented series that also deals with some of the social attitudes and issues of the time. Sharpe, like all of Cornwell's protagonists in his other historical novel series, is an outsider and a virtual outcast who has to prove himself constantly by his own merit, courage, and wisdom to overcome the contemporary prejudices of those around him and command the respect of those he leads and seeks to influence, persistently rising above these difficulties and triumphing over his adversaries, both internal and external, by the end of each episode or novel.

As an aside, I met Bernard Cornwell a few years ago at an historical fiction seminar in Harrogate where he was promoting his nonfiction book on Waterloo. Interestingly, he used to work for the BBC and only became a writer because he moved to the US with his American wife and couldn't get a green card allowing him to work, and so turned to novel-writing, instead. In addition to Sharpe, he also wrote a short-lived series of novels centred around Nathaniel Starbuck, an American Northerner who ended up fighting for the Confederacy despite being antislavery and having very enlightened, modern views on racism of the time, in keeping with his tradition of his protagonists being outsiders distrusted by those on his own side. Much to my disappointment, however, Cornwell decided that the Starbuck Chronicles were too much like Sharpe and effectively abandoned the series to focus on his other novels, including the *Grail Quest* series, about an English archer from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century who fights in France under Edward III during the Hundred Years War whilst simultaneously searching for the Holy Grail and dealing with being declared a heretic by the Church.

The general anti-Church theme of Cornwell's *Grail Quest* series is a reflection of his upbringing by a Christian sect he was adopted into, known as 'the Peculiar People', which he called an apt description 'as they were peculiar', during a Q&A session. Via his Canadian father, who had a brief fling with his mother during World War II when he was stationed England, Cornwell discovered he was descended from Uhtred the Bold, an Anglo-Saxon Ealdorman of Northumbria who once ruled over Northumbria from Bamburgh Castle, and thus decided to write another historical novel series (later turned into a TV series in its own



right called 'The Last Kingdom') based on a fictionalised version of his ancestor. This character is portrayed as an Anglo-Saxon captured as a child and raised as a pagan Dane, who steadfastly refuses to re-convert to Christianity despite the problems this causes for him amongst King Alfred the Great's court, including his being given the sobriquet of 'Uhtred the Wicked' by his enemies amongst the Anglo-Saxons. His paganism is tolerated only because of his skill and bravery fighting the Danes, which makes him too useful to get rid of, but still prevents him from being fully accepted by those around him. Despite this, Uhtred is firm friends with Father Beocca, his childhood tutor, and Father Pyrlig, a former warrior who became a priest that occasionally fights side by side with Uhtred in his battles with the Danes. Some readers may therefore find its anti-religious and anti-Church themes offensive at times, but it would be too far to say they amount to anti-Christian screed since not all devoted Christians are portrayed as foaming bigots and fanatics, although there are plenty of those serving as antagonists as well.

They are all definitely worth checking out if you like your historical fiction to be gripping and filled with plenty of action as well as being thoroughly well-researched on the historical background of the times they are set in.



Sharpe is my favorite role of all that I've played. He's a very complex character. He knows that he's a good soldier, but he will always have to fight the prejudice of aristocratic officers because of his rough working-class upbringing. On the battlefield, he's full of confidence - but off it, he is unsure, a bit shy and ill at ease.

— Sean Bean —

AZ QUOTES

# A Soldier's Heart

By **Avellina Ballestri**  
(alias **Rosaria Marie**)



He was always the quiet one, watching, waiting, it seemed, for something. He was lonely, people said, brooding over past hurts, keeping to himself lest others saw his wounds, going out alone into the wild on his hunting trips, and returning with as little ceremony as he had gone. He accepted invitations rarely, and when he did attend gatherings, he tended to remain on the sidelines of the party. He was the one they all muttered things about, the curious oddity all closeted up inside. He did his best to humor them, even if it stung, like raw exposure.

But no one seemed to think much of it, for Colonel Christopher Brandon was simply a part of the respectable furniture to them. He knew most men commended his rank and record, but most women thought him a bore, the bland colonel who had seen too much of the wars. They said some fighting men loved the parties more for all that, but Brandon was not among them. No, according to them, he would no doubt get duller by the years. And he had no doubt they were right. He was like the rain: gray, gloomy, always coming and going...

But then he had seen her, though she hadn't seen him, so involved playing a tune on her pianoforte, golden-red curls falling over her porcelain shoulders like sunlight dripping over the white cliffs that ran along the coast. And he was overwhelmed by the warmth of her, the light in her shining through dancing, laughing eyes. He wanted to be a part of this aliveness she seemed to exude at all times. She reminded him of his first love, so many years before.

Marianne Dashwood was living to feel, to dream, to love, to immerse her senses in all that he had cut himself off from for so long. He wished he could be a part of that life, so much that it hurt, but her eyes fell upon him with a cold shade, and it hurt more. He did not blame her, of course. He was not the most attractive of men, not physically or personably. He just was, like a piece of old lawn furniture, part of the atmosphere, but preferably ignored.

And then there was Willoughby. Young, handsome, charming in every way, a winning smile, knowing the right things to say to brighten her eyes, he was everything





to her, even as he was nothing to her. He was a rogue, the kind that can win a heart without having a heart. He was the sort who lived for pleasure, even if it caused others pain. He was like the summer sun in tropic islands, brilliant yet burning raw.

And had the day not come when the sun withdrew itself from the flower, and she had found herself alone, soaked by the rain and her own confusion, her own despair? But Brandon had been there, with his rainy countenance, to scoop her up off the ground and bring her home. And seeing her so limp, and pale, and death-like, had he not pleaded to be given something to do to help, lest he go mad? For few could know or realize, but inside him raged a summer storm, with lightning in the eye and thunder in the heart, beating warm.

And when she awoke from her coma, her mother was there, brought cross-country it was said, by a friend. Colonel Brandon, that very friend, was there, looking in the door to see if she was alright, and when her eyes fell on him, he shyly turned his own down and went away. But her words of thanks, however measured, had reached him, she knew that.

She saw much of him as the days passed. She was tired and ill and broken inside, and he looked upon her with a hint of fear, as if dreading that the petals of a rose might drop off and turn to dust. He was gentle with her, although she went as hard on herself as a person might go. He was the one who would not go away, somehow, and she was too tired to try and force him away, too tired to give him the slip anymore.

And in that inability, she gradually found his kindnesses were becoming more welcome. He might not be exciting, but he was steady. He always came. Surely he would always come, and almost every day brought her flowers, as he always had. She used to shove them off to her older sister, as they often seemed in some disarray, as if hastily assembled, like his awkward words to her. They used to embarrass her, like he did, and she had not cared how her actions wounded him. But now she kept the flowers hurriedly yanked from his garden, and she would bury her nose in them. They'd make her feel a little less dead in the heart. And his lonely eyes seemed comforted by it.

She never imagined he would like poetry, but clearly she was wrong. He knew the poets, the richly romantic ones she thought would be beyond his ken. And when she found out he knew, she asked him to read them to her, and he did. His voice was not like Willoughby's, exuberant and full of applied ardor, but it was deep and even as a ship sailing in calm waters. It often soothed her to sleep, either outside in the lawn chair or sitting on the crimson couch before the hearth. And when she woke up he'd be gone, but a knit quilt would be pulled out over her, and sometimes she thought she might remember the flash of his fingers across her cheek in her sleep, and his voice telling her to have pleasant dreams.

Flowers. Poetry. Tea.

They took tea together often, on the porch, or in the gazebo. The cream and sugar questions would go back and forth, and the butter and berry jam on muffins. And when the lights rose or dimmed, the gardens would be the most beautiful, and they would watch the way the flowers opened or closed. And she would ask if all beauty was built on suffering. He said that if it were so, then all suffering was built on love. She asked if it was worth it. He answered that each person would say a different thing. But he believed it was.

Sometimes they'd listen to the rain fall. Sometimes they didn't have to say anything, and she realized she liked it that way. It was not because she didn't like him to speak, but rather she liked knowing she could feel



safe in the presence of another, even in the quiet. It was the strange sense of sharing a mind sometimes, even in forgetting the separation between the one and the other. Strange and beautiful.

He started to speak a little more, sometimes. Rarely, he'd even try for a joke, when she seemed most deeply depressed. It was frequently self-deprecating, about his own rather silly past efforts to please her. Hearing him do that made her chuckle softly, involuntarily. He would smile at his own expense. He could also calm her when her breathing betrayed her, in the wake of the pneumonia that almost claimed her life. When she was weak, he was the arm she leaned on. When she felt her lungs flutter, he was the one who helped with her inhaler, and counted slowly, methodically, until her breaths became even again...he was there to make her whole again...

“For whatsoever from one place doth fall,  
Is with the tide unto another brought:  
For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought.”



He was always there. He always had been. She started to imagine he always would be.

But then the day arrived when the streets buzzed with news. It was all quite dramatic, all darkly thrilling really. Bonaparte had escaped from Elba! The bagged fox was on the loose again! Was it somewhat romantic for everyone, to imagine the flurry it would cause?

“It will come to nothing,” the finely dressed citizens said. “That Corsican pretender is making a final swagger, that is all. He is all done and finished.”

And everyone believed them.

But then the evening came when Brandon arrived at the door, and he was dressed in his uniform.

“Colonel,” Marianne blurted in surprise as she surveyed him on the stairs. “What is this?”

“I am to report to my regiment tomorrow, and must leave for Portsmouth on the late coach. I am sorry I could not inform you earlier. The news came suddenly, although I admit to rather expecting it would.”

“I rather thought recalling officers to the field was unnecessary,” she admitted. “The common thought is that this problem should be resolved easily, as

Bonaparte has but a handful of men.”

“I...would agree that he will be defeated,” Brandon concurred.

“Defeated?” she blinked. “But I thought he had no army *to* defeat.”

“I fear those who know little of the man also know little of his ability to attract other men. There is an army, Miss Marianne. He has gathered one again, and it is only a matter of time that they must be met.”

“Would you...I mean, I’m sorry, would you like to come in and have something to eat before you leave?” Her words were awkward, confused. It was common for them to have tea together, though it was rather late in the day for that now. *Leaving? Was he really...leaving?*

“You are most kind, but I must decline...I must be on my way shortly, and can get something to eat at the halfway point...of course, it would not be as good as meal with friends, of course, but...,” he rambled, then exhaled. “I simply wished to...to relay my thanks to your family, for their friendship, their many kindnesses...”

“Really, colonel, there’s no need for that,” she reproached him, still feeling uneasy at the prospect of him

him being called back to war. "You've been...more than kind, yourself."

Brandon gazed at her, as if trying to find the words he wanted to say. "I...have never...expressed myself...well," he confessed. "But, Miss Dashwood, Miss Marianne, I..." He paused, and there was nothing but pain on his face. "I...will miss you, Marianne. Yes, if you believe me capable of any honesty, I...I will miss you...very much."

"You make it sound like you're going away forever," Marianne replied, trying hard to make light of it, but feeling a weight in her chest. "It shan't be a long separation. You said so yourself; this business with Bonaparte is a foregone conclusion. If battle must come, so be it, but it's still nothing more than a last stand."

He smiled slightly, grimly. "Never underestimate last stands, my dear."

She blinked, suddenly noting the tone in his eyes and realizing what it meant. *He thinks he might die...he thinks he might die out there, and he's trying to say goodbye.* "Are you...afraid, colonel?"

"I wish I could be afraid," he said softly. "It would mean I was not all numb by the action taken, and going to be taken." He looked wistfully out the window to where Margaret was playing with a wooden sword. "I think...I shall get your sister something in Belgium, if I am able. She might like a memento of the war to show her own children one day...nothing sharp, never fear; I am not that thoughtless. But you would be amazed by the sort of things left over on a battlefield. It is as if all the world has been turned upside down..."

"Colonel." Marianne's voice sounded strained, and it brought Brandon out of his strange ramble. Then she exhaled. "You know...Margaret has grown to like you quite a bit."

"Has she?" His voice was almost innocent in his eagerness to know that. "I...am glad you told me. I would not imagine...well, I've just had limited experience with children. Indeed, to be liked is...somewhat difficult for me to achieve."

"That's nonsense," she countered. "We all like you. Everyone of note in the county has good things to say about you."

"You may have been told already, but I am afraid I am the kind of man who is frequently spoken well of, but rarely cared about."

Marianne bit her lip, recalling Willoughby's dismissal of the man, as one who everyone pretended to be delighted to see, but loathed trying to talk to. Now that she thought about it, almost everyone she'd ever seen interact with him treated him that way, like something that had to be there for conventions sake, but which no one truly held any attachment for.

"I think...people simply need to get to know you," she offered quietly. "Like Margaret. I'll admit, in the beginning she thought you were..." She paused, trying not to be too forward, not wanting to spill out the words, not wanting to admit that Margaret had called him a boring old bachelor who she'd hate to have for a brother-in-law. And Marianne had agreed with her.

Brandon smiled. "Whatever she thought, she was probably right. She's a clever girl."

"But don't you see? Now you're...you're almost...one of us." She reddened, fearing how that might be taken. "I mean, like...a part of the family..."

He chuckled a little. "Marianne, please...do not fear leading me the wrong way. I may have wished for much, but now my greatest wish is simply to be your friend. All or nothing must flow out of that, and I do not for a moment think myself entitled to anything at all. It is joy enough for me to...have someone like yourself who is gracious enough to put up with my feeble efforts at friendship, and my poor attempts at idle conversation. Believe it or not, it has given me something to live for." He looked over his shadow at the light cast over the lawn. "I fear it grows late. Please forgive my hasty departure. It is with no intent to abuse your kind hospitality."

He stepped backwards towards the door, awkwardly.

"Of course, we all understand," she muttered. "Umm...please, you will...write, won't you? I mean, even if it's not long...we'd all appreciate hearing how you are faring."

He smiled a little. "Can't give away military secrets, I fear. Margaret might get chattering and inform the world over."



This caused Marianne to laugh a little. "Oh, well...you'll have to address your secrets to me alone, then."

"Alright," he conceded, and then his eyes fell to her again, softly drinking her in, like the last drink a man was ever going to have before being sentenced to die of thirst. "Be well, Miss Marianne...take care of yourself...remember to eat and sleep as the doctor tells you, and wear your shawl, and keep in out of the rain..."

She giggled a little. "Now you sound very much like my mother."

He reddened slightly. "Yes, yes, an old mother hen," he allowed, in good-natured self-deprecation. "I suppose...I've gotten used to worrying over you just a little. I am...a silly man."

"You're a good man," she responded quietly.

He swallowed and took her hand in his. She felt his lips against it, tingling her skin. The sensation should have been hot, she thought, but it was cold. And now she was the one who was afraid.

"Goodbye," he whispered, stepping backwards on the door. "Goodbye, Marianne..."

She watched him go down the path, towards the garden gate as the evening mist fell, and how ten-year-old Margaret stopped her playing and marveled at his uniform, and asked where he was going, and how he told her he was off to join his regiment, and he'd try and bring her something back...and then she hugged him, impulsive little girl that she was.

And although she couldn't see from that far away, Marianne might have sworn he was forcing back tears as he went out that gate, feeling just a little warmer from Margaret's hug. And for all the propriety in her, she wished she would have given him the same.

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She stood in the town square that was half in a state of rejoicing, half in a state of mourning. The war had gone on for so long, the end of it sent strange shock waves through everyone, each person taking it a different way. Laughter, dancing, trembling, tears. But Marianne merely stood, white as the last rose of summer, bent upon the stem, weak at the knees. And the name of a place was carving deeper and deeper into her mind, her heart, her soul.

*Waterloo.* That was where the battle had happened, the long expected final confrontation. Victory and death, all wrapped up into one. It was the culmination of months of waiting and watching and wondering. And for her, it was underscored by the starkness of an absence and her own thoughts rushing to fill in the void.

*Where is he? Why hasn't he written? Is he unable to write? What's happened to him?*

All thoughts, rushing around in circles upon circles. And his own predictions about the nature of last stands, and her own memory of the look in his eyes when he left. Did he ever expect to come home, or was something else altogether anticipated? And why did each day feel like a month, until they all accumulated, and it felt like a thousand years?

And here she was, brought to this place, and the casualty list posted in public as bonfires were being lit, and the songs being sung, and the sun was sinking. And she both could not believe and could believe all too well the ink burning through her. It was the longest casualty list she had ever seen, and the first one she had ever been personally invested in. It was as if the ink had all but turned to blood in her eyes as she scanned it, every blessed bit of it, seeking out the regiment feverishly. And then came the words that singed her most:

*Colonel Christopher Brandon. Missing.*

*Missing...?* What did that even mean? Is it simply another way of saying blown apart, unrecognizable, left on the field in so many little unidentifiable pieces? Did it simply mean no proof either way, an eternity of uncertainty, confined to a ghost-like sphere? Did it mean, quite simply, no one cared enough to investigate beyond that, that he was honored enough to be listed, but not loved enough to be sought after...even the blood and bone of him?

She felt unable to walk, and yet she walked. It felt like floating, hovering over the confetti-stained

cobblestones, jostled by crowds of merrymakers and those wailing for the loss of loved ones. She made no sound. It all was inside. Some strange comfortable silence, and then the twist. She had not felt that since he was last with her. And now...he was no more. Or at least, she did not know more. Oh, he had always known it would be this way, hadn't he? His soldier's heart had told him so.

She was in too much of a fog to recognize the faces clearly in the torchlight spread across the square. She had snuck out alone, even unbeknownst to her family. And uncle and aunt would simply lecture her about going out into the tumult so late. It was not appropriate that a young lady should be seen amidst the late night revelry that easily might be commandeered by drunken hooligans. Her sensible sister Elinor also would have cautioned her against it. And high-spirited young Margaret would have wanted to come along. But this night, she did not want to be seen, to be recognized. Anonymity was her cloak.

But faces were one thing; voices were another. Voices, and laughter, blended together, almost like a strange dream. She knew what she was hearing, what invaded her being like a lance. He was sitting high in his carriage, pulled off in the shadows, a bottle in one hand and a full-breasted woman slumped against him in what seemed to be a state of drunken celebratory giddiness. She watched numbly as the flickering torch reached its fingers across the faces of the man and the woman sharing the bottle, the brandy wine dripping down their faces. And then their lips pressing against each other, blood-red against blood-red, moaning with pleasure, while others were moaning in pain...

And then, like a cat's ears prick up, the man seemed to sense the eyes of another on him. He sat up abruptly and made her out in the shadows. With a quizzical expression on his face, he slipped down from the carriage and came towards her. She was too drained to move at all and just watched him approach.

"Marianne..."

"Willoughby."

A strange, almost embarrassed chuckle rose in his throat. "Well, no need to look so very glum, a fair flower of a woman such as yourself...why, you'd think it'd been a defeat from the look on your pretty face."

She said nothing, just continued staring at him accusingly.

"Here alone, my dove? Surely you should have a fine gentleman to take you about by now?"

"Where is your wife, sir?" she demanded hoarsely.

He shrugged. "Do you think I'd subject her to such a raucous display of gaiety? No, no...she'd much rather be at home!"

"As you would," she remarked quietly, "instead of on the field."

"Ohhh...I see now," he chirped. "You wish I were with *him*. Get my face blasted off by Boney's guns, hmm?"

She shut her eyes, but said nothing.

Willoughby, on the other hand, snorted. "An honorable man, such a perfect gentleman, yes? So unimaginative in his perfection, so foolish in his honor. As they say, the paths of glory lead but to the grave... he had a personality for it..."

"Stop..."

"What? You yourself once agreed with me that a man of five and thirty might well have outlived all acuteness of feeling, so little could be expected in return for him. But all is not lost. Perhaps his mother might find him worth mourning over...oh, sorry, did he ever even *have* a mother...?"

His words shattered the last shadow of their past attachment and brought her hand striking across his face like white heat, with the sting of a rose's thorn. The slap stunned him, and for one instant, Marianne



thought it also might have shamed him, perhaps even pained him, as his own words had shamed and pained her, as the memories of their mutually shared cruel jokes ravaged her.

Then for a moment, she genuinely pitied the look on his face of self-realization, his own petty hatred for a man with character that he himself had never had, and it was unlikely he would ever have. And now the last sparkle of what might have been, in the late evening of their love, faded from her eyes, and she turned away from him forever.

But his words had broken something inside her, and she suddenly felt overwhelmed with a pounding realization that no one would go. No one would know. But someone had to find out...someone had to know... someone had to go. And some hard breath flashed through her lungs, and she sensed his thoughts, somewhere, rustling like the wind that struck her shoulder...as she was sure it had his own, somewhere...

And the thoughts melted into an old poem, one Brandon had once read to her, that she now heard someone singing in the night...

*One I love  
Two she loves  
Three, she's true to me...  
And when the fire to ice will run  
When the tide no longer turns,  
When the rocks melts with the sun  
My love for you will have just begun...*

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To have stolen away, to have gone, blindly, with only a note of farewell. To have bartered for passage across the channel's tide, and across the torn apart lands. To have found herself in the company of others, desperately seeking out missing loved ones in the aftermath of a battle. To see what he had told her...all the world turned upside down...oh, what a foolish venture...

And yet, of all the impulses of her entire impulsive existence, this one was the most necessary, most strangely assured, even though the risks haunted her, and the sights stung her sorely. It was as if she knew without knowing that this one thing required her, if ever she was required, and that sensibility had to be put aside in favor of the senses. For the senses were beckoning her, telling her to keep going...from hospital tent to hospital tent...

Until one day she found her instincts vindicated. The surgeon at this hospital tent had informed her how *he* had been lost in the chaos of the battle, had been found later on, in a burnt-out hut he had dragged himself into. And now she stood only a few paces off from him, and she was more afraid to look at him than anything else in her life.

She knew he was there, she could hear his breathing. She never knew she had grown close enough to him to recognize his own from all others, but now she knew that she had. It was imprinted in her mind, her heart, her soul, the inhaling and the exhaling she had thought nothing of previously. The man she had once wanted away from her...now here, still breathing...oh, thank God...

She moved towards the cot, a lump in her throat, and saw blood, all blood and bandages, crisscrossing his chest and stretching across his shoulder. She had been told that a ball had lodged itself in his lung and was too hard to remove, as well as his arm having been nearly severed by the flying projectile. Oh, there was so much blood, soaking through everything!

She sat on the stool that had been left there, and saw how pale he looked, how very weakened, with his white lips murmuring something, inaudibly. And yet she knew what it was, more with her heart than anything else...



*And when the fire to ice will run  
When the tide no longer turns,  
When the rocks melts with the sun  
My love for you will have just begun...*

Slowly, she moved her hand to his injured arm. He tensed and jerked awake. His eyes flashed to her, hazy at first, then aware. Her presence startled him out of whatever semiconscious state he had been in.

"Marianne...?" he croaked. "My God, no..." He swallowed back the dryness in his throat. "Is it a dream...?"

"No, you are awake," she told him softly. "You were missing. I...came to find you."

"For the love of God, what...why did you come?"

"I had to come," she stated firmly.

"Does your family know you are here?"

"They will soon enough, if they don't already."

"Miss Dashwood...it was imprudent..."

"Colonel, we might discuss my own imprudence at another time," she cut him off in a rush. "There are more pressing matters to face." She straightened her back, trying to steel herself. "The regimental surgeon tells me the arm must come off," she stated. "He tells me...it's your only chance..."

"I know," Brandon whispered. "He...told me the same."

"Then...why have you refused him?"

He shifted, painfully. "There were...others who required attention sooner than I."

"That's not all of it, and you know it. Now tell me the truth."

He paused for a long time. "Miss Dashwood, I feel...I have done everything...I was meant to do," he explained haltingly. "I have done everything...I could. I am a content to die...a whole man, uncut."

"And what of me?" she challenged. "You would leave me alone?"

He smiled a little at her effort. "You could never be alone for long. You have far too much to recommend you...and God knows you can do far better than what I have to offer..."

"I think not."

"Marianne...don't, please..."

"Don't what? Tell you how I feel?"

"Don't force yourself to say things you don't mean in hopes of..."

"Alright, I swear to you I'll say nothing to you not brought forth in truth," she vowed. "I'll say it all out, no hiding behind formalities, no holding back at all."

"Alright," he conceded softly, realizing this might be the rare opportunity to hear what she really thought.

"Then I'll tell you...I'll tell you how I used to try and avoid you when you came to visit, how I thought you on the wrong side of five and thirty years, and dull, and slow to talk, and how I didn't want to waste time to find out if there was anything you had to say," she spit out. "I wanted a great romance, you see? The kind the poets write about, that sweeps you off your feet and spins you around...and I took every line, every stanza as some great adventure, with flash and color...and I wanted it all to myself, I wanted to drown myself in it...and I just...didn't see it in you..."

"Not...hard to understand that..." he offered, struggling against a twitch of pain. "I fear I am not...one to get swept up with..."

"But I found out something," she continued. "I...didn't like drowning so much, after all. What I wanted was dry, solid land...land with good soil. Oh, I didn't know that at first, not after Willoughby first left. You were good to me, through my shock and stupidity, but I still took it all for granted. I still spent all my time pining over him, wishing for something I thought would bring my dream to life again in a way you never could. But then...you went away, and..." She shuddered. "Since then, every day, I found myself looking out the window, waiting for you to be there, waiting for you to come through the door, all awkward at the wrong moments, as I used to think, with your messy flowers and kind words. I waited for you on sunny days, for you to come and walk with me, and sometimes we'd talk, and sometimes we'd be quiet, and it was all the

same for you made me feel so deeply wanted, so deeply safe. I waited for you on the rainy days, for you to sit down in the study with me, and I feel I can barely drink my tea if you're not there. When I lay down in bed, I couldn't sleep until I'd imagined your voice...reading to me..."

"I...didn't mean to haunt you quite that badly," he muttered shyly. "I never considered myself the particularly haunting type. I'm...forgettable enough. Not like...others..."

"But don't you see? Every time I read a poem now, he's not the one I think of, he's not the voice I hear..." Her eyes were filling up with tears now, real tears. "It's you. It's all you. He was just some silly dream I dreamed...and that's fine for infatuation, colonel, but not for love. Love must be real...and you're...*real*, and I...miss you! I miss you every day, and all the little things we used to do, the things I thought were so dull, that I crave for now more than anything because they're all a part of you, and I...I can't bear to keep going on every day without you there...don't you see? I...I know now...all those things I used to imagine...all the flash and swagger...do you know? All that...that's not...love..." She sniffled involuntarily. "Love is when...when you can't help but think of someone...not because they're so glamorous or silver-tongued...but because you're in them, and they're in you, and you didn't even know it was happening, through all those quiet, dull moments you suddenly realize are worth everything in the world, and you'd give anything to live them over again..."

"Marianne..." he rasped.

"Christopher?"

"Oh..." Her use of his Christian name made him shut his eyes tight to hide the tears there.

She seized the hand of his half-severed arm and he gasped. "Please...please...I'm begging you...to *live*..."

She knew she had broken him, in the best kind of way. She sensed he would undergo the sting of the knife now, even if he couldn't form the words. The surgeon was there in a minute and the tools were being laid out. His eyes were on them briefly, then on her again. They did not seem terribly afraid, rather filled with a strange sort of awe.

"Here," the surgeon said gruffly, handing Marianne the lantern. "Hold the light so I can make sense of metal and bone..."

"Don't...make her stay for this," Brandon rasped.

"I haven't come this far to leave now," she responded resolutely. She held the light out in front of her as the doctor offered him a swallow of brandy to dull the pain. He declined, saying it should be saved for someone worse off than him. So he just had a bullet stuffed in his mouth instead. *Oh, Brandon, what kind of man are you?* she thought as her eyes locked with his.

And she saw many things in his eyes that night, the light flickering across them.

There was a haunted look, yes...

An adoring goodbye that melts like a candle...

A silent prayer that passes like a flash of light...

And pain...that will not cry out...

Deeper and deeper...cutting...

And wonder...

Dreadful wondering if such pain would bring death...

And the shock that contracts, at the sound of the saw...

And awe, fear-wrenched awe...

Tight-shut eyes, biting on the bullet, fighting to breathe...

And a trembling tear he does not want to shed, running down...

Flinching, when soft fingers brush it away...

And thanks, borne from eyes with some lingering glimmer...

And then the dark...

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When Brandon opened his eyes late the next day, he found her sitting there next to the cot, though she

clearly had fallen asleep. Locks of her hair were falling out of her bun in a disorderly fashion. She looked pale and bruised beneath the eyes. There was blood sprinkling her dress now, splattered from his arm during the amputation. He felt his throat tense, and turned to look at the bandaged stump where his arm had been.

Then...he turned to look at her again. And to him, she had never looked more like an angel, in all her exhausted humanity, with the haze of the evening sun penetrating the tent and burning like a halo on her vibrant hair. He wished he could touch it, or if he was half as romantic as Willoughby had been, to ask her for a favor, to cut himself a piece...but he would never be so forward, or act so infatuated. But he thought back on the way she had instinctively brushed the tear of pain from his cheek the night before, and his heart swelled.

He wished her awake. He felt very much like talking; he knew not why. He rarely wanted to talk so much, but...perhaps being so close to the silence, so close to the stillness pulling on him through the pain that put him to sleep, made him want to let the world know...he was still there.

No, maybe it was not so much the world he cared about. Just *her*.

But she was asleep, and he didn't want to frighten her. He thought to himself how he might go about it...should he go about it? Oh, but he did want to talk to her...even a little...

There was a low humming in his throat, an old tune he remembered, one that made him smile just a crack through his pain. And words that formed on a parched tongue, needing water, but unwilling to ask for it, knowing it too was in short supply. It was a song...because songs, strange things, are the life of men...

She opened her eyes slowly as the tune carried, and as soon as consciousness came to them, they immediately found their way to his. The song stopped. And they held each other that way, gaze to gaze, for a long time.

He smiled shyly at her. "Hello, Marianne."

She shook her head, a hand to her mouth, as one does to hide an emotion, and she whispered, "Hello..." She smiled softly. "I...I think I dreamt you were singing...or was it a dream at all?"

"Perhaps not."

She tilted her head quizzically. "I never knew you could sing."

"Oh, I do extraordinarily with...with only four notes to work with..." he tried to joke. "Besides, this one...was in French. Anything in French sounds melodious by default..."

She turned her eyes down. "The French...hold little appeal for me at the moment," she responded shakily, "what with their revolutions and emperors...for what they've done to you, to everyone..."

"Now, then...do you not think there are as many suffering souls in their ranks as in ours? Do you not think their wounds run as deep, made even keener by the sting of defeat? Do you think, perhaps, desperation might not have driven revolution, and despair driven them to arms for the emperor as their savior?"

Marianne gazed at him in admiration. "You are magnanimous, colonel."

"I am a soldier, Miss Marianne, and I know that this war has cost both sides the lives of many honorable men. As we both know from experience, they are often enough hard to find."

She blinked. "I...believe I found one."

He regarded her serenely. "I pray I am even half as honorable as my lady is brave."

"I am not brave," she refuted. "I very nearly fainted last night...all the blood..."

"But you did not faint. You've soldiered on to help others, regardless of rank. And you stood over me with your light shining..." His eyes gleamed. "I am in debt to you for my life."

"No, surely. If anything it is a debt repaid."

"Ah..." His expression looked downcast. Then he added quietly. "Then...it is...a settled score?"

She shook her golden locks resolutely. "Do those who hold each other in their hearts ever keep scores to even? Would you even question it?"

"No," he whispered in reply. "Never." Then he once again glanced over at the stump of his arm wistfully. "It will be interesting when we get back," he mused. "I imagine they'll enjoy having a relic from the battle around, in the form of dullness on display who somehow managed to misplace a limb and sustain a bullet stuck inside him. Might even enhance my status as a party exhibit, yes?"



He smiled at her, meaning it to be a joke. But she looked utterly disturbed. “They don’t know...know what it’s like here.” She wiped a dirty strand of her hair away from her eyes.

“No,” he agreed. “No, I’m afraid they couldn’t...if they haven’t lived it.”

“You know, I don’t believe I ever noticed the servants much before, back home,” she mused blearily. “Never saw them really as anything much, just sort of there to do things, not really...living. But now...I... I’ve met so many...just this past week, common as common cloth, all torn up...” She exhaled in exhaustion. “There...there was a boy, on the other side of the hospital. He was even younger than me. He...he was afraid...so very afraid...” She swallowed. “He had family, on the Isle of Skye. He told me about them, poor crofters. He had a sweetheart, with hair like mine, he said. I...I stayed with him...until...”

“Marianne,” he whispered, and stretched his one remaining arm out to her as tears started to fill her eyes.

She looked at him through the saltwater for a long moment, seeing his sincere desire to comfort her even through his own pain. She didn’t need more persuading to be pulled into an embrace, for her sense of propriety was too far broken down by all she had witnessed, and Brandon knew it. She was soon resting her head on his chest and letting her tears fall down on the bandaging. He brought his hand up and gently fingered her hair.

“I’m...I’m sorry...I’m acting like a child,” she choked.

“No, I’m the one who is sorry...sorry you were made to see what you have seen, on my account,” Brandon murmured, and kissed her softly on the forehead.

She stayed there up against him because it felt safe, it felt warm, and the feeling of his breathing under her comforted her, even though it felt weak, wheezing sometimes. The bullet lodged there would tamper with his breathing for the rest of his life, she expected. But who could care? He was *breathing*, that was all that mattered.

She thought she must have fallen asleep that way, worn out from crying, and that her broken, bruised thoughts turned into shattered, dying starlight and wove into dreams of drumming heartbeats, and she half-heard the surgeon saying something about how she shouldn’t do that, she really shouldn’t...it might hurt him...

“No, no, let her stay,” she heard her man whisper. “Don’t wake her...just let her stay...”

\*\*\*

She looked over the edge of the ship, at the cliffs of Dover rising just beyond the horizon. White, with gold light streamed down, and a flood of pinks with an undercurrent of gray, and purples with an undercurrent of deep, dark ebony. It would be night when they stepped on English soil again, but she could drink in the colors and shades of home for the present.

*Home.* There were moments when she almost forgot what it was, like some distant dream of a child’s first



waking moments, or a young girl’s first romance when maturity has taken over. She was going back, and yet she knew...she could never really go back. Not the same way, at least. She heard

footfalls on the deck, and turned to the colonel behind her. He had his empty sleeve tuck into his uniform. He looked just as tired as Marianne felt. Two weeks fresh from amputation, and he was taking it like a true soldier. He winded easily from the wound to his lung, but he still insisted upon walking the deck, strengthening himself as best he was able.

"Have you ever seen this view before, Marianne?" he inquired.

She shook her head. "This is the first time I've been far enough away to appreciate it."

"I've seen it before, from a distance like this. And each time, I wondered if it was excitement or dread that I felt. For it was either that she looked so large and I felt so small, or she looked so small and I felt large."

"I know...what you mean," she agreed. "It's like measuring yourself against the past and the future, with the present standing apart, suspended on the sea."

"Or against blood," he added morosely.

"Yes," she agreed. "Blood casts its tint on everything...even the whitest cliffs..."

"Even to the stars," he whispered looking up at the early ones breaking through the dying streaks of tarnished purple sun, like white bandages, blood-soaked. "No star trembles on thy top," he recited quietly, "No moonbeam on thy side. But the meteors of death are there: the gray watery forms of ghosts..."

"Night would have descended in sorrow, and morning returned in the shadow of grief," she finished for him, and again their eyes met.

"I wish...you did not have to see it," he stated. "And yet...forgive me for my selfishness, but sharing it with you makes the wound a treasure. I...I hope that does not sound...terrible?"

"No, it doesn't," she assured him. "I welcome it."

He regarded her softly, then cleared his throat. "It's getting a bit cold. Want...want me to get you a shawl?"

"No, no, I'm fine," she assured.

"Want...want to walk?" He tried to make a gesture automatically, as if to offer her his right arm, as he was accustomed...forgetting for a precious moment that he no longer had a right arm to offer, but only an arm ending before the elbow. He blushed at his mistake, then tried to joke to cover. "I'm afraid I've made a slight miscalculation...must be getting senile..."

Then he felt her gently weaving her arm between his side and his empty sleeve. There was a brush, the softest brush of her body against his, and he felt a shock run through him as her head leaned against his shoulder.

He closed his eyes and let his face brush against her hair, as she had let her face brush his flowers back home. "I worship you," he said in the quietest of whispers, as if to himself. "Would...would you...ever...consider...?"

Her breath caught in her throat. "Christopher..."

"I know, I know...I don't deserve it...deserve *you*...but I...I can't help...help but ask...even if it's in vain..."

"It's not that," she responded. "It's...I have to tell you something...something you should know, that...that happened between me and Willoughby." Now she really did feel cold, more chilled than any exterior temperature could make her. "I went out with him one evening, out into the woods. We stayed out late, watched the stars come out, lying outstretched in the fallen leaves. The wind was cool, it being autumn, and...he put his arm around me...and...we...spent an hour, there, together...and he said...he said it didn't matter, in the long run, for we had each other, and..."

"Marianne." His voice was quiet, calming. "You don't...have to spell it out. I am...familiar with his ways."

She looked at him deeply. "Then...you knew?"

"I...supposed it a possibility."

"Then...then I am not an angel, colonel," she protested, biting her lip. "I am not something pure and untouched, I..."

"I love you." His eyes were warm with a passion she had never before seen in them. "Whatever was

done...however he betrayed you, body and soul, and damaged your trust, I would seek...seek to win it back...to heal it, if you would let me...let me try.”

“Oh, Christopher...” Her voice, broken as it was, found its silence in the suddenness of lips against lips. The impulsiveness of the act surprised her, yet soon softened, melting into the warmth of her mouth. Her heart raced, and then felt absorbed, swallowed up into the heart of another.

But then something shattered the moment. He pulled away from the kiss abruptly and broke down into a cough. He fumbled for a handkerchief with his only hand and turned to press it to his mouth. Marianne didn’t have to see the color red to know what had happened. She had tasted his blood on her tongue. She knew the ball in his lung was responsible.

“I’m sorry,” he rasped. “I’m...so sorry...it...it won’t happen like that when...I...I’m capable of...” He was shaken, ashamed, and Marianne found herself looking into his eyes, touching his face. Would she have done so before this voyage beyond herself? She doubted it.

He swallowed. “I want to...please you, Marianne, as much as...” He paused. “As...you could want.”

“You are pleasing me,” she murmured, and her lips found their way to his again. A second chance at it, yes, imperfect and pulsating with words unspoken. And their kiss was hot like the sun’s scorch and deep, true like the ocean’s breath.

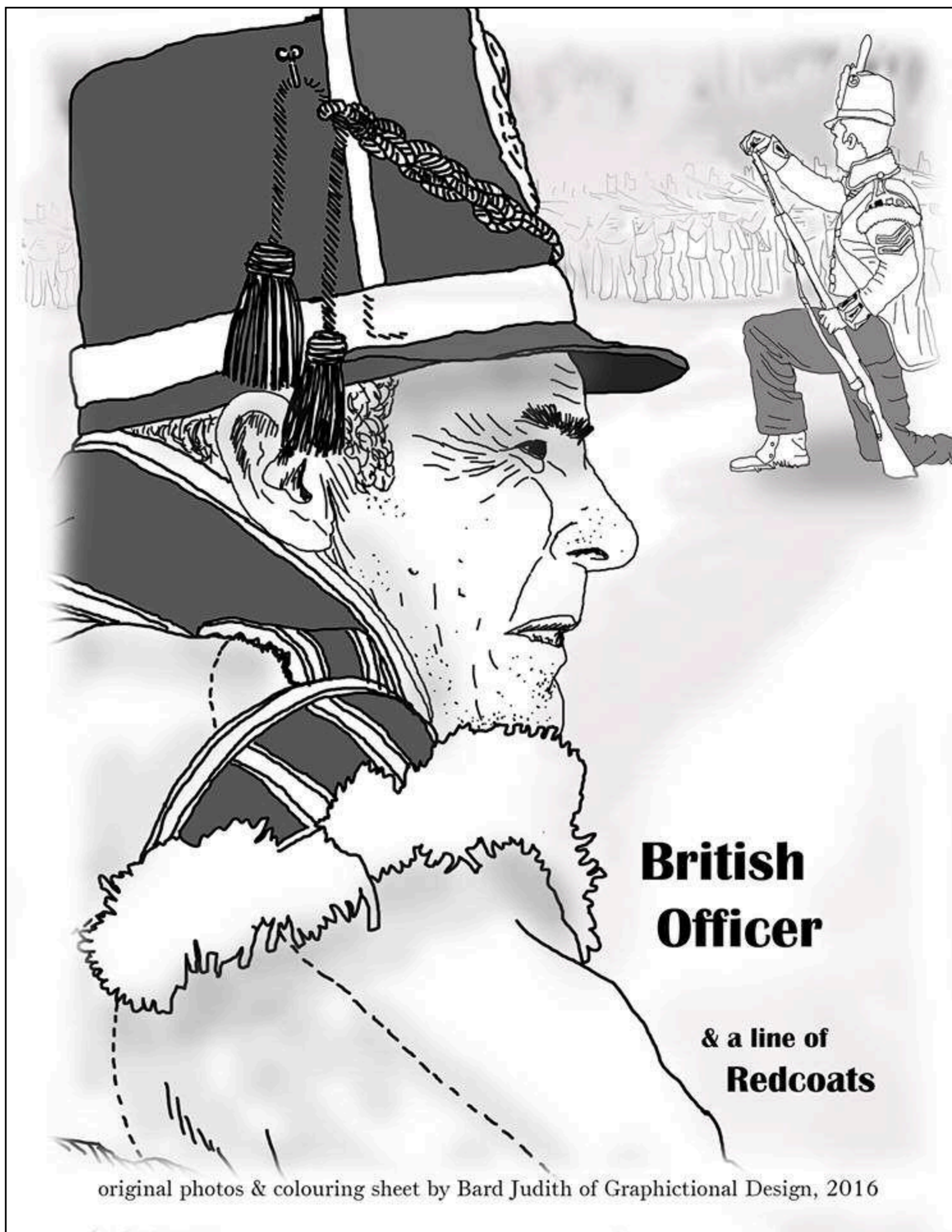
Neither one knew how long it lasted; it didn’t matter. It was like a breath no one needed to count. And the wind skimming the waters was keen and cool in the darkening dusk, but the kiss outlived it. When it broke, there were breathless words, a poem, on his lips:

“I leaned forward from my shield, and felt the kindling of my soul. Half formed, the words of my song burst forth upon the wind....”

“We rose on the wave with songs,” she continued, completing him. “We rushed, with joy, through the foam of the deep...”







## **British Officer**

**& a line of  
Redcoats**

original photos & colouring sheet by Bard Judith of Graphictional Design, 2016

# *Life and Love: A Jane Austen Drabble*

*By Audrey Elissa Hodson*

*Dawn crept through the thin linen window hangings. Our rooster 'twas all but inept, as of late. But not to worry, as the sun was ever the faithful companion, as perhaps it always had been. I did not boast myself a scholar on such matters.*

*The advantages of having two sisters included morning ablutions. A hasty swipe of the rag over our visage, and then returned to the wash basin for the following sister. Our long hair swept up, and the bodice buttons 'twere made quick work by our nimble, practiced fingers.*

*A breakfast of eggs, bread, and sometimes even fresh butter was quickly followed by garden tending, and oftentimes needlework. Whilst afternoons were leisurely, punctuated with reading, and portraits or still life drawn by Mary.*

*Mr. Wellesley seldom called for tea, as mother so hoped would lead to an advantageous match for Frances. The daily engagements of well-bred gentlemen 'twere so often perplexing to my sisters and me. Had our brother, Henry, survived past infancy, conceivably we might have had a better education on the entirety of the male sex.*

*Merriment in the evenings is nothing less than the embodiment of love and affection. In our short lives if all that is accomplished is to love often, and love well, then this world will be left a far better land for those who follow. Perchance women were never meant to comprehend the complexities outside the realm of home tending. Is not everyone at their finest when the shortcomings of one are bolstered by others?*

*A few of the more sophisticated ladies tend to look down on my family for our misfortunes, both in house and business. However, there is only one life for all of us, and we all have our parts to play. My home would not be what it has become without the trials or celebrations that have taken place.*

*I could pen a flourishing list of the four and twenty families we dine with; however, there is hardly a more favorable account of country life than to experience the dreary moments alongside the vibrant and jolly times. Perhaps not all wish to achieve a quiet calm, nevertheless for the few that persist daily, we do not aspire for anything greater than the life God has bestowed upon us.*





**NOW SHOWING**

**BOOK VS MOVIE: WHEN BAD MOVIES  
TELL GOOD STORIES**

**BY KILLARNEY TRAYNOR**

“The book is always better,” someone said to me one day. “I don’t know why you even bother watching film versions. They are never as good.”

She was referring, of course, to my *Jane Eyre* movie collection and was trying to stop my unasked for in-depth discourse on the comparative qualities the various films. Her question brought me up short. Why *did* I watch so many versions when the book was so much better? If I must watch *Jane Eyre*, surely one good quality version (the 1983 BBC miniseries is the best) would suffice.

Perhaps. But I, like most humans, love stories and storytellers. Good books are rich troves of characters, motivations, morality plays, and human interest, which, when seen through a



variety of lens (literal and figurative) can add to our enjoyment. Directors, producers, actors, and screenwriters are all storytellers who put their own complexion on stories, bringing to light hidden depths or spinning the narrative slightly so you can see it from a different point of view. While occasionally there are misfires (I'm looking at you, *Sherlock Holmes in New York*), even an unfaithful movie version of a book can offer interesting insights into the story.

To prove my point, I offer three comparisons of a faithful adaptation of a book (in one case, an extremely obscure version) against a more imaginative retelling.

### **CASE ONE: HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES**

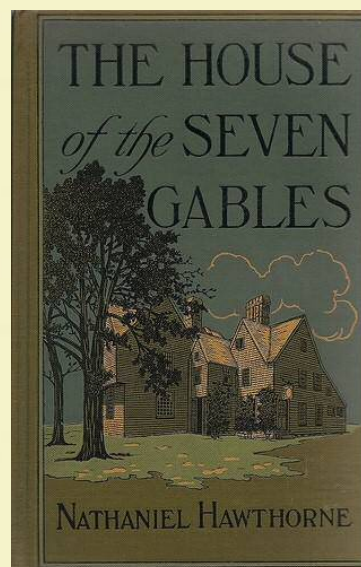
**Book Synopsis:** *A young country girl goes to live with her relatives in Salem, where an old family curse still haunts their halls... and rumors of hidden treasure stirs old dangers.*

#### **The Movies:**

Universal's 1940 movie starring Vincent Price and George Sanders versus 1958's Shirley Temple's Storybook, starring Shirley Temple and Robert Culp.

This is, admittedly, the oddest mix of the batch. Vincent Price, king of the 1960s horror flicks versus Shirley Temple, everyone's favorite little orphan girl from the 1930s. But this works, so stay with me.

*Shirley Temple's Playhouse* was an hour show that presented a three-part play with simplified costumes and backgrounds. This particular play has a great cast, but is hampered by wooden acting, poor lighting, and stilted dialog. However, it *is* faithful to the story, keeping the main character, the innocent, courageous Cousin Phoebe front and center for the whole story (watching *Greatest American Hero's* Robert Culp chewing the scenery as the mysterious photographer is a treat), and reminding viewers that greed rewards its followers with emptiness. It is dark (in its way), weird, and small, very much like the book itself and, despite its drawbacks, I found it entertaining.



Price's *Seven Gables* is a horse of a different color. It starts twenty years before the actual novel, showcasing the young Price as Clifford Pyncheon, a dashing, bold musician ready to chuck his tainted ancestry to the wayside for a musician's life in New York with his fiancé, Hepzibah. When Clifford is convicted of murder, thanks to his wicked brother Jaffrey, the grieving Hepzibah seals the House of Seven Gables, denying Jaffrey entry as revenge. But it's when Clifford meets young Matthew Holgrave in prison that the real revenge plot gets going. Cousin Phoebe, the star of the novel, is delegated to a side-character while Hepzibah's performance is strong and powerful. What I really liked about this rendition was how lively and strong the characters came across: Holgrave is a reformer, Clifford is a rebel, Hepzibah is driven by grief and love, but none of these seemed stilted or antiquated. They are as alive

and as lively as anyone living today, reminding the viewer that people in old New England weren't all that different than people today.

The most interesting thing about these movies is how important perspective is to each. Temple's *Seven Gables* is about a young woman helping to free her family from the guilt of a crime committed by an ancestor. While this is referenced in Price's movie, the focus is on wrong done to Clifford and Hepzibah, the time that was stolen from their lives by his brother's greed. While all of the same facts are in evidence (with the exception of poor Phoebe's reduced role), the take on the story is vastly different and offers the viewer different points to ponder on. While greed is present in both, Price's movie talks about justice and revenge, while Temple's adheres to the novel's themes of sin visited upon the generations.

**Why the Remake was Necessary:** The Price version shifts perspective so entirely that the main character, Phoebe, is lost in the shuffle, reduced to Pretty Young Thing status. Hawthorne never would have approved.

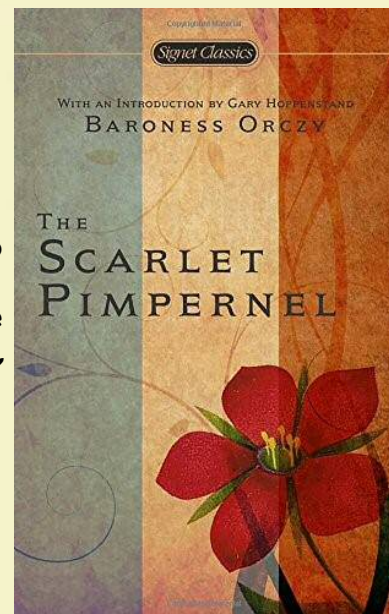
## CASE TWO: THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL

**Book Synopsis:** *A young French woman tries desperately to save her brother from the guillotine, all while unaware that her estranged dandy husband is in fact the mysterious Scarlet Pimpernel.*

### The Movies:

Leslie Howard's 1934 black and white movie versus the 1982 TV movie starring Anthony Andrews and Jane Seymour.

Howard's *Pimpernel* is hands down the better movie: it's more faithful to the book and it has a satisfying pace with little to no wasted time in it. Strong performances offset occasional stilted dialog and even the poor quality of the black and white film doesn't detract. While it isn't quite as good a movie as, say, *Captain Blood* or Tyrone Power's *Zorro*, it's a good swashbuckling film that holds its own. Howard is great as Sir Percy: a truly brave character who's willing to play a fool for everyone, including his wife, in order to save lives. He is well matched by Merle Oberon, and the two scenes where Sir Percy and Lady Blakeney separately realize the truth about each other shows their subtle strengths to perfection.



Andrews' *Pimpernel*... well, let's just say it *feels* like a TV movie. Though generously endowed with great scenery, gorgeous costumes, and a good cast, it's hampered by awkward pacing, clumsy dialog, an overpowering soundtrack, and awkwardly played out scenes. Combining two of the *Scarlet Pimpernel* books (the original with the sequel), it somehow manages to feel too long and like it ought to have been a miniseries (Wikipedia tells me that the intention was to turn this into a TV show, but it never materialized with Andrews).



All that being said, Andrew's *Pimpelne* is actually the more interesting movie, in its way, because of the manner in which it treats the main villain, Ian McKellen's head of state security, M. Chauvelin. While the book keeps the narrative simple (the French in power are cruel and bloodthirsty, while the British are noble heroes who quite literally laugh in the face of danger), the 1982 movie gives Chauvelin more credit. He is, in his own way, as idealistic as Sir Percy, committed to the ideals of the revolution. Sir Percy appears to represent everything that Chauvelin is fighting against – the well-fed, well-heeled, laughing, careless aristocracy that brought France to its knees to begin with (Chauvelin's frustration when Sir Percy steals his girl is almost heartbreaking). It's a solid, unexpected reminder that the French Revolution was, among other things, a battle of ideals and ideas that went too far.

**Why the Remake was Important:** Honestly, it probably wasn't – Howard's is a good solid movie without many mistakes. However, the 1982 movie *does* give Anthony Andrews this line, spoken while wooing Jane Seymour: "You must tell me all about yourself, in every detail. But ever so slowly. So very slowly, so that it takes a very...very long time." For that reason alone, you should watch it. (Seriously, that line should not work. But it totally does. *Sigh!*)

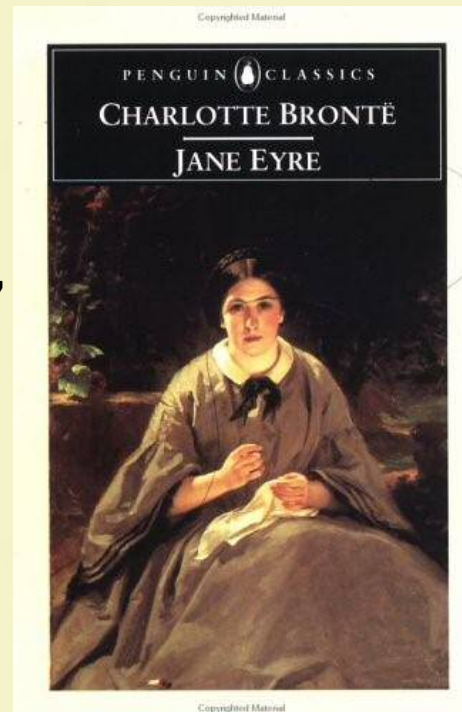
### CASE THREE: JANE EYRE

**Novel Synopsis:** *A young woman, orphaned and abandoned by her family, finds love and understanding in the house of her new employer, but when secrets from his past threaten to ruin her, she must find the courage to keep her own integrity intact.*

#### The Movies:

Vivien Leigh and Orson Welles' 1943 version against the much more faithful BBC miniseries starring Zelah Clarke and Timothy Dalton

The 1943 movie is filmed like a cross between a noir and a horror film: Thornfield house is a castle filled with long, shadowy passageways, turrets reverberating with ghostly sounds, and lots of atmosphere: when Jane nurses a man after an attack, she's left alone in a turret room while a lock door rattles under some unknown person's pounding – really a pretty chilling scene. Similar to poor Phoebe in Price's *Seven Gables*, Jane's role is diminished and more time spent on Welles's Rochester. Women, in general, have a reduced role in this movie: it isn't the teacher, Miss Temple, who helps to train young Jane in a better way, but a kindly doctor, while the Rivers sisters and their brother are completely written out. Instead, when Jane flees from Mr. Rochester, she returns, penniless and homeless, to her Aunt Reed, (a retreat the Jane of the novel would never have made). And when Jane does return to Thornfield, it is as a bereft, still-penniless woman, who begs Rochester, "Please, don't send me away!" Feminists, be





very wary.

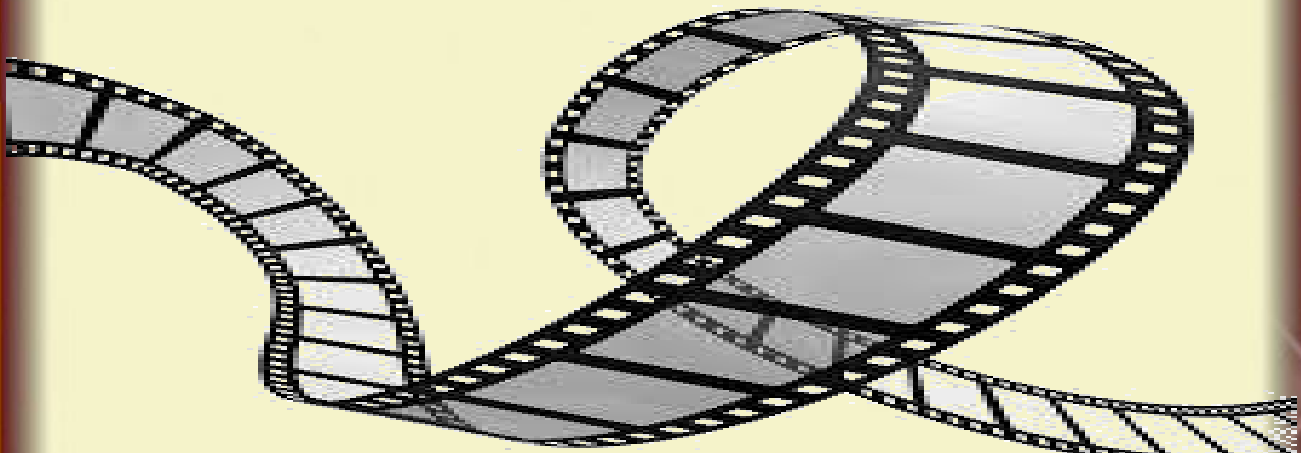
When I first watched the 1943 movie, I dismissed it as revisionist and silly. But watching it again, I realized that, while this *Eyre* doesn't do its heroine much credit, it does lend some new light to the character of Rochester. Welles' Rochester is a sadder figure, more kindly than a cursory read through the book would suggest (his first thought, after putting out the fire in his bedroom, is to check on his daughter, Adele) and the movie shows more of his actions than the book does. While the movie *does* take liberties, it has the effect of making Rochester likable and more of a whole person rather than merely a motivational prop for Jane's various awakenings.

In contrast, the faithful BBC miniseries does an admirable job of capturing the spirit of the book: Zelah Clarke is very good at conveying both Jane's inner struggle and strength. Her stalwart exterior pairs up nicely against Timothy Dalton's almost manic Mr. Rochester, all seething frustration and despair. Even their difference in height plays nicely into the drama: when Jane accuses Rochester of dismissing her feelings because she is 'little and plain', you really feel for her. While the six-hour miniseries might be a little too stiff for some, it's rich in detail and well-thought out. Jane's isolation, youth, and steady character shine against the variegating characters surrounding her, and the ending, faithful to Bronte's, is a satisfying cap to what is, at times, a heart-wrenching journey.

**Why the Remake was Necessary:** As powerful as Orson Welles's acting is in this role, the story is Jane's, not Rochester's. The 1983 BBC version never forgets that. Also, Orson Welles never played James Bond, so there's that, too.

- - -

**Killarney Traynor** is a writer, actor, director, bookworm, and bad-movie addict who lives in southern New Hampshire. The author of four books, her blog can be found on her website at [www.killarneytraynor.com](http://www.killarneytraynor.com).



## *A Poldark Tale*



# *Accents & Sophistication*

*By BellChell17*

Ross Poldark had just come home from the mine and settled in his seat to talk to Demelza as she cooked dinner. The topic of holding the smuggled goods for Tren crom had come up and Demelza had started a rant.

“It just tisen’t righ’, Ross! He’s taking advantage of our good nature, and I jus’ won’t STAND for it.” She slammed a pie tin down, glancing at Ross, only to see him leaning back in his chair, a big grin on his face. “What ‘ave ye got to be smilin’ about? Are ye even listenin’?”

“Indeed, I am. But it’s a miracle I can understand half of what you are saying.”

“What are ye talking about?” There was confusion in her already terse tone.

“All that Cornish in one little voice. It’s like trying to understand another language,” he smirked.

Demelza put one hand on a chair, and propped the other on her hip. “I ‘ave half a mind to slap that smirk off your face.”

Ross assumed a look of bewilderment. “I do apologize. All I was able to make out was that you have half a mind. I wouldn’t worry about that, though; I’m sure your wits will improve with age and sophistication.” He tried to hide the growing smile on his face behind his rum-filled cup.

Demelza stared tight-lipped at him for a moment, then straightened herself and stormed out of the room.

Ross frowned as he watched her go, before guilt started creeping up in his chest. “Demelza,” he called, getting out of his chair to follow. “Demelza, I am sorry, I didn’t mean it. I was only trying to lighten the mood.”

He entered the hall before noticing the door leading outside was open, the chilly night air pouring in.

He sighed and started towards it, feeling like he had just struck a child. “Demelza, please come back in.” He stood outside, looking around. “I truly-”



He was stopped short  
by a wave of ice water hitting him from the right.  
“WHAT ON EARTH-”

“Perhaps ye can understand this, sir!!” he heard Demelza cry.

He looked over to see her grinning, holding an empty bucket like a child would hold a prize. “I do dare think that this is a message which transcends all languages,” she added, again propping her hand on her hip.

Ross pulled out a handkerchief, wiping his face and shaking his head. “Indeed!” He paused a moment. “I also think that in all languages,” he glanced up to look at her, “one must always get what's coming to them.”

Demelza's smile waned only a little with confusion, before she realized that Ross was reaching for the bucket left out from the evening chores of watering the livestock. Her eyes widened. “Nay Ross, ye wouldn't dare!” She started running before a splash of water hit her from behind, stopping her in her tracks.

“At least your measure was only lukewarm, madam!” Ross taunted to her back.

“Oh, you're gonna get it, Ross.” She shook her head at him, before sprinting to the pump, with Ross fast on her heels.

She got to the pump first and started madly working it. It was only a quarter full when Ross got to her, but she used it anyway, again throwing ice water at him. Only this time hitting him squarely in the face.

Seeing Ross with his curls plastered to his forehead, she bent over with laughter. It was Ross's turn to stare at her, tight-lipped, but instead of walking away, he stormed towards her. She had barely glanced up before he hoisted her over his shoulder. “What are ye doin'?” she cried, but there was no reply. She tried to see where he was taking her, and discovered that they were marching towards the horse pen.

Realization slowly dawned on her face. “No, Ross. No. No-no-no!” she started kicking him in the chest but it did nothing to slow his pace. It only made him move faster.

He reached the horse pen and bent over the water trough, dropping her in like a bag of potatoes. “Perhaps this will put an end to your unruliness!” he said triumphantly.

“JUDAS!” she screeched.

He watched for a moment before it was his turn to bend over, laughing at her curls stuck around her face.

Demelza spluttered and thrashed before finally pulling herself out of the now almost empty trough. “You're hateful, Ross!” she cried, wringing out her hair.

“And you're not the first to inform me of that,” he retorted, offering his mostly soaked handkerchief to her. She took it, but not without glaring at him.





Ross watched a moment before reaching out to run his hand over her waterlogged hair. "I want you to know, though, I would not trade your accent nor your manners for all the English sophistication in the world," he said quietly.

Demelza looked up with a sigh and small smile. "An' perhaps I can stand your rudeness a little while longer," she countered, wiping her face.

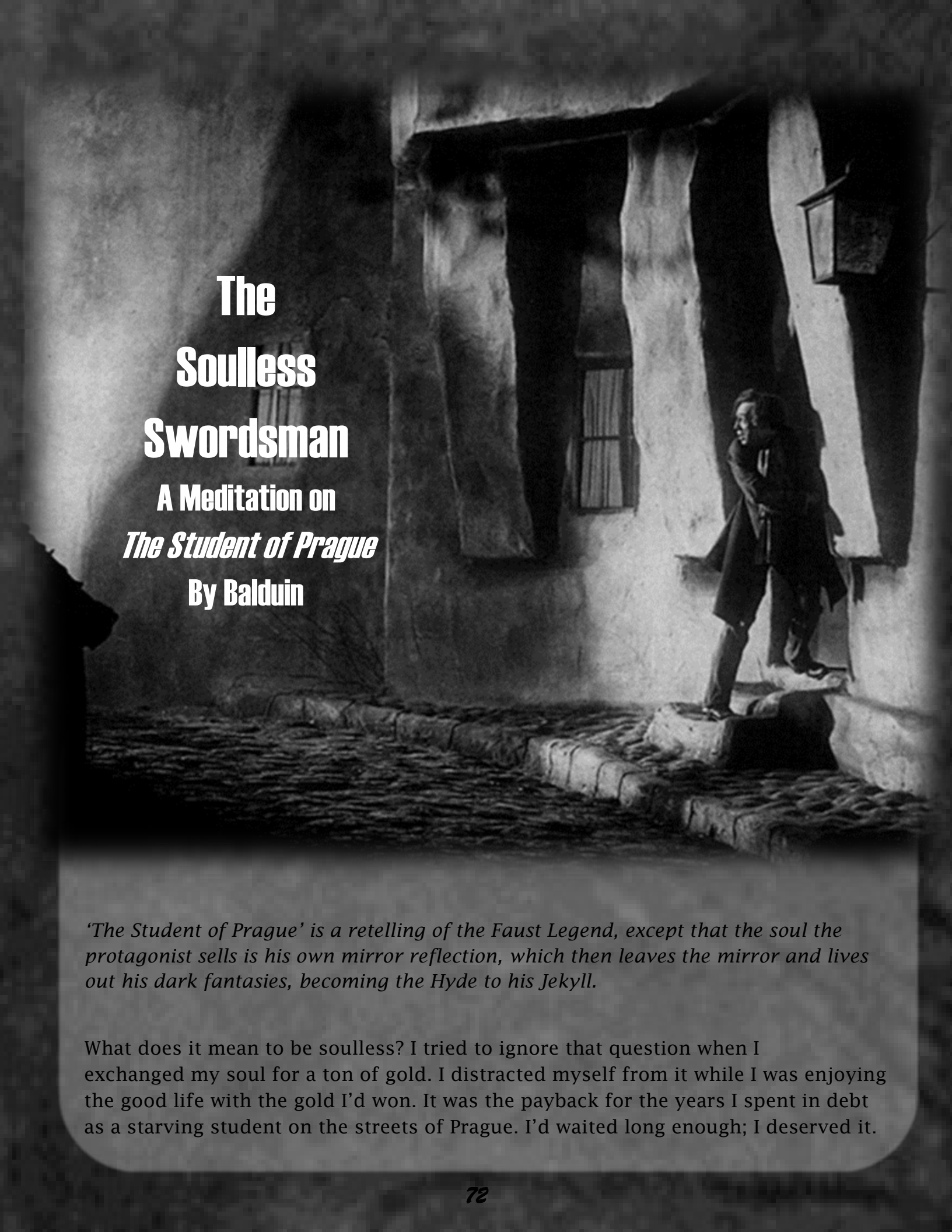
They both chuckled before Ross noticed a small shiver from Demelza.

"Come. Let's go get out of these clothes," he said, reaching around her shoulders.

Demelza feigned a gasp and looked up at him. "Such forwardness. I'd expect better from well-bred English sophistication."

"Perhaps being around Cornish boorishness has rubbed off on me," he smirked, before being struck in the face with a wet handkerchief.





# The Soulless Swordsman

A Meditation on  
*The Student of Prague*  
By Balduin

*‘The Student of Prague’ is a retelling of the Faust Legend, except that the soul the protagonist sells is his own mirror reflection, which then leaves the mirror and lives out his dark fantasies, becoming the Hyde to his Jekyll.*

What does it mean to be soulless? I tried to ignore that question when I exchanged my soul for a ton of gold. I distracted myself from it while I was enjoying the good life with the gold I’d won. It was the payback for the years I spent in debt as a starving student on the streets of Prague. I’d waited long enough; I deserved it.

When I found out I was immortal, it just seemed like an extra bonus. I dueled more fiercely than ever, growing careless because I couldn't be killed. I could endure grievous wounds and still fence; it seemed like a fighter's dream. I performed mad, suicidal feats, for money or just because I could.

But I was soulless; at first, the only thing that brought that to mind was my lack of a reflection in a mirror, something I could hide. I began to feel it when I tried to requite my passion for Countess Margaret; I went blindly into the deal for the purpose of making myself worthy of her love. I still longed for her, but could feel nothing in my heart. Oftentimes I wondered if I still had a heart. But she faded, as did everything else I felt for.

The woman, the money, the liquor, it all spun around like a mad carousel for the first few years. During that time, I discovered the true meaning of soullessness. It's when you lie back to fall asleep and you feel an emptiness inside, the unshakable feeling that you have no purpose. It's recognition that you have no real desires, only an endless hunger to consume, but it eats a hole inside you that no pleasure will fill. Having no reflection wasn't the only physical manifestation of it; I leave no steam on glass when I breathe on it, and I cast no shadow in the firelight. I can perform any unspeakable act and feel nothing, as if my conscious has been forever numbed and deadened. Soulless is being empty, cut off, incomplete, inhuman.

So I lived by the sword as a wanderer, a pariah, never feeling attachment but always searching for it. My sword, my honor, and my hunger — when I had bartered away everything else, these were all I had left. I tried not to think of how pitiful an existence it was, but after three years I couldn't ignore it any longer. My youth had ebbed away with any interest in living. Now that it was gone, I resolved to find a way to end it all.

But my immortality had another curse; my soul was detached and wandering off on its own. It haunts me and seeks revenge since I bartered it away for wealth. As long as I am alive, it will stalk me and keep me from finding any means of escape. I have not known peace, since it is never far from me. It is the shadow that was once at my back, the shadow I still see flit around corners in silent streets, watching everything I do. He is there to whistle to the police when I grab money; he snatches my checks to the students I tried to help in Prague. I am caught in a cruel prison and my jailor is myself.





# A Day on Pic

By Eliza

Hatchards. Green painted wood and crisp, swirled gold letters stood out on Piccadilly Street, even though Anne could barely see through the crowds jostling along. Anne held the brim of her bonnet closer to her cheek, her blue cotton glove obstructing her face and only allowing her eyes of the same color to study the street. Her aunt could not be seen, and Anne assumed that she was still in the Egyptian Hall across the street, analyzing art and artifacts from exotic lands and pretending to make intelligent remarks. Anne would not be missed; she would complete her errand in little time and wend her way back to the exhibition before her aunt would notice she had lagged behind.

A gentleman held the door open for a lady as they exited the shop, and Anne slipped in. Her steps were slow on the plush carpet as she gazed about her. Books and pamphlets, the written words practically seeping out from the pages and into the air, calling to her.

"Terribly sorry!" she gasped, tripping over the hem of someone's skirt.

"Indeed, I hope not. No one should be so sorry when they are distracted by books," her victim replied.

"Yes, I was rather distracted by the shelves. Floor to ceiling with books; I've not seen anything like it. I suppose I was rather paying attention to the highest shelves and didn't see you."

The corners of the woman's mouth twisted upwards, as if locking away a secret in her smile. "Then it is a wonder you didn't see me, for I am rather tall, and yet your upturned gaze was still too high to see me. Ah, the lofty ideals of books that pull our heads and gazes with them."

The stranger's hazel eyes were uplifted, as if propelled to the ceiling by her sigh, and Anne couldn't help but chuckle. She drew her gloved hand to her lips as she and the lady slipped into silence, suddenly aware of their breach of etiquette, conversing without introduction. Anne bobbed her head and began to turn.

# Piccadilly Street

poeth Fust

"I normally wouldn't beg on with you, propriety and all," the lady said, pulling at Anne's hand, "but you seem lost."

Anne's foolish decision seemed to be catching up with her. There was no mutual party to introduce her and the lady, who must have seen by now that Anne was unaccompanied, on Piccadilly Street at that. Anne had no face for cards or charades; she was sure the lady could see her cheeks turning rosy.

"Indeed, I seem to have, to have..."

"Misplaced your chaperone?"

"Yes."

"Have you any idea where you misplaced her?"

Anne wasn't sure how much to say, for she did not know who this lady was or how she might get her or her aunt in trouble. She clutched at her purse, her hands perspiring in her gloves.

"Dear, your face has already revealed that you're up to no good; I recommend your lips follow suit and tell me how so."

The merry eyes and rosy full cheeks of the woman lent her a sense of youthful merriment, but the way she took Anne's elbow and led her to a quiet corner of the shop showed her a woman of age and determination, like a formidable aunt. Which made Anne feel none the better, as she had deserted her own aunt.

The lady said nothing, waiting for Anne to begin speaking.

"Well, I, I may have misplaced my chaperone at the Egyptian Hall."

"Then I can understand why you came here, and at the risk of propriety, too. Nothing is so dull as trying to appreciate art and having to listen to people ruin it with their opinions."

"I do enjoy art."

"Yet you escaped here. Why is that?"

"Well, why else does one come to a bookseller?"

"To meet respectable people, catch a gentleman's eye, hear the latest gossip."



"No, none of that." Anne's bonnet was loosened, she shook her head with such intent.

"An old-fashioned heart. You came to buy a book."

"Quite."

"Which one?"

Anne hesitated. "There's so many to choose from."

"You mean you didn't have a title in mind?"

She didn't. There were so many and they all blended together.

"What is your favorite novel? Perhaps I can help you in your quest for a new book."

Yet Anne was still silent. Novels were frivolous, according to her aunt, with whom she lived. Sermons, now that was what ought to be read.

"Do you not have a favorite novel? Surely you must; life without one would be intolerably dull. Or at least the pretense of one."

"Pretense of a favorite novel or pretense of a life?" Anne asked, regaining her tongue after having lapsed into silence for what must have been a considerable amount of time.

"Either. Perhaps both."

"It's just that I'm not sure I have a favorite novel. My aunt doesn't really approve of novels, you see. She doesn't disapprove, not with words or rules, but with the way her mouth turns down and her nose turns up."

"Yes, I know the look. So what would she have you read?"

"Sermons. Not that I find anything wrong with those, yet I feel as though they only tell one perspective of life. And that's hardly a well-rounded story."

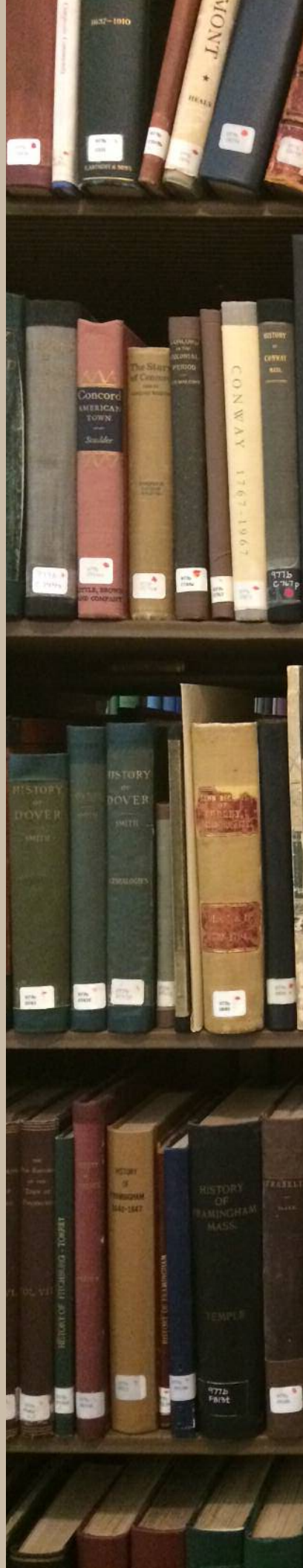
"Ah, so you seek truth."

That made Anne hesitate again. "No. Just stories. I suppose a glimpse into how one person sees life, sees people, sees circumstances. Sees characters in the midst of all the trials and tribulations and triumphs that the sermons talk about, but do not always show. Then to move on to another novel and see another writer doing the same thing in an entirely different way, another different perspective."

The lady was studying her.

"Perhaps I have rambled on. I'm sorry I've kept you from your own book perusal; I won't keep you. I don't think I am ready to make any purchases here today." Anne bobbed her head and turned back to the door.

"Quixote."







"I'm sorry?"

The lady beckoned for her to follow, led her into a nook of the shop, pulled a book from a shelf, and handed it to Anne.

"*The Female Quixote?*" The title of the book peeled off of Anne's lips.

"Yes. You see, Quixote was a knight who went on these adventures. Oh, he went on quests and saved the day and won the fair lady. Or so he thought. Imagined rather, for that was his problem. He wasn't a knight, and his quests led to more problems than triumphs and there never was even a fair lady; she was only in his imagination. His perception was distorted by dreaming, and no one around could stop him and make him see that, and he went traipsing around Spain under the impression that everything he imagined was real. Miss Lennox copied this narrative, in a way, for her *The Female Quixote*, but I shan't recount that, for it would spoil this novel for you, though I will say there is a bit of romance and it's all about stories and people, expectations and truth. A theme I myself am rather drawn to. Perhaps it may help you find your balance of story and truth, as well."

"That does sound intriguing." Anne held the novel, a perfect size to fit in her reticule where it would go unnoticed by her aunt. It had been risky coming here, unaccompanied, with the shillings she had scrimped and saved from her pin money, but she was holding a novel in her hands and it was all worth it. "Thank you, thank you very much. I shall enjoy reading this immensely."

They curtsied to each other a final goodbye, and Anne approached the proprietor to make her purchase. He raised a grey eyebrow behind his wire rimmed glasses when Anne went to pay, yet an unaccompanied woman making such a large purchase in small coinage was not enough to rouse him to conversation. With the novel tucked snugly in her reticule, she turned to the door with a deep breath, ready to brave Piccadilly Street again.

The lady was standing at the door next to a gentleman who shared her same sly smile and sparkling eyes. "I hoped to catch you. I've noticed you seem to be alone; perhaps my brother Henry and I could accompany you to the Egyptian Hall?"

"Oh, yes that would be lovely!" Anne said, even as Henry pushed open the door and ushered them out of the shop, offering each lady an arm.

Anne did not do much talking as they pushed through the crowds, but listened to the lady and her brother comment on all the Londoners passing by. Finally they reached the museum with its edifice of Egyptian god statues and hieroglyphics, which they paused to wonder at, for it seemed the brother and sister pair were not keen to return Anne to her aunt so quickly.

However, it was not long before the happy trio overtook Anne's aunt, who was studying Napoleon Bonaparte's travelling carriage on its display. Her aunt did not notice them at first, for she was intently squinting through a pair of lorgnette





## *O Lord Forgive Me*

*A Patriot Fan-Fiction Story By Aegismaiden*

**Warning: Caution is strongly advised for our younger reading audience due to thematic elements.**

*I have long feared that my sins would come back to haunt me, and the cost is more than I can bear.*

God does not let the evil go unpunished; He is a God of justice, and justice He will have.

My fears became reality on that day, nay, in that one hour. That precious hour which marked my judgment and left me scarred.

In Charles Towne, I had said that our children would learn of the war with their own eyes. Mine were the first to learn, I felt. When those words of seeming prophecy, the foreshadowing of the near future of the Colonies left my lips, I realized that no matter what I did, there was no turning back.

I had raised my children as best as I could after their mother died, praying that they would grow up unlike me. I reared them, trained them, and disciplined them without wavering. They were obedient and steadfast, with a strong belief in God's sovereignty over all things. Still, no amount of discipline could withhold my stubbornness from seeping through their childish spirits. I thought that I had control, but in that hour, my perfect world was thrown to the wind and I could not save myself.

*Forgive me, O Lord.*



I assisted both the Redcoats and the Continentals after the skirmish near my house, praying for leniency from the commander in charge. All were tended to, cared for, and treated for all wounds. I had control. When that man, Colonel Tavington, took Gabriel captive, I prayed. The colonel might have released him, had Gabriel not made a grave mistake. He called me father.

*Father.*

It was barely audible, spoken through pursed lips, scarcely a whisper, but the colonel's ears snatched the word up like a fox. *Father.*

Smiling a sickly, serpentine smile, the colonel turned to me. "Oh. He's your son."

My hands began to shake. My insides were boiling, my mind running a marathon faster than anyone ever could as I turned my eyes to the colonel, the snake. I reminded him of the rules, praying that he had a sense of decency. When morals did not work, I was reduced to mere pleading. None of this swayed Colonel Tavington. I stepped back in defeat.

Then Thomas, brave, foolish Thomas, bolted forward in a courageous but doomed attempt to free his brother. In a moment, though it is forever branded upon my memory, the colonel lifted his hand, cocked his pistol, and fired into Thomas's back.

The boy's hands went up as he keeled over, frozen from the pain. His scream I shall never forget. I rushed forward, cradling him in my arms. My family huddled around the two of us, crying, sobbing, distraught. Thomas's face was ashen against my fingers, his eyes slowly losing the light of life.

The colonel pushed his horse forward two paces to look down upon our little scene.

*"Stupid boy."*

I glanced down at Thomas, now growing cold in my hands. The Dragoons were shooting the wounded enemies, killing them in cold blood. Rage welled up inside of me as I clutched my son to my chest.

The toxic perfume of smoke blew all around us; the house was on fire, the barns ablaze. Screams filled the air, mixing with the crackling of the fire and the diminishing hoof beats of the soldiers who were taking Gabriel away.

I could control myself no longer. The rage, the sheer anger inside of me burned my heart more than the fire around me. Instructing the children to stay put, I sprinted into the house, up the stairs, and into the Room. I had always used the Room to punish myself, to remind myself of what I had done. Now, the only thought on my mind was what I was about to do. Grabbing the guns and pistol, I retrieved the tomahawk from the chest. Slingshotting all over my shoulder, I rushed out of the wreckage of my once controlled world.

What a fright I must have given my children as I emerged from the flames, smudged, unkempt, and carrying more weapons than they had ever seen on my person before. The thought did not cross my mind then. I barked for Samuel and Nathan to rise, handed them each a rifle, and gave instructions to Sarah with short, urgent breaths.

With that, my two sons and I raced into the forest, overtaking the logs and trunks with ease as we had done so many times before. Only this time, we had a purpose other than fishing. We stopped by a fallen log near the dirt road.

"Boys, what did I tell you about shooting?"

I was thankful that I had taught them how to handle a rifle and that they were both good marksmen. Nathan looked at me and answered the affirmative; Samuel only whimpered. I whispered a few last minute instructions and ran

off again, looking for a good spot to open fire.

All that took place after the first shot is a blur to me. I remember feeling at one with the forest, fluidly jumping from one tree to the next. I remember the rush that hit me as I shot each one of the soldiers dead. I remember running into their midst screaming like a wild banshee, wielding my tomahawk. The world slowed down as I caught the last one running away. My tomahawk flew through the air with perfect accuracy, embedding itself deep in the soldier's back. He fell into the creek. Somehow his instantaneous death was not enough; it was not painful enough to satisfy me. I leapt to his side, pulled my weapon out and let it fall again and again into his skull, taking out all my anger, frustration, and fury on this one soldier. His blood mixed with that of the river, splashing my face, covering my entire body. Still, I kept on until my strength gave out.

I saw what I had done; his head was a pulp, the water turning to blood and flowing downstream as it passed us. I lifted my face heavenward as the sun filtered through the trees, warming my blood-covered head. My eyes alighted on my children. Gabriel, Nathan, and Samuel; they were all staring, terrified as if they had never seen me before. In that moment, the tears began to fall and I looked skyward once again.

*O, Lord, forgive me.*

That night, I said goodnight to Nathan, trying to justify bringing him into my act of vengeance.

"You did nothing wrong; you did what I told you."

His response shook my inner being. "I'm glad I killed those men. I'm glad."

I kissed his forehead and left the room, turning to Samuel's doorway. I murmured his name, but he whimpered and faced away.

What had I done? I had tried so hard to avoid the cost of my acts at Fort Wilderness, I was repaid, and I wreaked vengeance once more. The price of my second revenge had cost me the trust that Samuel had in me; he now lived in fear. And what would Nathan do? He had savored the taste of revenge. What would he do when he was older; who would he become because of my recklessness, leading him into the paths of my own sins? I could only pray.

*O, Lord, forgive me.*



# THE EARLY PROPOSAL

## A NOBLE MASQUERADE STORY

BY EMILY KOPF

*A NOBLE MASQUERADE* IS A HISTORICAL, CHRISTIAN ROMANCE SET IN THE EARLY 1800S. RYLAND IS A SPY FOR ENGLAND INVESTIGATING SOME OF THE SERVANTS IN THE ESTATE MIRANDA SHARES WITH HER SIBLINGS. BOTH HAVE SECRETS, BUT THEY FEEL THE ATTRACTION FOR EACH OTHER FROM THE BEGINNING. I AM CHANGING THE DATE OF THEIR ENGAGEMENT TO EARLIER IN THE NOVEL. THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THE SAME: RYLAND IS KIDNAPPED, MIRANDA HELPS RESCUE HIM, THE TWO OF THEM RUN AND HIDE IN A BARN OVERNIGHT, AND MIRANDA'S BROTHER GRIFFITH CONFRONTS RYLAND ABOUT THE IMPROPRIETY OF THE SITUATION. IN THE NOVEL, RYLAND TURNS DOWN GRIFFITH'S DEMAND TO MARRY MIRANDA IMMEDIATELY, INSTEAD CHOOSING TO WAIT AND PROPOSE IN HIS OWN TIME, AFTER MANY MORE FUNNY, DANGEROUS, AND ROMANTIC SITUATIONS. I REWROTE THAT SCENE BECAUSE I SPENT MY TIME READING THE BOOK IMAGINING ALL THE WAYS RYLAND COULD HAVE REVEALED HIMSELF AND PROPOSED. THIS IS ONE OF THEM.

"YOU ARE GOING TO MARRY HER, AREN'T YOU?" DUKE GRIFFITH HAWTHORNE SPEARED HIS FRIEND RYLAND WITH A GLARE.

RYLAND WAS ANOTHER DUKE, BUT HE HAD BEEN WORKING UNDERCOVER AS A SPY FOR THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW. PRESENTLY, HE WAS POSING AS MARLOW, GRIFFITH'S NEW VALET, WHILE INVESTIGATING SUSPICIOUS SERVANTS IN THE HOUSEHOLD. THE NIGHT BEFORE, RYLAND HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED BY SAID SERVANTS AND LADY MIRANDA, GRIFFITH'S SISTER, HAD COME TO HIS RESCUE. RYLAND AND MIRANDA SPENT THE NIGHT HIDING IN A BARN BEFORE TAKING THE LONG WALK BACK TO THE MANOR THE NEXT MORNING. THE "HER" IN QUESTION WAS MIRANDA, WHOSE REPUTATION WAS RUINED BY SPENDING A NIGHT ALONE WITH A MAN.

"OF COURSE I AM," REPLIED RYLAND. "IN A COUPLE OF MONTHS WHEN I RETAKE MY POSITION AS THE DUKE OF MARSHINGTON."

"NO," THUNDERED GRIFFITH. "MIRANDA'S REPUTATION HAS BEEN RUINED. YOU MUST MARRY HER NOW!"

"A SERVANT CAN'T MARRY A LADY."

"YOU ARE *NOT* A SERVANT."

"NO, GRIFFITH. BUT I APPEAR TO BE. WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE HER SPEND HER DAYS ALONE AS A SPINSTER OR WED TO A POOR SERVANT?"

"A SPINSTER. BUT YOU ARE NEITHER POOR NOR A SERVANT. DO THE RIGHT THING AND MARRY HER BEFORE TIME SCARS HER REPUTATION WORSE THAN IT ALREADY IS. I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO MISTREAT MY SISTER IN THIS WAY."

RYLAND WAS NOT TO BE BULLIED. "IMAGINE HOW EVERYONE WILL TALK. AND THEN TO REVEAL THAT THE SERVANT WHO SCANDALOUSLY MARRIED INTO NOBILITY IS ACTUALLY THE DUKE? PEOPLE WILL ASK QUESTIONS THAT I AM NOT PREPARED TO ANSWER."

"WHY ARE YOU BEING SO STUBBORN ABOUT THIS? DON'T YOU LOVE HER?" A VEIN IN GRIFFITH'S FACE THROBBED IN ANGER.

RYLAND PAUSED. "I DO. AND I WANT TO DO RIGHT BY HER. I WILL MAKE YOU A DEAL. I WILL REVEAL MY IDENTITY TO MIRANDA AND ASK HER TO MARRY ME. THEN I WILL LEAVE HERE TO TRACK DOWN THOSE FIENDS, AND WE WILL KEEP THE ENGAGEMENT SECRET UNTIL I FINISH MY ASSIGNMENT AND RETURN TO SOCIETY AS A DUKE."

GRIFFITH GLARED THREATENINGLY AT RYLAND. "YOU HAD BETTER DO SO. NOW GO."

"YES, YOUR GRACE," RYLAND BOWED OUT SNARKILY IN THE CUSTOM OF THE VALET HE WAS POSING AS.



GRIFFITH'S IRE ROSE AND HE THREW A PUNCH WHICH RYLAND EVADED JUST BEFORE WALKING OUT OF THE ROOM.

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MIRANDA HAD RETURNED TO HER ROOM, WASHED, AND CHANGED QUICKLY FROM THE DRESS SHE MUDDIED BY TRACKING ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE IN THE RAIN AND MUD. IT HAD BEEN A HORRIFYING ORDEAL, BUT HER MIND KEPT STRAYING BACK TO RYLAND MARLOW, GRIFFITH'S VALET, WHO HAD KEPT HER SAFE AND SHARED A LITTLE MORE ABOUT HIMSELF. SUCH AS THAT HE HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN A SERVANT. MIRANDA WONDERED WHAT HIS LIFE HAD BEEN LIKE BEFORE HE HAD COME HERE.

SHE ALSO WONDERED WHAT HER FRIEND LADY AMELIA WOULD THINK OF HIM. AMELIA HAD COME TO VISIT MIRANDA THE NIGHT BEFORE, WHILE MIRANDA AND RYLAND HAD BEEN MISSING. NOW, RETURNED AND DRESSED PROPERLY, MIRANDA HURRIED TO GREET HER AND TALK OF THE PREVIOUS DAY'S EVENTS. ALTHOUGH, SHE KNEW SHE WOULD HAVE TO PUT UP WITH HER FAMILY'S QUESTIONING BEFORE SHE COULD SPEAK WITH AMELIA ALONE. AFTER ALL, HER MOTHER WOULD NEVER APPROVE OF MIRANDA'S ATTRACTION TO RYLAND BECAUSE, "A LADY NEVER BECOMES FRIENDS WITH THE SERVANTS."

THREE DOORS BEFORE THE SITTING ROOM IN WHICH HER FAMILY WAS SURE TO BE WAITING FOR HER, SHE HEARD SOMEONE CALL OUT FROM BEHIND HER.

"LADY MIRANDA?"

"RYLAND?"—COUGH—"I MEAN, MARLOW?"

"MAY I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU?"

MIRANDA COULD HEAR HER MOTHER'S VOICE, *A LADY NEVER—*

"OF COURSE, MARLOW. WHAT IS IT?"

RYLAND OPENED HIS MOUTH, THEN SEEMED TO THINK BETTER OF IT. OPENING THE DOOR TO THE DINING ROOM AND BECKONING HER OVER, HE SAID, "PLEASE ALLOW ME TO TALK WITH YOU IN PRIVATE."

IT WAS NOT PROPER TO BE ALONE WITH HIM IN THIS WAY. MIRANDA KNEW THAT AS WELL AS SHE KNEW HER OWN HANDS. WHEN SHE HESITATED, HE SAID, "PLEASE MIRANDA. GRIFFITH ASKED ME TO SPEAK WITH YOU, AND IT IS SOMETHING THAT MUST BE SHARED PRIVATELY."

BEFORE SHE COULD SECOND GUESS HERSELF, MIRANDA ENTERED THE DINING ROOM, RYLAND CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND THEM.

"PLEASE HAVE A SEAT," HE SAID.

"I WOULD PREFER TO STAND."

ONE OF HIS LIPS QUIRKED UP. "DO AS YOU WISH, MY LADY." HE PAUSED. "I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT SOMETHING."

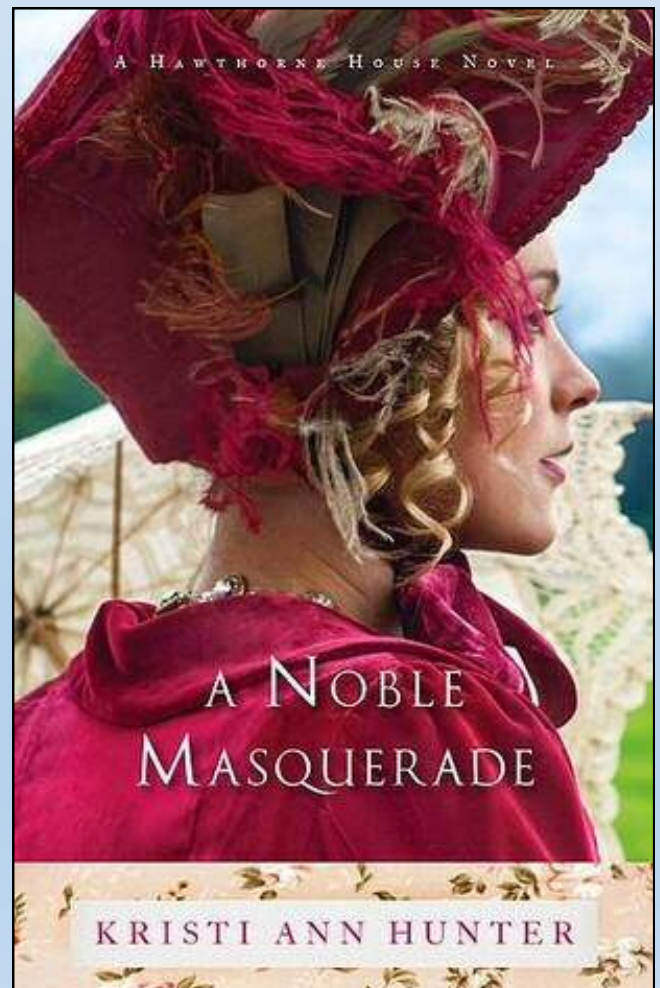
MIRANDA GREW CONCERNED ABOUT HIS HESITANCY. "IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT? GRIFFITH IS NOT SENDING YOU AWAY, IS HE?"

"NO, MIRANDA. IT'S ME. I AM NOT A SERVANT."

MIRANDA'S BROWS DREW TOGETHER IN CONFUSION.

"THAT IS," RYLAND CORRECTED, "I MEAN I AM A SERVANT, BUT THAT IS NOT WHO I REALLY AM." RYLAND PAUSED AGAIN.

THE NEXT PART WOULD BE THE MOST DIFFICULT TO SAY. HE WAS THE DUKE OF MARSHINGTON ... THE MAN MIRANDA



HAD SECRETLY BEEN WRITING LETTERS TO FOR MANY YEARS. IT STARTED, AS FAR AS HE COULD TELL, AS A SORT OF DIARY FOR HER TO RELEASE ALL OF THE PRESSURE HER MOTHER PUT ON HER TO BE THE PERFECT LADY. NONE OF THEM WERE EVER MEANT TO BE SENT TO HIM. BUT THEN RYLAND HAD FOUND AND READ ONE OF THOSE PRIVATE LETTERS WHILE WORKING IN HER HOUSEHOLD. HE HAD PRETENDED TO SEND THE LETTERS TO, WELL, HIMSELF, BUT SHE DID NOT KNOW THAT. THEN HE RESPONDED AS THOUGH HE WERE A PERFECT STRANGER, AND THE TWO OF THEM HAD BEEN SECRETLY CORRESPONDING EVER SINCE. THAT DECEPTION, WHICH EVEN GRIFFITH DID NOT KNOW ABOUT, WOULD BE THE HARDEST OBSTACLE FOR MIRANDA TO OVERCOME. AND SO THE MOST DIFFICULT TO REVEAL TO HER.

RYLAND TOOK A DEEP BREATH. "LADY MIRANDA, I WOULD LIKE TO FORMALLY INTRODUCE MYSELF. I AM NOT RYLAND MARLOW, BECAUSE I AM AN UNDERCOVER AGENT OF GREAT BRITAIN. I AM ACTUALLY THE DUKE OF MARSHINGTON."

MIRANDA FROZE, THE CONFUSION CLEAR IN HER FACE. RYLAND WOULD GIVE HER A MOMENT TO COMPOSE HERSELF BEFORE—

WHAM! ONE OF MIRANDA'S FISTS CONNECTED WITH RYLAND'S NOSE. A SECOND CAME FLYING AT HIS FACE, BUT THIS TIME RYLAND'S INSTINCTS KICKED IN AND HE CAUGHT IT BEFORE IT HIT HIM.

THIS WAS NOT THE WAY RYLAND HAD EXPECTED MIRANDA TO REACT. TEARS, ANGER, EVEN A DEAD FAINT. BUT NOT A PUNCH TO THE FACE. RYLAND HAD NOT THOUGHT HER CAPABLE OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE. STILL, THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT SHE BELIEVED HIM. IT WAS THE REPERCUSSIONS THAT WERE THE PROBLEM.

"YOU LIED TO ME! ALL THAT TIME PRETENDING YOU WERE—"

RYLAND SLAPPED HIS HAND ACROSS HER MOUTH. "QUIET, PLEASE. THERE MIGHT STILL BE TRAITORS AMONG YOUR SERVANTS, AND THEY CANNOT KNOW WHO I AM. THEY WILL KILL ME. I ONLY TOLD YOU BECAUSE..."

MIRANDA'S IRE QUIETED SOMEWHAT AT THE POTENTIAL DANGER TO HIM, AND RYLAND REMOVED HIS HAND. THEY WERE QUIET FOR A MOMENT, LISTENING TO SOMEONE WALK PAST THE DOOR. RYLAND COULD SEE MIRANDA'S MIND PROCESSING ALL HE HAD TOLD HER.

"RYLAND, WHY DID YOU TELL ME WHO YOU WERE?"

"BECAUSE I—BECAUSE A LADY SPENDING THE NIGHT WITH A GENTLEMAN RUINS HER REPUTATION. I CANNOT ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN TO YOU. MIRANDA, WILL YOU MARRY ME?"

MIRANDA DREW IN A SHARP INTAKE OF BREATH. MANY THINGS SEEMED TO RACE THROUGH HER MIND, AND THEN, "YOU WOULD MARRY ME BECAUSE MY BROTHER IS FORCING YOU TO? BECAUSE OF MY RUINED REPUTATION? YOU SAID HE ASKED YOU TO SPEAK TO ME."

HER EYES ACCUSED. BECAUSE HER BROTHER ASKED HIM? BECAUSE, AND HE BARELY DARED TO HOPE, SHE WANTED TO MARRY HIM FOR LOVE RATHER THAN REPUTATION? IT WAS TOTALLY IMPROBABLE THAT SHE WOULD WANT TO MARRY HIM AFTER EVERYTHING. BUT THERE WAS THAT ONE MOMENT EARLIER THAT DAY WHEN THEY WERE TRAVELING BACK TO THE ESTATE THAT MADE HIM WONDER.

"YES, MIRANDA, HE ASKED ME TO SPEAK WITH YOU." HE HELD UP A HAND AT HER IMMEDIATE PROTEST. "BUT I CHOSE TO ASK. I COULD HAVE TOLD HIM NO, BECAUSE IT IS IMPROPER FOR YOU TO MARRY A SERVANT. I MUST STILL PRETEND TO BE A SERVANT UNTIL MY MISSION IS COMPLETE." DRAWING A BREATH, HE CONTINUED. "MIRANDA ... I WANT TO MARRY YOU. I WAS GOING TO FIND YOU WHEN MY MISSION IS COMPLETE AND I RETURN TO SOCIETY AS THE DUKE. I LOVE YOU. WILL YOU MARRY ME?"

MIRANDA'S FACE HAD FROZEN INTO A MASK AGAIN, AND RYLAND'S HOPES FELL. IT WAS TOO MUCH. HE KNEW IT WAS. THE LETTERS AND THE SECRECY WOULD TURN HER AWAY. HE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BARED HIS HEART AND HIS SECRETS TO HER.

THEN MIRANDA, EVER THE EMOTIONAL LADY, FLUNG HERSELF INTO RYLAND'S ARMS. "I LOVE YOU, TOO! I WANTED TO MARRY YOU EVEN WHEN YOU WERE A SERVANT."

RYLAND'S SMILE GREW. THERE WERE A LOT OF UNCERTAINTIES IN THEIR FUTURE: HOW HE WOULD FINISH HIS MISSION, HOW THEY WOULD KEEP THINGS SECRET AND BREAK IT TO HER FAMILY, AND OTHERS. BUT THEY LOVED EACH OTHER AND WERE GOING TO MARRY. THAT WAS ENOUGH FOR ANY MAN. RYLAND PULLED MIRANDA BACK A LITTLE AND KISSED HER.



# A PERIOD OF DRAMA AND DETERMINATION

**By Amanda Pizzolatto (alias Aurora Mandeville)**

Everyone knows that a woman with a large fortune is in need of a man to manage it. Or, in some cases, to use it, if the woman turns out to be a better manager of money than the man; but whatever the case may be, a woman with money is more likely to find a husband than a woman without. At least, that was certainly something Mrs. Collins would ~~o~~ment ~~d~~ her sons. George the eldest, would only smile and nod at his ~~not~~ her's somewhat interesting notions. He was also the favored one, the one most likely to get a lovely wife, handsome as he was with his sandy locks and grey eyes. Richard, the youngest, took her words mostly to heart. Considered the second most handsome of the family, though by far the most airheaded of the lot, he was the one who really wanted to please his mother.

The second-youngest, James, seemed to follow Richard around like a puppy dog, being his minion in all his schemes. Charles, the middle child, was not interested in finding a wife at all; he saw no point in it for himself. Then there was Henry, the second eldest. With his dark hair, green eyes, and something of a mysterious demeanor, he turned a lot of ladies' heads. But of the bunch, he alone loudly voiced his intentions to marry only for love, not money. So what if he had to work harder than most men to keep a roof over his family's head and food on their table? He would do it for the love of his wife and their children.

Unfortunately, due to his poor health, he couldn't do a lot of what was required of him in terms of military, farming, or sailing. His tongue proved too tart for a judge or to be a clergyman. He tried to take up accounting, but found his greatest strength to be words, not numbers. His mother, however, thought it all well and good that he had such poor health; it meant that he would have to marry a woman of consequence in order to get by in the world. And with George taking up the family business in the accounting line, Charles preparing for the clergy, James determined to become a midshipman, and Richard with high hopes of becoming a dashing soldier, Henry didn't have to worry too much about attempting to find a job, as long as they all stayed at home, for the most part. Henry understood that George would soon want to break away and start a family, but as of right then, he hadn't found a woman he was interested in. He was currently saving up to purchase a place of his own, though their dear, sweet mother kept insisting on him to wait, there may yet be a rich woman who could provide one.

Henry rolled his eyes every time she said that and would retort with, "Dear sweet mother, how do you ever expect George to be a man if you do not let him work for his own living instead of living off a woman?" And every single time she would glare at him, though she would become quiet ~~a~~ ~~er~~ t hat or s ~~wt~~cht o a ~~fff~~ er er t subject, mainly because George would always speak up. This time, they were in the sitting room, all the men reading and drinking tea while Mrs. Collins was sewing. She barely stopped stitching when she glanced up to glare at her second-eldest.

George let out a sigh before continuing with his usual, "Henry, really? How can you speak thus to your



own mother?"

"Oh come now, George, a man has every right to let a woman know when she is wrong, just like a woman has every right to let a man know when he is wrong," their father said as he flipped a page in his paper. "Though, it's less of a right and more of a duty, as a right has a few privileges attached to it, while a duty must be done, though begrudgingly and at the expense of being ridiculed."

Mrs. Collins turned her angry glance upon her husband, who was safely unaware of it thanks to the paper, at least at that moment. He would no doubt hear it when the two retired for the night.

"And how exactly do we know what is right and what is wrong?" asked Charles from his corner, poring over the Bible, yet again. It was nice that he liked the Bible so much, but there was only one, and the others would like to read it every now and then.

"Maybe if you let your brothers read that book more often they might actually know for sure" quipped their father.

Charles rolled his eyes and went back to reading the Bible. Henry let out a sigh; they had to have been the most dysfunctional family in all of England. Besides, how could his mother think that a woman with a fortune was in need of a man to manage it? Out of the five of them, George was really the only one qualified and capable of managing anything! Richard and James were as liable to spend it as quickly as their mother could. Charles could care less about money; besides, he was more interested in the clergy than anything else; hence his Bible hugging. And Henry was expensive only because becoming a writer was the best option he had.

The whole family jumped when feverous knocks came crashing on their front door.

"Who in the world could that be?" asked Mrs. Collins as Henry watched one of the maids rush to the front.

"Guess we shall find out," muttered Mr. Collins as he folded up his newspaper.

The maid came rushing into the room and gave a quick curtsy. "It's your sister, ma'am, says she must speak with you."

"Oh," muttered Mr. Collins as he rolled his eyes and unfolded his newspaper again.

"Oh no," mumbled Henry

"Well, of course! My sister is always welcome here!" exclaimed Mrs. Collins as she eyed both men before picking up her sewing. The maid gave another quick curtsy and left returning with Mrs. Collins' sister.

"Oh my dear Mrs. Collins, I have some wonderful news!" she stated as she rushed to sit next to her sister.

"My goodness, you are rather flushed, Mrs. Russell!"

"Oh, because I just had to rush over here once I heard! Did you know, Crescentwood is to be let to a wealthy family!" she exclaimed as she grabbed Mrs. Collins' shoulders in her excitement. She just as quickly let go and fixed her hat. "I figured you would want to know."

"What do you know of the family?" asked Mrs. Collins, her eyes clearly picking out George. By then, everyone was listening.

Mrs. Russell smiled; she knew she had their attention. "The family is rumored to have four daughters, and that the father is eagerly seeking a son-in-law, or more, so that the wealth can stay within the family instead of being inherited by a cousin," replied Mrs. Russell with a big grin.

Henry let out a soft groan when his mother's eyes passed over all five of her sons; she was going to play matchmaker. Or, at least try to.

"Oh my, well, we should definitely welcome them to the neighborhood!" exclaimed Mrs. Collins, looking pointedly at Mr. Collins.

"As in, having a party?" asked Richard excitedly. Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Russell glanced at him.

"Oh, that's a wonderful idea, Richard! What do you say, Mr. Collins? Should we not throw a party to welcome the new family to the neighborhood?"

Mr. Collins sighed, folded up his paper again, and finally spoke, "It would be nice, would it not? However, I must remind you, there is not enough room at Newpoint for a party of your tastes or size."

"But there is plenty of room at Ivy Lane. I shall talk to Mr. Russell about it and get you your invites as soon as I know," remarked Mrs. Russell as she placed her hand reassuringly over her sister's.

"Oh, will you? That would be wonderful!" exclaimed Mrs. Collins as she clasped her sister's hand. "Oh, my boys may yet be married by next year!"

"Mother!" cried Henry, causing everyone to look at him. He rose stiffly and placed his book on the table before giving a quick bow. "Thank you for your consideration, but as an adult, I make my own decisions. Good evening, Mrs. Russell, Mother, Father." Without waiting for another word or look, he practically stomped out of the room. He dashed up the stairs, breathing quickly so as to let out his anger. Oh, his mother could be so frustrating!

"Henry!" called out George. But Henry didn't stop until he was in his room. He sat down on the bed, crossed his arms, and waited for George to come through the door.

A minute later, George burst through. "What is with you today?" he asked as he sat next to Henry.

"What do you think? It's the usual with me. You know Aunt Russell is going to leave here with the report that you acted like an angel as always and I'm just the devil in disguise."

"Henry," berated his brother with a sigh.

"You know it's true, you've been Mother's favorite ever since we were little. I mean, come on, with your sandy locks and your grey eyes, you were destined to be an angel," stated Henry as he tried to make his voice high-pitched and fluttered his eyelashes. George merely shook his head while trying not to smile. "At least, according to mother; and boy was she ever right."



"Well, you can rest assured that you're at least Father's favorite, being the devil's advocate and all," George said with a smirk.

Henry scoffed, "Right, but then, if you're the angel and I'm the devil, what does that make Charles, James, and Richard?"

"Mere humans, my dear brother; our parents finally got it right," replied George with a pat on Henry's back. Henry eyed him as he scrunched up his nose.

"Charles, James, and Richard they got right? Which household did you grow up in?" Henry's face went from dead serious to a silly grin, causing George to burst out laughing. Henry joined in, until he began to cough. George instantly got him to his feet and bent him over, patting him on his back until the coughing fit died down.

"Alright, that's enough excitement for you, time for bed," he ordered.

"Alright, alright, let me change into my night clothes, please. I can do that myself, thank you," stated Henry as he went about getting ready for bed.

"Do you have your water?" asked George, looking for the glass by the bedside. Henry picked it up to show him.

"Right here."

"Good, now . . ."

"Keep talking like that and you'll convince me that you were meant to be a doctor," Henry teased.

George sighed as he shook his head. "Come on, Henry, please be serious."

"What? You don't have a problem with our dear sweet mother setting us up with some women we haven't even met?" grumbled Henry.

"Ah, so that's the problem."

"Oh, come on! You should know by now that's always been my problem!" Henry snapped. It was followed by a quick cough, causing him to pick up the glass and drink.

"And you should know by now that your health has always been my problem," snapped George. Henry glanced at him in surprise, George rarely got upset. George heaved a sigh when he noticed the look on Henry's face. "I'm sorry, it's just; sometimes, you act so selfishly. You do understand that I would go crazy if you weren't around?"

"You mean, you would have left at the first chance you got if it hadn't been for me and my health?"

"What? No! It's not like I can leave just yet, I don't have enough money saved up to buy my own place! Besides, I'm the one who's going to inherit everything."

Henry smiled and gave a soft chuckle. "That is true."



"Well, I should be going, and you should get to bed. There's a lot that has to be done," stated George as he got up to leave.

"To meet our future wives?" mumbled Henry.

"To welcome the new family to town; you need to stop expecting things will go Mother's way. Let's just go to the party, meet the family, and do nothing else. Mother doesn't have to be always right."

Henry let out a sigh, "Oh, alright, if you insist; unless, of course, you're thinking that one of those women is to be your future wife."

"Hey, we have only established that you don't want to make one of them your future wife, that doesn't mean I can't be open to the idea for myself."

"Well, alright, maybe they won't be as bad as I'm making them out to be."

"Good idea, dear brother. After all, you have never even seen them. You know as much as the rest of us; there are four daughters and they're wealthy. What did you expect to learn about them based on that information?"

Henry let out a laugh. "Oh, alright, alright; I see your point."

"Good, now time for bed," remarked George as he went to his brother and led him to his bed.

"You're right yet again, George, I will admit it. But I can go to bed on my own, thank you," said Henry as he shook his brother's hand off of his arm. But he did move closer to his bed to show that he was at least heading there.

"Alright, good night," said George as he walked towards the door.

"Good night," said Henry before George closed the door behind him.

He heaved a sigh after George left and crawled into bed. Yes, George was right, as usual, but he really did not want to give his mother the satisfaction of being right again. But as he slowly drifted off to sleep, he couldn't help but wonder about the new family moving into town. Yes, they were wealthy with four daughters, their mother's dream come true, but what were they like? Could they even be friends? All he knew was, if any woman tried to break his brother's heart, she would come to regret it.



# The Silver Lining

By Stuart S. Laing

**Warning: Caution is strongly advised for our younger reading audience due to thematic elements.**

**Edinburgh, Scotland**

**1<sup>st</sup> November 1746**

“Och, we may as well make ourselves comfortable. That rain isn’t going to let up any time soon.” Sergeant Angus MacIan of Edinburgh’s Town Guard gave a slow shake of his grey head as he closed the shutters on the darkness and torrential rain sweeping across the filthy cobbles of the High Street outside the crumbling walls of the guardhouse. Crossing the long, narrow room, he tossed a few more coals onto the roaring fire and swung an iron kettle over the dancing flames as he scratched at his neatly trimmed beard. “We might as well ha’e a mug o’ tea if we’re confined to barracks,” he chuckled as he joined the two men sat at the battered table which dominated the centre of the room. “And while we wait for the kettle tae boil, I think I’ll treat myself to a wee puff on my pipe.”

“Do you really have to?” Captain Charles Travers laughed as he watched his veteran sergeant pull out an ancient leather pouch from the pocket of his regulation issue redcoat. “At least open a window or you’ll be choking us with the stink of that tarry old rope you insist on smoking.”

“Rest easy, Charles,” the third figure said with a smile. “I happen to know that my wife passed Angus a pound of the best Virginia tobacco just this morning.”

“That she did, Mr. Young,” MacIan nodded happily. “I’ve told her she doesn’t need to be wasting her money on all an auld goat like me, but she’ll no listen.”

As he sliced off a sliver of tobacco and began to rub it into loose strands, Robert Young’s eyes fell on the pouch of faded green leather with a few coloured glass beads still stitched into place. It was obvious that at one time there had been others forming an intricate pattern, but most had long since been lost. “Is that your pouch you got in the Colonies?” he asked.

“It is. Made by the natives and gifted to me by a beautiful girl,” mumbled the veteran, his eyes twinkling briefly at some memory rekindled by the question and making him look, for an instant, much younger than his fifty-seven years of life.

“And if I remember correctly, you have promised to tell us one day the story behind how you came to have it,” Robert said with a raised eyebrow. “If we’re going to be stuck in here avoiding the worst of the weather, this might be the perfect time to hear the tale.”



MacIan hummed and hawed while his companions pressed him to talk. Finally, with a resigned sigh, he acquiesced. “Very well, I’ll tell you, but be warned, it’s a tale of murder and blood, of spies and betrayal, and an innocent young woman who found herself at the mercy of a band of heartless men. I, to my shame, was one of them.”

“You?”

“Aye, me.” He tamped down the tobacco into the bowl of his chipped clay pipe and lit it before speaking again. “We had been sent from the slaughter yards of Tournai, Ypres, Mons, and Malplaquet to bolster the resolve of our colonists in Boston who were being harried by the French and their native allies in Acadia.”

“Acadia?” asked Charles with a puzzled frown. “That’s a long way from a glen in the Western Highlands.”

“That is was. Aye, the French colony of Acadia in New France, as it was called then. If we thought that being sent across the Atlantic meant that we would be safe from shot and shell, we were soon proven wrong.”

“You can never trust the French,” Charles nodded with a smile. “So you and your friends were pitched from the frying pan of Europe into the fire of America? So how does this end up with you having that faded old baccy bag?”

“If you would be good enough to pour the tea, sir, I’ll tell you.”

### **By the Rivière Dauphin, Acadia, New France**

**10<sup>th</sup> August 1710**

Heavy raindrops dripped from the thick leaves which were failing to provide any real shelter for the seven British infantrymen and one Frenchman gathered below the broad boughs of the trees forming a narrow wooded fringe by the dark tidal waters lapping the shore fifty yards from where the soldiers crouched. Two miles to the south a small fishing boat, one of the few to avoid being captured by French pirates,



patiently awaited their return, having carried the small party from the British city of Boston to the large sheltered body of water named Basin de Port Royal, deep in enemy territory.

The British soldiers had been secretly set ashore on French soil far behind the border, between the tiny hamlets of Beliveau and Robichaud, less than a mile from the French fort of Port Royal. Had anyone happened to see the huddled figures, they would have



seen nothing to identify them as soldiers of the United Kingdom, as people were slowly coming to call the newly formed union of nations within the British Isles. No red coats hung on their bodies, no cockaded black tricorne hats, no white crossbelts or gaiters. These figures grimly staring through the endless drizzle towards a single story cabin of logs and thatch set a few dozen yards from the edge of Robichaud were anonymous assassins.

One of these figures, dressed as were the others in buckskin jackets and trousers, pointed a dirty finger towards this cabin. "That's the place," he said in a harsh whisper revealing a strong French accent. "It is a poor tavern, not one I would wish to drink in, but it is there we will find your spy, may God have mercy on him, for he can expect none from me."

"Frenchie, yer a cold hearted sod," Sergeant Peter Flynn, the hard-faced man by his side, said with a dark grin. "But ye ain't wrong. He's crossed the line once too often and orders is orders. Our lords and masters have passed their judgement on him; we are just doing what we are told. He ain't to sell another secret."

The youngest member of the party, a pale-faced soldier barely out of his teenage years, suddenly felt very far from the safe hills of home in the western highlands of Scotland. It was a home he had run away from when the girl he loved laughed at his proposal of marriage. To be sure, it had felt like a reasonable thing to do at the time: a young man's pride is easily hurt by rejection, and the excitement offered by a career in the army had seemed the perfect escape from his sense of shame. Little more than a year later, he had reason to ponder the sense of that decision. It had been a time of mud, blood, gut-rending terror, and abject misery in the killing fields of Flanders where a United Kingdom, still only a handful of years old, and her allies fought an endless war against the French.

Swallowing down a nervous lump in his throat, he said in a quavering voice, "Sarge, I thought we were meant to be taking him back with us?"

The hard-faced man curled his lip as he looked at the youngster. "Listen Goosey, me boy, we was told to make sure Monsieur Theodore Flaubert doesn't go spilling any more secrets. That's what we is going to do, all right?"

The young man's face seemed to grow even paler at the unwelcome nickname being spat at him in a harsh Cockney accent. He had been lumbered with the title 'Goosey' due to their French guide's habit of pronouncing his name as '*Hangoose*' rather than Angus. A habit his comrades had quickly seized on and used to his discomfort ever since. His discomfort was not eased when another soldier hissed a warning, "Someone's coming."

All sank lower into the mud below the trees and watched as a young woman wrapped in a heavy hooded cape to ward off the rain hurried along the dirt track from the village and entered the cabin. "Who the 'ell that's, then?" the sergeant growled towards Francois their guide.

The middle-aged man gave a Gallic shrug. "It will be his new wife. He arranged for her to be shipped over from France only last month. He had never laid eyes on her before she landed," he chuckled. "She could have been like the cow's rear, *non*, but she is a beauty, *oui*? *Oui*, she is a beauty, far too pretty to be wasted on a swine like Flaubert."

"Why ye ain't told us about her before? You said that he would be alone!"

Francois shrugged again. "Alone. With a wife. What difference does it make? We are still going to silence him, no?"

"But what about her?" Angus asked, feeling a sick knot form in the pit of his stomach.

The sergeant's face turned towards him, his lips parted in a smile revealing several missing teeth. "Her? I think that Flaubert has been so good as to allow for us to have a little bit of pleasure to mix with

business!”

Suppressed snorts of laughter were barely contained as young Angus MacIan squirmed in embarrassment. Any reply he thought to make was cut off by a dismissive wave of one hand and the hissed words, “Keep yer noise down, scum. You’ll have the whole bleeding Froggie army down on our necks. Keep quiet till it gets dark, and then we can all have a taste of tender French pie for our supper.”

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While cursing his luck, MacIan burrowed as closely as he could into the shelter of the broad tree trunk and did his best to avoid the rain trickling down the back of his neck. As the daylight slowly faded towards the approaching night, he considered his life. He had thought that the carnage he had seen after the slaughter of Malplaquet was as miserable as he could feel, but sitting here in the incessant drizzle, waiting to commit what he could only think of as murder, was far worse.

His mind wandered back to the night he and his comrades had been sitting in a decaying roadside tavern a few miles from the outskirts of Bruges when the order came to pack their bags and head for the coast. Without ceremony, they soon found themselves on a ship for England. Two days kicking their heels in a barracks in Portsmouth had given way to them being ordered aboard a warship bound for New England where the colonists were demanding action be taken against the rampages of the French and their native allies. Unlike many of his comrades, he had suffered no crippling sickness during the long voyage across the ocean, a single blessing in what had otherwise been a miserable few months. The endless training of local militias had been a thankless task, but a more pleasant duty than the occasional forays into the backwoods where danger hid behind every tree. French regulars, their colonial militia, and the savages were almost always somewhere out there, their presence unknown until a musket barked or an arrow whistled by an ear. These skirmishes rarely lasted more than a minute or two, but it had been long enough to lay a man in a lonely grave. It had been one of these skirmishes in an unnamed wilderness where MacIan had killed his first man: a Frenchman wearing a combination of regular uniform and native buckskin. He had stared down at the man’s face afterwards, feeling sick inside. During the mass battle of Malplaquet he had stood in line with his regiment, firing at a line of French infantry with no idea if he had hit anything or not through the clouds of gun smoke which wreathed the field of conflict. Here, he had aimed, fired, and saw him fall. When the French withdrew he had advanced cautiously until he stood over his victim. There was nothing remarkable about the man; he seemed to be in his thirties and until a moment earlier had been a living, breathing person. Now he was nothing but a corpse among the trees. Staring at the blood staining the dirty white uniform jacket left him feeling sick. It was that same stomach churning feeling he was experiencing now as the drizzle grew ever heavier into a torrential downpour. The weather, at least, was something familiar to a Scotsman. The atmospheric misery fitted his mood perfectly.

His dark brooding was brought to an abrupt halt as a hand dropped on his shoulder. “Move yersel’ Goosey,” the sergeant said in a low hiss. “It’s time to make a man o’ yer.”

\* \* \*

Like vengeful wraiths, the soldiers and their French guide flitted through the shelter of the trees, eyes constantly watching in every direction as lights began to shine from within the houses of the village of Robichaud just a short distance away. Figures scurried through the gathering darkness of the village, each one of them making the British soldiers freeze for an instant before moving on. The hurried movement of the villagers was due to the weather, not a desire to avoid drawing fire from Redcoat muskets. It took only a few

tense minutes to reach the rear of the tavern which bordered the trees, and in the last of the dying light was found to more closely resemble the yard of a failing farm. Several decrepit sheds and outbuildings, all of wood, stood on either side of a square area of stinking mud containing a small pen for some pigs and piglets nearly ready for market. Their grunting and snuffling was more than enough to cover the sound of heavy boots slithering through the sucking mud as the men cautiously advanced on the rear of the cabin, wary eyes on the shuttered windows for the first hint of discovery.

Using hand signals only, the raiders were directed to advance around the side of the tavern with every ear cocked for any sound of revelry from within. Francois, the guide, had assured them that with today being a Sunday there was little likelihood of any villagers wishing to be seen inside. The village priest, he told them, took a very dim view of both the tavern and those who may think to frequent it on the Sabbath.

With backs to the cabin wall, they edged forward knowing that should a villager's eyes turn in their direction there was a risk they could be seen in the light of the single lantern hanging by the closed door to the tavern. Francois wasted little time in extinguishing this light, casting the scene into darkness. Now the only light was that which crept out from below the door itself. The sergeant, his ear pressed to the door, could hear voices from within in rapid French which meant nothing to him; what did matter was that there were more than two voices. A woman could occasionally be heard along with the louder voices of two men.

"Three of 'em," he hissed over his shoulder as he hefted his musket, ready to unleash death, although discharging it was the very last thing he wanted to do. Silence was more important than anything else. A gunshot would bring unwanted attention down on the tavern, and attention was the very thing he most wish to avoid. Behind him he heard everyone shuffle quickly into position, and only when he was sure that all were in place, did he test the door. A simple latch secured it and it lifted silently to his touch.

"GO!" he barked as he pushed the door wide and rushed inside, musket to his shoulder as its blackened muzzle swept back and forth around the small room to find two middle-aged men at a table, but no sign of the girl.

The men, frozen in their seats, stared in horror as the room was suddenly filled with grim-faced, silent figures, all of whom aimed muskets in their direction. For a moment there was complete silence before one of the seated figures recognised a single face. "*Francois Dubois, t'es un salaud!*"

"*Ta gueule, crétin!*" Francois spat back, his hand pulling a wickedly long dagger from his belt. "Who is your friend?"

Flaubert scowled and spat a gob of phlegm towards the turncoat. "*Degage!* So you have sold what is left of your stinking soul to the *Anglais branleurs*. I always knew you were a dog."

Sergeant Flynn looked back and forth at the rapid exchange in French. "What's 'e saying, then?" he demanded.

Francois shrugged. "He is being most rude towards you and your men, *mon ami*."

Sergeant Flynn shook his head. "I don't care 'bout that. Who's the other bloke, and where's the girl? MacIan, get through the back room and find her. Seeing as this is your first time in enemy territory, I'll be all Christian and let ye get nice and...eh...*acquainted* with her first."

MacIan, his anxiety growing by the moment crossed the room, careful to keep well out of the line of fire as some of the others moved forward to secure and gag the men who were now their prisoners. A part of him still believed that things could end without bloodshed, but even as he reached the door to the back room, his hopes were dashed. Francois's knife moved in the flickering candlelight and Flaubert's companion jerked in his chair as his throat was slashed wide.



Swallowing down the sickness which threatened to spill from his mouth, he sent a prayer heavenward and pushed open the door to find himself in a small bedchamber. Also present was the female he had seen earlier as she crouched low by the bed with terror plain on her lovely face. It was clear she was even younger than he was and it was also clear that neither wished to find themselves in this position.

“Who are you? What do you want?” she managed to stutter out in French as she sank deeper into the scant sanctuary of the bedside. A single candle and a low burning fire provided the only illumination in a room containing only a bed and two sea chests of clothing.

MacIan could only shake his head in ignorance of her language. “I dinnae speak French,” he said with a weak smile, and finally realised that aiming a musket towards her was doing nothing to lessen her distress. From the room behind him, he could hear Flynn and Francois questioning Flaubert with angry words and punches thrown.

“*Anglais?*”

“Good God, no. Scottish...” He struggled for the correct word. “*Écossais.*”

Her brow furrowed as though struggling to tell what difference this made to her predicament and failing to find any which helped her. “I speak little,” she managed to say in English, albeit with a very thick accent that he struggled to decipher but was at least not completely foreign to his ears. “What you do to me? Please, no hurt me.”

“I’m not going to hurt you, lass,” he was quick to reply, all the while feeling sick at the knowledge of the fate which awaited the girl once the others were finished with Flaubert. After his throat had been cut, he knew that the same death awaited her. But that would only be after his comrades had used and abused her. Even the thought of that made him feel worse than before. Behind, the door opened and one of the soldiers stuck his head into the room.

“You got her then, good. Flynn said to take yer time, Goosey,” he said with a leer as his hungry eyes fell upon the shaking figure trying to hide beside the bed. “Ooft, she’s a tidy bundle.” He gave a dark chuckle. “Her feller ain’t talking yet, but he will. Flynn and that French git know how to make tongues wag. Once we know what he’s been telling the Frogs about us, we can move on to the pleasurable part of the evening.”

“Flynn still means to...” he stuttered to a halt and he looked helplessly from the man to the girl.

“No witnesses, Goosey. Ain’t the done thing to go leaving people to spill their guts about who was here. No, Frankie boy says he can make it look like it was the savages what done it so no’one will ever think it was us what was ‘ere.” With another lingering look he left the room, closing the door behind him.

“Goosey? What do they mean to do to me?” The terror in her voice was clear to hear and twisted at his heart.

“Don’t call me that,” he said as gently as he could. “My name is Angus.”

“Angus,” she nodded, making a better job of pronouncing it than Francois ever had. “I am Arabella. What happen to my husband?”

“Him through there? He’s been selling French secrets to the British and British secrets to the French. Now he’s been caught out.” MacIan could only give a helpless gesture. “You understand? He has been betraying your country for cash.”

“I am not surprised,” she spat. “Theodore, *t’es rien qu’un petit connard!*” Her eyes, a startling deep blue, looked beseechingly towards MacIan. “Am I going to die?” The look on his face answered her question as she broke into heart-breaking sobs.

“Arabella,” he said as he placed his musket against the door and hurried across the room to kneel by her side, one hand gently stroking her shoulder in a weak attempt to comfort her. “Listen Arabella, I swear

that no'one is going to harm you. I swear it."

Her tear-filled eyes looked up at his for proof that he was telling the truth. From the determined look in his eyes and the firm set on his lips, he was being honest with her. Small hands grasped his arm. "You swear it? Please, Angus..."

"I do, Arabella," he replied with a firm nod of his chin. But how? His mind raced for a solution. He couldn't smuggle her out through the room where the others were questioning her husband. If he lifted her out through the window, it was likely one of those keeping watch from the tavern would see her before she got ten yards. She would either be caught, shot, or stabbed. Any of which would likely be enough to raise the alarm in the village and see the British running for their lives. Even if they managed to evade capture, he knew that his life would be left hanging by a thread for betraying Flynn and the others. None of them could be considered close friends. He simply hadn't been through as many fights as the others. Their sense of camaraderie meant that he was still an outsider in many ways, and that meant he could not let her escape without risking his own life. As his brown eyes looked towards her tear streaked face, he knew he could not stand by and watch while she was assaulted and murdered. He just couldn't do it. It was one thing to kill a man in the heat of combat, but this? This was no different than grabbing a girl off the street and butchering her in cold blood. Butchering? An idea was forming in his mind.

"Wait here," he whispered to her as he got to his feet. Crossing the room, he opened the door a crack, just enough to see the bloodied face of Flaubert as Flynn and Francois continued to work on him. Those not watching this performance were glued to the shuttered windows, their full attention focused on the village for any risk coming from that direction. Biting his lip, he looked back to Arabella. She was still hunched down by the bed, her wide eyes looking at him with a mixture of hope and abject terror fighting for dominance. "I have an idea," he said quietly as he hurried back to her. "But I don't think you're going to like it."

*"Oui?"*

"Yes," he smiled grimly.

\* \* \*

A few minutes later, MacIan watched round the partially opened door as the grim scene involving Flaubert drew to its inevitable conclusion. Flynn, satisfied he had learned all he could from the traitorous Theodore Flaubert, nodded to Francois. The Frenchman smiled happily and his knife went to work.

As Flaubert's body finally stopped its spasmodic twitching, all attention turned towards the bedchamber. Now was the moment MacIan had been dreading. Pulling open the door he stood there, a bloody knife hanging from his hand and a devilish grin on his face. "Sorry, I got tired of her fighting me," he said as he wiped the blood from the sharp blade on his sleeve.

"Hells teeth, what you bleeding done?" Flynn gasped at the horrific figure standing grinning maniacally at the raiders. Striding forward, he only got as far as the doorway before even he was forced to a halt. The bedchamber looked like something from a nightmare. All he could see was blood. Blood on the floor. Blood on the walls, even blood dripping from the roof. Yet worse than this was the limp figure on the bed, blood saturating her clothing.

MacIan shrugged. "I'm sorry, Sergeant. I didn't mean to spoil everyone's fun, but the little pig was being obstinate. I got a bit annoyed," he added with a perverse giggle.

Flynn shook his head in disbelief. "Remind me not to annoy you, eh, MacIan." He couldn't force himself to look at the girl again as he rapidly closed the door on the ghastliness within. He swallowed down

the threat of bile in his throat and said, “Well then, looks like we’re done here. Flaubert ain’t going to be selling any more secrets to the Frogs, and we ain’t getting our turn with Madame Flaubert either, thanks to this stone-cold killer.” His hand clapped MacIan lightly on his back. “Just try and clean some of that blood off before we get back on the boat. I don’t want to be reminded of what I’ve just seen all the way back to Boston.”

Within minutes the tavern was abandoned to the corpses inside while the raiders fled through the night. Less than an hour later their boat was heading downriver for the Basin de Port Royal and the open waters beyond.

## **Edinburgh, Scotland**

**1<sup>st</sup> November 1746**

“You murdered her?” Robert Young gasped in horror as MacIan concluded his tale.

“Of course I didn’t kill her,” the grizzled veteran chuckled. “She could hardly gift me this baccy pouch if I had killed her, could she!”

“So what did happen then? If even a man like Flynn thought you a heartless killer, how did you fool him?”

MacIan rolled his shoulders, puffed on his pipe as his fingers gently stroke the beads on his tobacco pouch. “He saw what I wanted him to see. I did promise Arabella she wouldn’t like my solution, and she didn’t, but she went along with me. It cost her two of her fine young piglets that were due for the market. I went out the window, stunned them with my musket butt and then decorated the stage, so to speak, with their blood and guts. I had to make it look so horrible that no’one, not even Flynn, would want to get too close to her. Anyway, it worked perfectly.”

“So how did you come by the pouch?” Captain Travers asked, a bemused smile on his lips. “I thought you said you were all back on the boat to Boston?”

“I was. A month later the regiment was back in Acadia to strengthen the resolve of the militia and marines during the invasion of Acadia. Port Royal was besieged, the outlying villages all abandoned at our advance. The French fort fell after a few days. The troops and civilians were allowed to take ship for France if they wanted to leave.”

“And the fair Arabella?”

Again MacIan chuckled with real humour. “She had landed on her feet. You see, the other man who was there that night had arranged to buy the tavern from Theodore Flaubert. The bold Theodore knew that his card had been marked by the British, and the French were starting to ask questions as well. He knew it was time to head for pastures new. They had just signed the deal before we turned up. Arabella was busily putting the gold the other poor sod had paid in the strongbox below the bed. With her husband dead, the new owner also dead, and the gold in her control, she discovered that every cloud has a silver lining. The first thing she did was burn the bill of sale. After that she had raised the alarm, only once we were long gone as per the agreement we had reached. As for Arabella, well, all she found was sympathy on every side. Understandably she wanted to sell the tavern, which she did within a few weeks, so she got the value of the property twice over. And lost nothing when it was burned down along with most of the village during the invasion.” MacIan puffed happily on his pipe. “Anyway, once Fort Royal had surrendered, I saw her one day as I was walking



the streets. By then no'one thought to call me Goosey any more. It was MacIan. I had a reputation as a ruthless killer. A man not to be crossed at any cost. It served me well all through my army days, and it was all based on a lie. Anyhow, back to Arabella. I saw her, she saw me. She took me aside to thank me for saving her life and told me her good fortune. I was delighted for her. As a gesture of thanks, she gave me her purse. She kept the gold, right enough, but we can't have everything." His finger tapped the pouch. "And here it is. All these years later."

"What became of her?" Robert asked with a smile.

"A wealthy widow? The world was her lobster. With Fort Royal in British hands and renamed Annapolis, she decided to move on, herself. The last I heard was that she was happily married to one of the richest merchants in Boston and ruled an ever growing family with a kindly hand."

"A far cry from a sordid death in a log cabin in Acadia."

"Aye, indeed. She was happy with her lot, and I was happy with my baccy."

**The End**



# *A Hieland Chieftain in His Finery ~ 1745*

*original photo by Tracy Gordon. original colouring sheet by Bard Judith of Graphictional Designs, 2016*



# *A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS*

## *A Felicity Story*

*By WriterfromWardrobe*

Was it a man's job to teach his daughter to ride horseback? Maybe his son, but a daughter?

The new store on the corner that was adjacent to the town square was brimming with activity this market day, keeping the young shop-owner on his feet. He had no time to ponder mannerisms that his daughter should or should not be adopting. She would be coming into the store later that morning as usual, requiring something her mother had sent her to fetch, but she would plead to stay for all hours to help her father in the store – restocking shelves or keeping track of inventory in the storeroom. And with the way things were going now, he would be hard pressed to dismiss her. He really ought to get an apprentice.

A line of customers were waiting to pay for their items, and some in the back of the line were starting to grumble about the poor service they were receiving while the storeowner busied himself with the inquiries of one stubborn lady who did not know what she wanted. His mind was racing, trying to come up with some excuse to get away from the woman, and he was shouting at his customers to be patient; he would be with them in a moment. But he was also thinking back to his days as a store apprentice; he could not remember any days being as hectic as this.

On the busiest days of his own training, the shopkeeper's daughter would come in, all too eager to help when she saw the crowd. She would not wait to be asked to assist; she would just start working. And when the crowd had dispersed, her father would ask his apprentice to escort her home, and he had been more than happy to oblige. He hoped his own daughter would arrive soon. He had finally rid himself of the pesky female shopper, but there were many more like her, demanding his attention. Pretty soon he was thinking he would need more than just his daughter to aid him – he needed an entire army.

This was not the first store he had owned, but it was the first in a bustling city of Yorktown, and many passersby were curious to see what this new store had to offer. He did have some of the finest goods for reasonable prices, and it was hinted that only the most upstanding people bought goods here.

The bell above the door rang, and the storekeeper was relieved to at last see his daughter walk in. Her round face instantly lit up when she stepped into the commotion, and her green eyes sparked as they alighted on a young woman struggling with a number of parcels. She had already paid for these goods, but there was not an inch of space on the counter to arrange them into her basket. The girl went to her at once and held the packages while the woman loaded up her basket.

Then the girl was behind the counter, up the ladder, hauling a cone of sugar down for another customer. Next, she was accepting coins and wrapping parcels. Within an hour, the shop contained only a few people; all the rest had left, contented with their purchases.

The storeowner turned to his daughter with a relieved smile. "I kept thinking about you this morning," he remarked, "and how I hoped you'd come."

She turned her head toward him. Her hair was too red to be brown like his, but it was not the vibrant blaze that crowned her mother's head. Her hair was more like copper. "I am what mother calls 'a Penny for your thoughts.'"

"Very true, you are hardly ever out of my thoughts, Penny."



"Was I named after a horse?"

The shopkeeper met her pouting lips with a chuckle. "I suppose you would find out sooner or later."

"Mother mentioned her old horse when she was giving Beth her riding lesson this morning," Penny remarked.

"Your mother told me she planned to get that younger sister of yours onto a horse any time now. You know, there's no finer horsewoman in all of Virginia than your mother."

"So, she named me after her beloved horse?"

"You should be honored." He turned away just then to tend to a customer. A few minutes later, he returned to the nine-year-old spitfire – she looked just like her mother when she frowned. "I think it's time you heard the story of Penny, how your mother saved him from the cruel clutches of one Jigy Nye, how her grandfather found that horse years later and gave her back to your mother. That is one very special horse." He tugged on his daughter's ponytail; her frown was softening to an expression of curiosity. "And it's because of that horse that your mother and I became friends."

Penny leaned on the countertop. "I think I should like to hear that story."

\* \* \*

*Author's Note: When I saw that Felicity had returned from the American Girl Archive for a new generation to discover, I got to wondering if Felicity had a daughter, what she might be like.*



# HER FANTASY

## A REVIEW OF THE MOVIE AUSTENLAND

BY HANNAH VINCENT

What is it about men who wear breeches, billowy white shirts, velvet waistcoats, and top hats? Is it the knee-high boots that make the ensemble or the way they tip their hat as a woman passes by? For Regency era-loving Jane Hayes in the film *Austenland*, it's simply because the men are living in the ideal yesteryear of Jane Austen's world. From a young age, Jane Hayes has been completely absorbed and fascinated by all things Austen. At first, her admiration appears to be a hobby but becomes an almost addictive pastime as she matures into adulthood.

Jane Hayes lives a quiet life working a desk job, enjoying the company of the occasional boyfriend who fails to live up to her expectations of a Regency gentleman. After one too many disappointments mixed with sheer frustration, Jane decides to pay a visit to *Austenland*, an immersive vacation destination she is sure will heal her wounded heart.

At first, *Austenland* lives up to Jane's expectations...mostly. There is a snobby owner, Mrs. Wattlesbrook, pretentious Lady Amelia Heartwright, and prideful Mr. Henry Nobley. These three characters seem to be the only thorn in Jane's side at *Austenland*. She quickly forms a friendship with the other guest, Ms. Elizabeth Charming, as well as with Captain George East, and Colonel Andrews, while starting a romantic fling with Martin, the stable hand. All is right in Jane's world as she lives her fantasy and enjoys the brief respite from modern society.

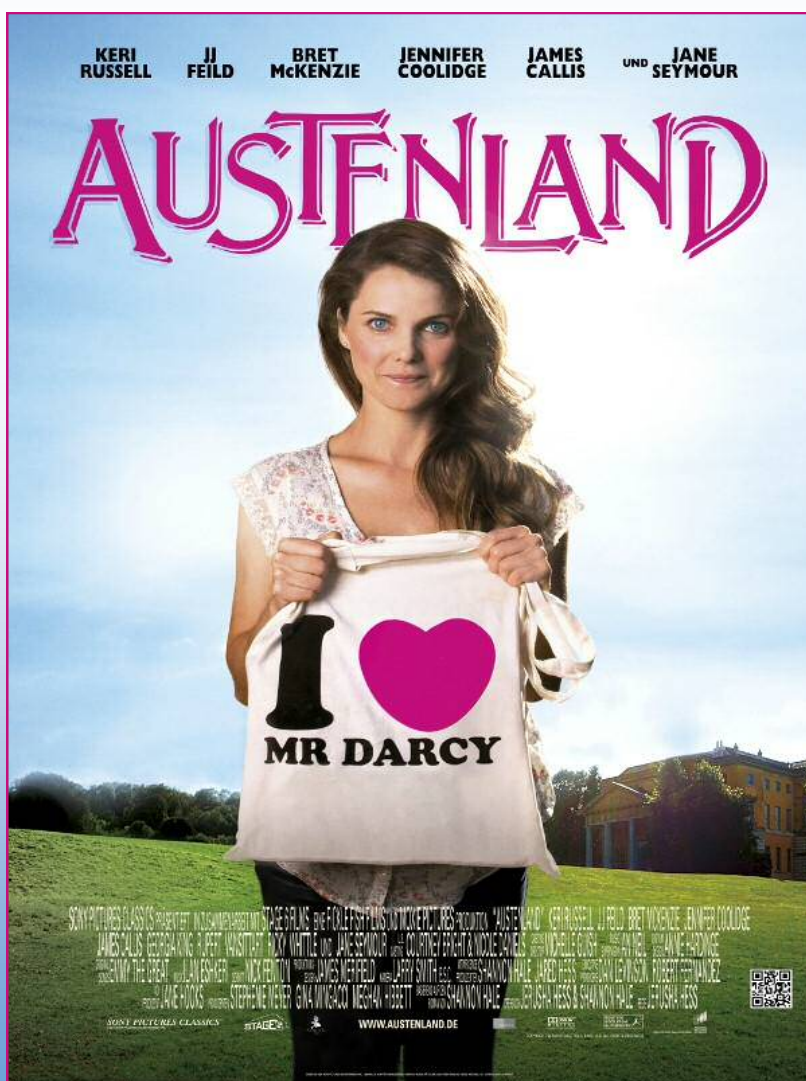
Due to her low "status" in *Austenland*, Jane is treated unjustly by Mrs. Wattlesbrook and snubbed by the other actors, as well. Her naturally timid and naïve nature almost force her to stay in her designated place, but Jane becomes fed up with the prejudice she's receiving from others. Quickly taking charge of her story, Jane transforms herself into the ideal guest and woman of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. She soon garners respect from the actors as she puts aside her shy nature and increased boredom for the role of an Austen woman.

Despite the fact that Jane's ego is bruised from being the recipient of prejudice from the actors, she conveniently closes her eyes to the fact she treats Mr. Nobley with prejudice throughout the majority of the film. Yes, he may be a man of few words and dour expressions, but the words he chooses to speak are full of wisdom and honesty. Under the façade of his

monotonous personality, Mr. Nobley harbors an equally wounded heart. Jane focuses solely on his outward mannerisms and passes judgement on surface impressions. The viewer cannot help but wonder why Jane chooses to focus on Mr. Nobley's crusty exterior and not on his chivalrous displays, such as rescuing her from being stranded in a forest or genuine concern for her welfare after an assault.

As the film continues, secrets are spilled and identities uncovered (much like Mr. Nobley's) to reveal true natures. Jane discerns that her "hobby" has become an obsession, trapping her inside a world that no longer exists. Although Austen fans wish for the Regency era to come around again, its time is over and done. While still an ardent lover of all things Austen, Jane comes to the conclusion that Austen's books can provide a brief respite to another period, but she is meant to stay in the modern age.

**(Spoiler alert)** The 21<sup>st</sup> century can provide long lasting love just the same as the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Jane uncovers this truth when Mr. Nobley admits his love for her. Still sore over the staged romance with an actor from *Austenland*, Jane is hesitant to believe a kind, honorable, and honest man could be real. Mr. Nobley completely offers himself to her in hopes Jane will open her heart to him and let him love her. He admires her quirks, stubbornness, and innocence. Mr. Nobley, or Henry as it is revealed, pursues Jane after the stay at *Austenland*.



Jane is doubtful at first, believing the scenario too good to be true. She says her fantasy is simply that – a fantasy. Nobley corrects her and professes she is his fantasy, quickly quieting all arguments from her. In that simple statement, he says reality is better than the pipe dream because it is real. As the credits roll, viewers' hearts are satisfied with the classic ending of true love conquering all.

While happy endings are the ideal situation, oftentimes the path leading there is bumpy. Many times a fantasy is better than a reality and it can be tempting to live in a make-believe world, but life's winding roads and experiences make us unique individuals. Having a grateful heart is what opens up the door to blessings. *Austenland* teaches the lesson of gratitude and shows us the folly of overly-swift judgments. Happiness and true love are possible in this world – we don't need to live in a fantasy in order to see it all around us.



# About This Magazine

Fellowship and Fairydust Magazine is a publication of Fellowship & Fairydust Publications. F&F is an online literary blog and magazine that aims to inspire faith and creativity and explore the arts through a spiritual lens. F&F came into being when the blog and online magazine The Fellowship of the King merged with the online magazine Ink and Fairydust in January 2017. To learn more, visit [fellowshipandfairydust.com](http://fellowshipandfairydust.com).

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# *Let It Snow*

Our Winter Issue of Ink and Fairydust will be based on the season and its many holidays, particularly Christmas and other solstice-based celebrations. We are looking for all types of works, including but not limited to...

- \* Artwork
- \* Book & Movie Reviews
- \* Fanfiction
- \* Original Fiction
- \* Poetry
- \* Reflections on the season
- \* Reflections on the holidays