The Caroline Bingley Diaries

by Shrubbery_Girl

Summary

Caroline Bingley keeps a diary that details her encounters with the Bennet family, her attempts on Mr Darcy and how she met the love of her life.
In Which Caroline Goes To Hertfordshire and Encounters The Locals

September 29th:

Charles apparently has rented a house in the country. Knowing Charles, have to confess was quite alarmed house might be sort of farm, with naïve blonde farm girls all around, but seems to be quiet nice mansion, not as grand as Pemberley, but tolerable enough, I suppose. Charles expects me to keep house, so will probably move to country soon. Must confess am quite sorry to leave London, esp. dear Louisa & of course Mr Darcy, but am quite relieved not to see Mr Hurst for the time being (remember now: have again forgot to ask Louisa what his first name is. Am sure I must have heard it in church, when the awful event, I mean, the wedding took place, but cannot remember.) Country house also means will not have to spend hour after hour with Georgiana Darcy. Am sure she is sweet girl but turning pages for hours when she plays the piano can be very annoying & it is very difficult to be in raptures when one is tired and has aching hand (from turning pages). Wish Georgiana would talk, would make meetings with her more easy. Also, while spent approximately 150 hours in Georgiana’s company this month, Mr Darcy was only present in 20 of them. Seems waste of time.

October 12th:

Have arrived in country house, place called Netherfield in Hertfordshire. To great delight, Charles invited Mr D. & dear Louisa to stay. Unfortunately, Mr Hurst also to accompany us. Still, am convinced stay in quiet country house with nothing to do but shoot stupid birds & play cards with Mr H. will deepen relationship between me & Mr Darcy. Louisa of the same opinion. We are all to attend some country-dance where we are to meet local beauties as Charles promised. If beauties are really as beautiful as Charles says, must have an eye on Mr Darcy & prevent him meeting them. Charles has never seen beauties though, so might all turn out alright. Today told Mr D. for fifteen minutes how much admire Georgiana, am sure he was very much delighted. Maybe will have Christmas wedding after all this year. (must make sure to lock Mr H. in attic or somewhere before ceremony).

October 16th:

Attended country dancing. Locals really clowns. Met beauties. Should rather say, “so-called beauties.” Turns out beauties all part of one family. Could not believe it, but family really consisted of five daughters, dim-witted mother & freaky father. Eldest daughter (called Jane) rather pleasant (pretty, and not at all Mr Darcy’s type, nice manners), will make nice companion for Charles until we return to London & keep him away from farmers’ daughters (though must make sure freaky father is not, after all, farmer. Would spoil whole plan). Charles seemed attracted to Jane, Mr D. ignorant. Second daughter rather plain, but in comparison to rest of family well behaved. Might make companion for self while Charles busy with Jane and Louisa & H. busy with cards. Could show Mr D. how pleasant a companion I am. Rest of family total nightmare. Mother really dim-witted, one daughter ugly, rest of them flirting babies. On a more pleasant note, danced with Mr D. Mr D. ignorant of so-called beauties, danced only with Louisa & self. Made comment about plain daughter, and dim-wittedness of mother. Seems Mr D. and I agree about everything. Must say I looked rather pleasing today. Had urges to wear orange again, but bravely resisted. Must not hasten things.

October 21st:

Had freaky family (though not father) over for morning visit. Maniacal mother obviously into Jane-Charles-wedding. Am sure neither Charles nor Jane really serious. Charles, after all, in love every other month. Still, should keep eye on them just in case. Must have Charles marry
Georgiana as soon as she speaks more than once a day. Plain daughter (found out name is Elizabeth) obviously not interested in Mr Darcy, though heard about his wealth (very pleasing information). Still, a bit annoying, thinks herself a wit. Though, of course, not as annoying as maniacal mother & flirting babies. Ugly daughter luckily not hysterical, but into sermons, which nobody pays attention to. Spent 20 minutes of very pleasing conversation with Mr D. Found out all of his opinions on weather, will make sure to remember them. Praised Georgiana for 5 minutes. (only think, could have double wedding with Charles & Georgiana next spring. Should have to give up on Christmas wedding, though.) Still have not found out Mr H.’s first name. Tried to ask butler, but failed. Butler seemed to think was interested in a lock of Mr D.’s hair and recommended asking his valet. Might do that. Could not hurt.

October 25th:

Had to spend evening with locals again. Freaky family, of course, also attending (just my luck!). Ugly daughter tried to play piano & sing. Real nightmare. Told Mr D. how much superior Georgiana’s performance is. Did not even have to lie. Had to resist urge to poison flirting babies & maniacal mother. Charles still paying attention to Jane (have made sure freaky father is not farmer, but possessing some kind of house, called Longbourn. No money, though, so obviously no match for Charles - apart from him having to marry Georgiana anyway). Could not resist urge, had to wear wonderful orange gown, looked really superior & fashionable. Mr D. did not seem to notice, though, but probably he was just being shy. Plain sister was wearing white frock, really not becoming. The man without a first name is more and more annoying me. Suggested we all play cards the whole evening. I wonder if I can poison his wine?

October 27th:

Had terrible fit of urges today & was wearing orange the whole day. Must say, orange morning dress really becoming, and also orange gloves (had to spend evening with locals again). Mr Darcy, strangely, still oblivious to orange-ity of self. Sometimes wonder whether Georgiana was really serious when telling me orange was his favourite colour? She speaks only once a day, so she really should not waste that period of time with lies. And must not forget the two of us are best of friends, so surely she would not lie to me. Wonder if I will have to have her around when living permanently in Pemberley. Wanted to ask Louisa what is her husband’s first name, but did not know whether she knows; did not want to create embarrassing situation.

October 30th:

I wish Mr Darcy would propose soon. Does he realise it is less than two months until Christmas? Men certainly are not aware of the amount of work that organising one’s wedding is. Luckily, have already written to Mrs Taylor in London, lovely dresses (all in orange) will be ready within two weeks after I inform them, also carriage-makers really delighted to provide new carriages for us. (I must have more carriages than that vulture - I mean, Lady Catherine.) Had to spend yet another evening with locals. Conversations just get more and more hysterical. Tried to speak with plain sister about the benefits of London (Mr Darcy sitting close to us & obviously delighted that I could speak so eloquently about it), turned out freaky family has relations in Cheapside, where they stay when they are in town. Will have to point this out to Charles, just to make sure he does not do anything rash regarding Jane. Ugly sister insisted on singing again, ears still aching, also from cries of hysterical mother. Wonder whether Mr D. knows H.’s first name. Will not ask him, though, do not want to convey idea that am interested in no-first name. Could ask Mr D.’s valet, though.

November 3rd:

Wonder whether there are snowstorms in Hertfordshire that make visiting each other impossible. Am sure could not wish for anything else but being locked in this house with dear Louisa &
Charles & Mr D. Would have to make sure to lock Mr H. in the attic, though. Before going to rural meeting, wanted to ask Mr D.’s valet about H.’s first name. Was misunderstood, though, and now have curl from Mr D.’s head. Not bad at all. Wonder whether I should frame it, or make a ring out of it. Rural meeting total nightmare, and was not even wearing orange for consolation. Really tried my best to smile at comments of plain sister (Mr Darcy being nearby, wanted to convey idea of being in good humour), but plain sister conversing about boring books with very plain friend of hers was very frustrating, almost felt like turning pages for Georgiana. Must remember to write lovely letter to Georgiana tomorrow, telling how much I miss her. Am sure will receive boring report about new piano plays from her, but will tell Mr D. am all in raptures about her letter. Spent 15 minutes today telling Mr D. how much I admire his sister. I wonder whether I will have to call first-born son “Fitzwilliam.” Ugly name, really.

November 11th:

Mr Darcy today made very alarming comment about fine-ness of eyes of plain sister. Was really shocked at first, then realised he was trying to make me jealous. No one in their right minds could call plain sister anything but plain. Made jokes about supposed marriage between him & plain girl, really had a good time. I feel we are agreeing on everything. Am sure to receive proposal this week, still in time for Christmas wedding. Could be mistress of Pemberley by New Year. Rest of evening total catastrophe, though. Had to visit family of plain girl’s very plain friend. Flirting babies all into officers that seem to have come from nowhere, now all of the so-called town is full of them. Ugly sister into playing “serious music” (the kind Georgiana plays) but was stopped by flirting babies who wanted to do some hopping around with officers. Overheard Mr D. asking plain sister to dance, must certainly keep an eye on her. Not his fault, certainly, apparently she lured him into it. Though plain, she becomes more and more annoying. Wonder whether she has any plans for him?

November 12th:

Decided to have Jane over for the day. Want to find out more about plain sister’s ambitions, also must make sure Jane not luring Charles into anything. Him spending so much time with her more and more alarming, cannot risk her making him promise anything. Really like her, though, so wish there was not thing with Charles, she seems to be only local one can talk to. Went all pretty well, managed to extract lots of freaky information about freaky family out of her. Louisa & I quite alarmed about low-ness of family. Unfortunately, had to have Jane stay the night, as she had come on horseback & there was lots of rain. Still, Jane complained about headache & retired early, spent lovely evening with Louisa discussing merits of Pemberley. Louisa says I certainly have right to place Georgiana somewhere else as soon as I live there, nobody can be forced to spend every day with her. Then realised that when am Mrs Darcy, Georgiana will be Mrs Bingley, so nothing to worry there.

November 13th:

Today really not a good day. Turned out Jane had caught some sort of cold (apparently maniacal mother had sent her riding through the rain) & was not well. Seems to be maniacal mother’s latest step in getting Jane married. Must make sure Charles not to visit sick-chamber. Will point out impropriety of situation. Though, on second thoughts, Jane really not looking good at the moment, red nose & feverish eyes (am really pitying her, knowing how dreadful such a cold can be). Still, might wake pity within Charles, which could lead to unwanted declaration of feelings he certainly has not. Better to warn him on impropriety of situation. Still, at that point of time had everything under control. Had sent for apothecary & made sure that Jane wrote letter to freaky family assuring them she was alright.Really thought there was no reason that freaky family should come & visit (unfortunately, rain had stopped, so could not rely on weather). Turns out I was wrong. Shortly after apothecary, plain sister arrived. Looked just as plain as ever, & dirtier than usual.
Made sure to point out fact that petticoat was full of mud to Mr D., just in case. Also managed to mention Georgiana in conversation, so am really pleased. Unfortunately, had to invite plain girl to stay. Must now make sure she does not come near Mr D. the whole day. Mr D. obviously still trying to make me jealous, commenting about her eyes again. Still, with Jane & plain girl around, environment not at all proposal-friendly. Probably have to wait for marriage until January. Situation could have been worse though, maniacal mother might have come & would probably have locked Charles into sick-chamber until situation compromising enough. Happily, plain girl spends most of her time in the sick-chamber, so no danger of her luring Mr D. into something there. Still, very annoying discussion between her & Mr D. today, Mr D. obviously totally unaware of her plans & thinking only of me, describing the perfect woman. Had to prevent Charles from inquiring after Jane too much, not appropriate at all & would give plain girl the wrong ideas. Mr H. also very annoying, wants to talk only about food & cards. Feel really tired today.

November 14th:

Having guests really is not as easy as sometimes thought. Today even worse day than yesterday. Politely inquired after Jane’s health (really feel sorry for her. Very hard to have freaky family & terrible cold. Still, cannot have her marry Charles), and approved of plain girl’s plan to send for apothecary, only to find out that plain girl wanted to send for maniacal mother as well. Maniacal mother turned up, accompanied by rest of freaky family, except freaky father & insisted upon Jane’s staying. Stupid apothecary in favour of maniacal mother’s plans. Afterwards, spent really awful time with freaky family & Charles & Mr D. Am now convinced plain girl has some devilish plans. Obviously wants to befriend Charles & Mr D. Poor Mr D. totally unaware of her sinister ideas, and non-existing charms, still, must pay attention. Cannot expect to be proposed to when plain girl & freaky family all around. Flirting babies managed to convince Charles to have ball in Netherfield. Am not sure what to think about that. Obviously, ball provides very romantic, proposal-friendly atmosphere, but freaky family & other locals would have to be invited. Ugly sister preaching sermons again, & maniacal mother obviously already ordering Jane’s wedding clothes. Really hope Jane manages to find some clerk to marry soon. Cannot have her marry Charles, obviously, but really wish her to be able to leave freaky family. For the rest of the day, plain girl just got more and more annoying. Had most pleasing talk to Mr D. about how much I admire Georgiana, but plain girl interrupted us by flirting with poor Charles. Mr D. of course totally unaware of her sinister plans & politely tried to make conversation, though am sure he had rather talked to me about letter he was just writing to Georgiana. Really seemed to appreciate my ideas. Also, he specially asked me to play the piano & was delighted at my performance. Am now quite sure shall be married in January. Am also convinced Mr D. all for double wedding. Cannot expect proposal while plain girl is still around, though. Must make sure she leaves soon. Do pity poor Jane, however. Today asked my abigail what she thought Mr H.’s first name was, but she could not tell. Spent five minutes abusing Mr H. together with abigail, though normally do not talk to her. Wondered whether I can poison plain girl & H. together. Am quite sure Louisa would prefer being a widow. Decided better to poison Mr H. after am married, really could not marry when in mourning, so had to delay plan. Also wonder whom Louisa should marry afterwards, as Mr D. obviously not available.

November 16th:

Plain girl & Jane to leave tomorrow, at last. Would have preferred them to go today, but felt pity for poor Jane, having to return to freaky family. Must confess, almost perceived danger in plain girl yesterday, so made sure (during conversation) that she know how intimate Mr D. & I am. Plain girl obviously found it amusing to find faults in Mr D., but naturally, was not successful. Also, made sure to walk together with plain girl, so Mr D. would notice who looked better. Earlier, pointed out plain-ness of plain girl, and low-ness of her connections to Mr D. Noticed Mr D. still trying to make me jealous, so made ridiculous remarks about his marrying plain girl. All
this talk about marriage, however, did not inspire him to proposal, but could not really expect proposal while freaky family around. Today, Mr D. again totally oblivious to plain girl & not talking to her & making remarks about her, so am quite sure now plain girl knows her sinister plans have failed. Am quite relieved, otherwise would have had to write to the vulture and inform her about the danger her nephew is in. Am convinced the vulture wants Mr D. to marry her dumb daughter.

November 19th:

Had the urges again today & wore orange morning dress. Looked really becoming. Really feel much better now that plain girl & Jane have left. Am still a bit worried about Charles, though. Obviously, poor Jane’s illness induced him to think he is in love with her. Must make sure to mention Georgiana frequently, both to Mr D. & Charles, just in case. Do not think Charles will propose, however, as Mr Darcy would be totally against it. He & I always seem to be of the same opinion. Still, should not take things too lightly. Mr D. & Charles rode to freaky family today to inquire after Jane’s health. On a more pleasant note, Mr D. seems to have seen an old enemy of his in company of the plain girl. Obviously, plain girl now in love with enemy & not pursuing sinister plans anymore. Have only Charles’ report on this, though, so should not be too sure. Am not sure why exactly Mr Wickham (that seems to be enemy’s name) is Mr D.’s enemy, but he seems to be the son of a servant, & any enemy of Mr D. must be my enemy anyway. Wonder whether, when proposed to (which could happen any day now), have to be married from Netherfield. Would prefer marrying in London, but would have to ask Georgiana to be bridesmaid.

November 21st:

Had to visit freaky family today & hand out invitations for Charles’ ball. Took Louisa with me, unfortunately, Charles insisted on coming also & visiting Jane. Freaky family now has addition of creepy cousin, pompous rector of the vulture’s parish. Was really sorry to see poor Jane with freaky family, assured her of my missing her (though would prefer her not seeing Charles so often. Am sure she has no evil designs, but rest of freaky family surely has.). Creepy cousin obviously intends to propose to plain girl, could not be more pleased. Was really glad when was able to leave again, though sorry for poor Jane. Really hope she meets a decent clerk to marry soon. Tried to ask Louisa’s abigail and Charles’ valet, what Mr H.’s first name was, but ended up with two more curls of Mr Darcy’s hair. Now have a total of three curls of Mr Darcy’s hair. Wonder what to do with them, except frame. Must look for orange frame when in London next time. Though, when in London, will probably have to spend whole day turning pages for Georgiana. Mentioned how much I look forward to meeting Georgiana thrice to Mr D.

November 26th:

Luckily, rain the whole weekend, so no visits from freaky family & creepy cousin. Today, day of ball. Am now really alarmed & will have to make sure Charles does not see more of Jane. Also, must make sure Mr D. not to talk to plain girl anymore. Plain girl even lured him into dancing, though has already two admirers, namely, creepy cousin & enemy. Even mentioned low-ness and despicability of enemy to her, but still she seemed to be determined. Well, I only meant to be nice. Do not really know why, even. Surely would not mind her marrying enemy, but was thinking about poor Jane. Really could not meet her if enemy of my husband was her brother. Freaky family even more freaky than usual. Flirting babies obviously drunk, maniacal mother seems already to have ordered wedding clothes for Jane & plain girl (still seems to think Charles to marry Jane) & frenzy father behaving totally clownish & showing no manners at all. Must admit plain girl tried to behave well, but cannot forgive her for luring Mr D. into dancing. Am quite depressed. Lots of preparations for stupid ball & all went rather well, but could not enjoy it after observed sinister plans of freaky family. Creepy cousin even dared to address poor Mr D. & speak
to him about the vulture. Obviously creepy cousin fancies the vulture more than the plain girl. Wonder whether he knows about the vulture’s sinister plans for poor Mr D. & dumb daughter. Charles to ride to London tomorrow, must make sure he does not return to Netherfield.

November 27th:

Had discussion with Louisa & Mr D. today. Resolved to go to London immediately. Both Mr D. & I of the same opinion as regards freaky family & dangers for poor Charles. Am really convinced now will receive proposal before Christmas, Mr D. & self always getting along so well. Felt sorry to leave poor Jane with freaky family & wrote compassionate letter & told her how much would like to see her in town. Also told her about Charles marrying Georgiana, in case maniacal mother reads letter & plans to send her to London. Must make sure that Charles does not see Jane should she come to London. Am quite looking forward to being in town again, but realise will have to turn pages again. Really must hasten Georgiana wedding Charles. Wonder whether I can leave H in Netherfield, could lock him up in the attics somewhere. On a more pleasant note, can buy more orange dresses when in London, also must make new arrangements with Mrs Taylor about wedding clothes & with carriage-makers. Am sure shall be married in January.
November 29th:

Arrived in town at last. Must confess am quite happy to be back here. Am sure to have many engagements & nice non-rustic parties. Also, will be able to purchase many fashionable gowns & items. Thought of having to see Georgiana every day quite dreadful though. Also Mr D. no longer staying with us but in his own townhouse with Charles & G. & some Mrs Annesley. Hurst still living with us, unfortunately. Almost managed to forget him in the inn we spent the night but stupid footman noticed his absence when carriage had just begun to move. Will make sure he is fired. Footman, that is. Unfortunately, am not able to fire Hurst. Am quite exhausted. Louisa & I & Mr Darcy had talk with Charles about how he must be careful not to interpret too much into getting along well with Jane & how Jane was not interested in him in. Luckily, were able to convince Charles after only one & half hours & he is now quite resolved to forget her. Must make sure he meets Georgiana often enough.

December 1st:

Decided to put on best orange gown & spend day with Georgiana. Dreaded thought of turning pages but heard Mr D. to be at home all day. Luckily, was interrupted after only 1 hour of turning pages as some friends of Mr D. called. Rather strange couple, always goggling at each other, but very well-behaved & very rich and possessing large property in Surrey. He is much older than she is & she is considered to be very intelligent, though could not see much of that. Have heard she is very charming hostess & invites the crème of the town, so made sure to be very nice towards her. Anyway, conversing with her better than turning pages for Georgiana although some of her stories about how she never was in town before quite boring & Mr D. obviously pleased that I got along so well with her.

December 4th:

Had most vexing conversation with abigail about stain in orange lace gown. Did not know red wine would make such awful stains; in the future, will stay away from Hurst when he drinks wine. Had to wear pink gown because abigail insists all orange ones still wet. Went to see Georgiana only to discover strange couple visiting again & what was more, another couple also there. Both of them very young & seem to have married only last month. He very rich & from very respectable family in the North. Was shocked, though, to hear that she was trained as a governess or something before he married her. Obviously tricked him into marriage. Most annoying thing was both couples seemed to be friends & had lived in same village in Surrey - place of no importance, anyway. Strange wife telling governess how delighted she was all the time & telling her all about life in Surrey village: father staying with someone called Weston - someone called Elton having to sell carriage - someone called Martin to buy said carriage - thought they would never stop. Was shocked to discover that governess considered to be wonderful piano player by strange couple & Georgiana striking up conversation with governess even though she normally does not talk to anyone including self. Have terrible headache now & decided to retire early. Forgot to ask butler what he thought Hurst’s first name was.

December 6th:

Did not think spending day with Georgiana could be more boring than turning pages but turns out was wrong. Georgiana conversing with strange wife & all the time telling her Mrs Churchill says this & Mrs Churchill recommends that & Mrs Churchill reckons this piano - almost fell asleep, certainly prefer non-talking Georgiana. Things just got worse when greedy governess came & Georgiana now telling her about visit of strange wife & Mrs Knightley agrees...
& Mrs Knightley says that. Felt quite left out & Mr Darcy did not turn up all day. Wonder how he means to propose if he never is there. Resolved to leave early & instead of turning pages spent nice afternoon shopping with Louisa & bought very pretty orange & yellow shawl.

December 7th:

Could not stand thought of another day with Georgiana & her new friends & so decided to visit dear Fanny Dashwood instead. Poor dear really had terrible year, she told me, apparently her brother married a horrible, poor & plain girl & now insists on being some sort of parson in the country & her brother Robert also married someone without money though Fanny admits she is very nice. Told her about Charles & Jane & she agreed with me that we did our best for Charles & also advised me not to let him meet her again for at least a year. Told dear Fanny about how Mr D. too shy to propose & she suggested that I should make Louisa throws lots of parties & attend lots of them. Party atmosphere obviously much more proposal-friendly than morning visits. Told dear Fanny about how I did not know Hurst’s first name & she suggested should ask the housekeeper. Felt much better when I left her although had not seen Mr D. all day & spoke to housekeeper as soon as I returned. Housekeeper seemed not to understand me and returned with lock of Mr D.’s hair. Do not know how she came to it but have now total of four curls of his hair. Would prefer the man to his wig.

December 10th:

Went to the milliner’s to discuss lovely new hats (one bright green, one orange, one pink) only to meet strange wife & greedy governess & Georgiana. Strange wife obviously took it into her head that Georgiana needs new hat & gowns so had to say that I would take G. to Mrs Taylor. Will have to go to Mrs Taylor anyway, have heard next season calls for lower waists & anyway need new orange gown as abigail could not do anything against stains in now two orange gowns. Wonder whether should rather order wine-coloured gowns. Must make sure Mrs T. does not mention wedding gowns, though, could give G. wrong idea & probably she would tell her brother & we all know that though he loves me he is too shy to propose at the moment & would probably be intimidated. Went to Fanny afterwards & spent nice afternoon embroidering orange cushions, must say, rather pretty. Told Fanny about G. & Mrs T. & Fanny says probably very good idea, will make Mr D. aware how much I care for his sister.

December 15th:

Louisa had guests for dinner, Mr D. & Charles of course, but unfortunately also the strange couple & the greedy governess & Georgiana. Strange wife obviously took it into her head that Georgiana needs new hat & gowns so had to say that I would take G. to Mrs Taylor. Will have to go to Mrs Taylor anyway, have heard next season calls for lower waists & anyway need new orange gown as abigail could not do anything against stains in now two orange gowns. Wonder whether should rather order wine-coloured gowns. Must make sure Mrs T. does not mention wedding gowns, though, could give G. wrong idea & probably she would tell her brother & we all know that though he loves me he is too shy to propose at the moment & would probably be intimidated. Went to Fanny afterwards & spent nice afternoon embroidering orange cushions, must say, rather pretty. Told Fanny about G. & Mrs T. & Fanny says probably very good idea, will make Mr D. aware how much I care for his sister.

December 16th:

Abigail told me she could not get stains out of new gown, offered to dye whole gown. Had a little fit when thought about the number of items no-firstname had already destroyed with his drinks
(not only three orange gowns this season, but also one pair of orange slippers, one bright green spencer, one pink hat & three handkerchiefs) and started throwing objects. Abigail tried to console me & handed me wrapped object that turned out to be curl from Mr D., fifth this season. Went downstairs only to discover Louisa ordering H. about the hall, making him arrange Christmas decorations. Asked whether she thought not butler more fit for task, but she said it was custom she & H. always liked very much. Wondered whether could manipulate ladder, causing deadly fall, but could not find saw nor axe. Was in no mood to spend whole day with Georgiana again, so went to dear Fanny instead & abused H. Did not see Mr D. all day & also have headache. Wonder whether should ask cook for rat poison. Not for self, obviously, but H.

December 19th:

Wanted to put on freshly laundered bright yellow morning gown, only to find stain from wine on it. H must have stumbled over laundry basket yesterday while carrying glass of wine. Really do wonder whether he does it on purpose, wanting to destroy all my clothing. Had to put on pale blue gown & looked almost like plain sister, & went to cook to ask after rat poison. Cook smiled brightly & returned with what is now sixth curl of Mr Darcy’s in my collection. Found rat poison on shelf in store-room when cook went back to pots & pocketed it. Wonder whether should put it in his wine, though, or in his brandy. Am afraid he might offer guests glass of brandy, do not want to risk poisoning of Mr D. Though, in an afterthought, Mr D. has not visited as often as one could wish for. Can only hope he is busy with secret preparations for wedding & getting a special licence.

December 20th:

Went to visit G. this morning & told her how sorry I was to have neglected her so much. G. said not to worry because dear Mrs Knightley & dear Mrs Churchill had spent so much time with her, she had not felt lonely at all. Must confess am slightly alarmed. Only hope neither strange wife nor greedy governess have unmarried sister they wish to throw on poor Mr D. Just my luck, the two of them arrived only five minutes after self, bringing with them their husbands & Mr D. Was of course delighted to see Mr D. again & told him so & also was very friendly to Georgiana’s friends but felt slightly inferior because was wearing pale blue gown again, as no other gown available apart from dark green one. Damage in laundry basket obviously greater than thought before. Only good thing about visit of Georgiana’s friend was they had come to take leave because they are to return to their unimportant village for Christmas in order to celebrate with some people called Weston, Bates & strange wife’s family. Did not wish to hear all the details but really had no choice. Am glad though will be able to spend Christmas only with family & Mr D. & unfortunately H. Slightly worried about lack of Christmas enthusiasm on Mr D’s part but probably due to the weather. Wondered whether we are to celebrate at the Hursts’, or at Mr D.’s & was slightly confused because nobody asked me about it yet, but was sure everything would turn out all right & anyway had not the time to worry about it as had arranged meeting with Fanny. Wanted to take G. to dear Fanny, but Mr D. said most unfortunately they had to meet some relative, so went to dear Fanny alone & told her about laundry crisis. Fanny agrees situation with H. not bearably at all & tells me that as soon as am engaged must insist on short engagement, really cannot stay with H. any longer.

December 22nd:

Still have not been informed by anyone where I am to spend Christmas. I wonder whether they forgot? Surely, Louisa & H. must celebrate Christmas somewhere & would not want to leave me out. And certainly Charles can not want to spend Christmas without his family. Also, Charles may not want to spend without Georgiana, so probably we are all to spend Christmas with G. & Mr D. Am quite sure this is it. Wonder though why nobody told me. Unless Mr D. asked them not to, in order to arrange surprise for self. Do hope, though, surprise is made of gold & contains diamond
& fits my finger. Georgiana got a bust of a composer from him last year. Do not know what the
man has in mind when he shops for presents. Am only glad have all mine ready. Very nice hat for
Louisa in apricot - will look marvellous on her - new inkstand & new quills for Charles - had them
specially made for ‘beginners’ - very pretty orange embroidered pillow for Georgiana - hope her
brother admires it - very large book for Mr D. - do not have a clue what it is about, but the
bookseller recommended it - and lovely bottle of brandy & rat poison for H. Can really not believe
how inventive I am when it comes to presents.

December 23rd:

Still have not received any invitation for Christmas & am now slightly worried. Surely, Mr D.
must realise that I could accept other invitation if he does not invite soon. Maybe he thinks
Georgiana did ask, but G. did not because she never talks. Silly girl really. Must visit her first
thing in the morning & make sure to drop lots of hints about Christmas party. Was so exhausted
from worrying about Christmas party, did not even notice that H. had destroyed yet another gown
until abigail pointed it out. Whole Christmas thing definitely most vexing.

December 24th:

Went to Georgiana’s & spent most boring morning there, talking about Christmas celebrations all
the time & steering the conversation back on Christmas whenever she wanted to talk about silly
composers. Still, only received invitation when Mr D. came home & G. asked him had he
remembered to invite me to party & he then invited me. Do wonder why he forgot. Must have
been misunderstanding between him & G. How can he be expected to discuss anything with her
when the silly girl does not speak? Was forced to spend rest of the morning turning pages for G.,
who wanted to prepare musical entertainment for Christmas party. Fear that that means will have
to turn pages tomorrow again & cannot escape from it as Mr Darcy will be watching all the time.
Christmas most tiresome holiday. Came home only to find abigail all in uproar because H. had
stumbled into ironing chamber and spilt wine all over new orange Christmas gown. All abigail
could do was dye it & now have to wear wine-coloured gown for Christmas & what will Mr D.
think about it? Poor girl all in tears, but could not really blame her for ruined gown, knowing H.,
so told her not to worry & remember to lock ironing room next time she ironed my gowns.
Wander when did I become so soft? Am totally exhausted & wish could spend whole day
tomorrow in bed, but must of course go to Christmas party, now that I have invitation.

December 25th:

Most tiresome day, just as expected. Was woken by abigail quite early & feared something terrible
had happened to wardrobe again, but was only that abigail wanted to give me present from
servants. Received very pretty box from them, exactly the right size to store curls of male hair in
them, so put all my six curls in there. Really thoughtful of them & so felt really touched & gave
abigail more money than had intended. Really have become soft. Went downstairs only to
discover H. had put up mistletoe on entry to breakfast parlour. Asked footman whether Mr D. was
anywhere in the building, but he said no, so did not want to risk anything with regard to H. & had
to sneak into parlour via servants’ entry. Must say, quite narrow passage. Did not know servants
were that small. Luckily, H. did not breakfast with us, as he was sitting in the library having his
own more liquid breakfast. Had most delightful morning with Louisa exchanging gifts - turns out
Louisa gave me almost exactly the same hat I gave her - most curious how our minds work so
much alike. Had great time with dear Louisa trying to imagine what gruesome gifts G. might have
in store for us - my guess was sheets of music. Turns out, though, that was wrong. Party at Mr
Darcy’s started nice enough, though, but unfortunately, Georgiana then made her entrance. We
were all forced to endure piano music, though H. of course not in a state to listen any more & G.
forced me to turn pages for what seemed hours but Louisa told me afterwards it was only twenty
minutes. Then big exchange of presents started - with the exception of Louisa and me having
already exchanged - & it was from that point that things got slightly out of control. Charles pleased enough with his quills, to be sure, & G. smiled & thanked me for the pillow & H. grabbed the bottle I gave him. Then handed Mr D. the present I gave him & he thanked me & said he had always wanted Fordyce’s Sermons in a leather-bound edition, so thought evening might turn out very nice & proposal-friendly after all, especially as H. tried to open bottle & expressed wish to drink rat poison (not knowing it was rat poison, of course). Unfortunately, though, he offered glass to Charles & Mr D. & Mr D. all of a sudden accepted! Was really scared & situation demanded very quick thinking. Only solution that could think of was to stand up very quickly & allow H. to ‘accidentally’ spill brandy all over beautiful though wine-coloured new gown. Had not thought that rat poison was that effective though. Did not only stain gown, but actually burned hole right through it. Was afraid others might notice hole & ask nasty questions about quality of (now all spilt) brandy, so had to grab candle & set gown on fire. Did not realize there was enough brandy on rest of gown to make fire spread rather quickly & suddenly found self on the floor wearing only petticoats & buried under Mr D. Realised, though, that first assumption of Mr D. being overwhelmed by new gown & suddenly detecting burning passion was wrong, was actually burning gown that Mr D. detected. Was a little bit ashamed of self - although sensation of being buried below Mr D. not totally unpleasant & had to ask G. for gown to wear. Went home very soon afterwards, as Louisa thought that I was feeling a bit off & had fallen asleep, allowing whole brandy/candle disaster to happen. H. complaining about good brandy all being lost all the way home, did obviously not realise that brandy would have killed him. It was only in the carriage that found time to have a look at present from G. & Mr D. Had expected something golden to fit finger, but was severely disappointed. Present turned out to be book - that is, set of books. Wonder who ever bothered to read book that contained several volumes. Was some sort of intellectual book called *Pride and Prejudice*, written by someone called Lady Something. Tried to read first pages, but really could not. Was dreadfully boring about girls desperately looking for a husband. Feel really tired & will probably claim having a headache & stay in bed rest of the week.

December 29th:

Wanted to stay in bed longer but had to get up & go out, abigail told me had only two decent non-dark green morning gowns left after the recent accidents, so had to go to Mrs Taylor’s & ask for new gowns ready by tomorrow. Only positive thing that happened was that met Fanny at Mrs Taylor’s & told her about burning gown accident. Was astonished to learn that Fanny already knew, apparently, Mr D.’s footman had told Mrs Ferrars’ footman, who had told Mrs Robert Ferrars’ footman, who had told Mrs Robert Ferrars, who had told Miss Steele - whoever that is - who had felt free to tell whole city. Did not know all of London was aware that I had set myself on fire in Mr Darcy’s drawing room on Christmas. Realise, now that I write it down, that it is even more dreadful than I imagined. Am convinced whole town will be talking about me by now. Do so wish could leave this wretched place, but cannot, as have not even enough gowns - until tomorrow, that is. Most frustrating thing is that not even Mr D. or G. inquired how I was after fire. Can only think that Mr D. was overwhelmed by seeing me on fire, & embracing me in order to rescue me, & now does not trust himself to come near me again, for fear he will do something to damage my reputation. Still, would be nice if he called, would make me feel situation was not as dreadful as it really is. Do not think I shall ever leave this house again. Except to collect new gowns tomorrow of course. Was so depressed that I ordered all eight of them to be orange, plus one bright yellow one & one bright green one.

December 30th:

A miracle has happened. Will finally be able to leave this place & hopefully not return soon. Went downstairs this morning, still very depressed, both from whole fire/gossip thing & from having to wear dark green gown. Had only got up in order to collect lovely new orange gowns, but not even thought of them could improve my mood. Just in this moment post arrived & could not really believe my luck then. Louisa received letter from friend who lives somewhere in Somersetshire.
Do not know this friend but Louisa told me she is very amiable & not at all vulgar. Mother is dead & she lives together with father & sisters. The important point is, this friend invited Louisa & Charles & me & unfortunately Hurst, too, to visit her for some weeks & to return with her to the city in March. Cannot believe I really am to leave this place after all. Am sure nothing better could have happened. Went to say goodbye to dear Fanny after collecting gowns because we are to leave first thing tomorrow. Mr D. probably will recognize his deep regard for self if he does not see me for several weeks, & am quite convinced he will propose in March when he sees me again. Really feel much better now, that I know new year will not begin as total fiasco, instead, shall meet new interesting people & probably be married in May.
In Which Caroline Is Detained In Town And Acquires New Skills

December 31st:

Cannot believe another year has gone by and am still not married. Felt very depressed this morning. Accidentally stumbled upon list with last year’s new year’s resolutions & realised how many things did not accomplish. Have not married Mr D. Have not learnt French. Have not embroidered tapestry. Have not formed meaningful friendship with Georgiana. Have not followed politics in the newspapers. Have not stopped wearing orange. Have not found out Hurst’s first name. Am resolved to be more attentive to new year’s resolutions next year. Also, will try to be more subtle in making Mr D. realise my true feelings as do not want to set self on fire again. Also, will not accept any more curls from Mr D. or other male which are presented to me by well-meaning servants as half a dozen is a nice round number.

January 3rd:

\[\text{triste} = \text{sad} \\
\text{tristesse} = \text{sadness} \\
\text{Je suis triste} = \text{I am sad.}\]

Am still stuck in town. Do not know what is keeping us; according to Louisa, H. still needing to conduct important business deal. Spent several hours with Louisa sketching drafts for tapestry but all for naught. Charles thought was Japanese still life when showed him what was supposed to be life-size picture of Mr D. Have not seen Mr D. or G. again since unfortunate burning incident. Went to visit Fanny and agreed with her should not seek out Mr D. soon.

January 5th:

\[\text{detester} = \text{to hate.} \\
\text{Je deteste} = \text{I hate.} \\
\text{J’ai detesté} = \text{I have hated.}\]

H. still detained by so-called business. Was woken up late last night when mysterious men delivered several crates of unknown content via the backdoor. Was woken this morning by abigail telling me that laundry room was locked & she could not get into it. Crates nowhere to be seen. Was forced to wear dark-green gown again because new gowns in laundry room for pressing. Felt very depressed & complained to housekeeper about locked doors. Stupid woman presented me with new curl of hair & freshly-made cupcake. Must say, cupcake not at all bad. Did not venture out all day as weather rather depressing. Wish could go into the country.

January 8th:

\[\text{il pleut} = \text{it is raining} \\
\text{il pleuvait} = \text{it was raining} \\
\text{il pleuvra} = \text{it will be raining}\]

Still detained indoors but no loss as laundry room still locked & key still missing so was forced to wear dark-green gowns all week. Another delivery came for H. last night and was woken up again. Wish that man would live somewhere else. Do not know how poor Louisa can tolerate his presence. Searched out cook & asked about possibility of cupcakes for breakfast. Was presented with curl & also cupcake so visit to kitchen rather successful. Tried to mention possibility of rat poison in H’se breakfast but cook did not understand my nudges. Spent several hours trying to re-sketch Mr D.’s likeness but unsuccessful.
January 11th:

It appears situation with France rather more dire than thought before. Lecture of newspaper most educating experience but am not sure I like being frightened over breakfast of delicious cupcakes. Was visited by Jane who apparently is still in town. Jane informed me creepy cousin now married to plain girl’s friend. Never liked her but feel must pity her now. Knew not what to say to Jane. Did not want to mention French studies as have not made progress yet & know not how well Jane speaks French. Wanted to mention how much detest H. but was not sure Jane would understand. Jane asked about Christmas but did not want to tell her set fire to self in Mr Darcy’s drawing room so only shrugged. Meant to tell her about gown crisis but then did not know if perhaps H.’s business not legal & could not risk involving myself. Was about to show Jane sketch for tapestries but then recalled had scribbled ‘Caroline Darcy, Duchess of Derbyshire’ in the margins & knew not whether Jane would find that silly. In the end, did not talk much.

January 15th:

gris= grey
vert= green
rouge= red
noir= black

Was forced to go out and order new gowns since could not reach ones in laundry room. Abigail tells me two of the housemaids forced to loan money from housekeeper to buy new aprons as old ones still locked in. Had cupcakes again for breakfast & must say much more pleasing start into day than reading about dreadful quarrels in House of Commons again. Do not know why men make such fuss about going into politics when all they do is behave like fishmongers once inside parliament.

Ran into G. at Mrs Taylor’s and had pleasant chat with her if rather forced. G. tells me insurance company settled all affairs with burnt holes in carpet & tells me not to feel sorry as she never liked it anyway. Mentioned to G. am sketching embroidery for tapestry & G. offered to help me. Must show her some draft not involving her brother. Dreadful disappointment about gowns though as no orange or yellow fabric available at short notice & was forced to order three gowns in white and pale blue as really cannot stand sight of dark green anymore.

January 17th:

Fanny says should probably call on G. soon & go over embroidery sketches with her as G. really accomplished with needle & also must make sure do not loose all connections with important family only because of burning incident. Fanny tells me no one talking about Christmas fire anymore anyway because Mary Crawford lost a stocking at the opera the other day. Felt much more cheerful & had cupcakes & tea with Louisa. Louisa says any day now business will be over and shall be able to finally get into the country. Only wish weather would clear up.

January 22nd:

la fureur= anger
se mettre en fureur= to become enraged
Je me suis mise en fureur= I became enraged.

Abigail informs me laundry now seen to in still-room as laundry room still locked & late-night delivery people apparently knocked over jar of raspberry jam over new white gown. Gown already in dyeing vat & shall come out beautiful wine-colour soon or so abigail tells me. Wonder what is going on at our backdoors; surely products that are delivered and sold at nights cannot be legal.
Meant to ask Louisa about possibility of laundry room having become smuggling den but did not manage to for Mr D of all people came to visit. Was still enjoying cupcakes & newest parliament gossip when he was announced but think was very pleasing. Mr D did not mention fire accident at all & only asked about everyone’s health. Told him had seen Jane lately & informed him about plain girl’s friend’s sad fate but talk of weddings did not inspire Mr D to act & did not want to mention topic of possible engagement myself as did not know whether would be the thing to do after set fire to precious heirloom rug. Must say Mr D rather pleasing about whole carpet affair & also told me G. would like me to visit soon.

January 24th:

la neige= the snow
neiger= to snow
il neigeait toute la nuit= Snow was falling all night.

Spent day with G. today & really think made progress with embroidery. G. encouraged me not to portray any person but rather try patterns first & helped me sketch rather pleasant Japanese floral pattern. Must purchase wool for project soon but really do not want to venture out in dark-green gowns or wine-red gowns. Tried to put on pale blue one as have become rather fond of it but hem was ripped. Abigail informs me late-night visitors accidentally entered still-room and knocked over laundry hampers. Really do think H should conduct illegal business on other premises & also do think housekeeper should allow me to borrow some poison. Tried to ask H’s valet about illegal business but was only given what is now ninth curl in possession & a cupcake.

January 25th:

Louisa said H asked her to stay away from home all day & she had already made appointment with Mrs Taylor. Wanted to accompany her but was very boring because did not have appointment & also still no orange fabrics to be had. Louisa reminded me had meant to visit Jane so set off for Cheapside & was really in bad mood as was wearing white frock again & also driver had to ask for the way thrice.

Knew not what to say to Jane as possible illegal business still out of question & also did not want to talk about politics. Ended up telling her how I spent time with G. embroidering & also mentioned that all of us to leave London soon. Did not say though that had to wait until smuggler’s cove in own basement filled with illegal products. Left early as was eager to discuss choice of colours with G. & also feared driver would not be able to find way back in the dark. Really like Jane but do wish girl was somewhat more lively as her silence makes it very difficult to talk & also think some child spilt juice on my gown as have now large stain on what was last wearable white frock.

Visited G. afterwards & met Mr D. & told him had seen Jane again. Mr D. advised me not to tell Charles since Charles just over whole sad affair with Jane & really did not want to contradict him as think he is right & also think it important to show him I agree with him on important matters. G. thinks should use shades of green not orange and make flowers blue not yellow.

January 28th:

Laundry crisis now definitely alarming. Another frock missing and no one able to tell me where it went. Shall have to think about ordering fabric en gros so as not to deplete funds totally. Realise must settle on one colour then; preferably wine or other dark shade that does not mind being dyed by clumsy mysterious nightly visitors. Live now in daily fear of Bow Street Runners storming house; on the other hand, thought of lui-sans-nom being arrested definitely uplifting. Was wondering whether to visit Jane today and apologise for lack of spirits at last visit but caught
article in the newspaper about proposed bill and lost track of time. G. sent an invitation for tea.

January 30th:

Le duc - the Duke
La duchesse - the Duchess
Le comte - the Count
La comtesse - the Countess

Really sweet of G. to invite me for tea so often when one considers that only a month ago, set fire to one of their carpets & self in their drawing room. Had very good time & most tasty cupcakes. Only wish G. had not asked her guardian for tea as well. Most peculiar man; kept winking at me and making nonsensical remarks. Also think he was slipping cupcakes on my plate as feel quite full now. Asked G. about ordering fabric *en gros* and she offered to accompany me. Had meant to ask Fanny but now realise F. would find buying fabric *en gros* tacky & also think G. more sensible about suggestion of suitable colour.

After tea, went to search out Darcy housekeeper to ask for recipe for cupcakes and to my surprise was presented with curl that is definitely not Darcy’s. Suspicious shade of blond & shorter than the other curls. Put it in the box nevertheless.
In Which Caroline Is Still In Town And Is Reduced To Blackness

February 2nd:

Really think must have word with someone about laundry crisis only do not know who. Abigail woke me this morning to tell me had nothing to wear except ugly black frock which I wore in mourning of Uncle Algy. Asked about the white and pale blue gowns & was told one of them had disappeared & one had mysterious stain on it & one found outside in the snow. Thought had more than three gowns but abigail said was all that was left apart from one orange but that had mysterious hole in it & also ripped hem. Was not even in the mood for orange but would have preferred it to the black monstrosity. Whoever suggested ruffled sleeves ought to be shot.

Told abigail she should make sure all of my gowns are back in my room before sundown & if any are still wet to place the laundry hampers in my room. Told her she could do the same with the aprons as had heard from butler that several of the maids’ uniforms had disappeared. Abigail sobbed with gratitude & really knew not what to say but then luckily housekeeper came with fresh cupcakes to sample. New flavour, apparently, with raspberry jam. Very tasty although assume use of raspberries was necessary after still another incident in the still room.

Shall have to send to Mrs T & ask for at least one gown to be delivered; cannot even go out to buy fabric in the blackness.

February 3rd:

Most depressing day. Raspberry cupcakes really were highlight of the day as it went downhill from there. Newspaper full of disconcerting news; cannot believe how stubborn men are when it comes to their pride & do they not understand country needs new laws? Also still wearing black monstrosity as remaining gowns still undergoing various laundry procedures to cleanse them. Intense cleansing necessary as really have no idea how they got those stains & do not want to know precise nature of stains anyway.

Had surprise morning visit from G & her peculiar guardian even though had told butler was not at home but apparently H let them in when he was bringing a box out to a waiting carriage. Really do not want to know. Was looking my most horrid in the blackness & also apparently raspberry jam had caught on one of the thousand ruffles. Was ready to rip off sleeves but it was freezing already. Asked housekeeper about lack of proper fires in the morning & learned servants had not been allowed to leave their rooms until after sunrise.

P.G. most infuriating, kept shooting looks at the ruffles of doom & also asked about H & the boxes which clearly is none of his business. Hope he finds out though so he can tell me. Then emergency frock was delivered in the afternoon & was looking forward to putting it on only Mrs T obviously not up to her usual standard and had sent something with someone else’s measurements.

February 4th:

Day 3 in black monstrosity. Feel very sallow in the face already. Had emergency gown sent back to Mrs T in the morning with strict orders to send new gown in cheerful colour & right size. Messenger returned with note saying gown sent to me was only available gown my size at short notice. Unpacked it & found stunningly obscene piece made of scanty apricot fabric of dubious quality. Bust-line down to regions best not displayed in public & overall transparency of gown unbearable; to say nothing of the garish flitter adorning it. Also did not fit me. Had it transported back to Mrs T with letter stating was not in mood for her little jokes and to send replacement gown
at once or see me take my business elsewhere.

Did not receive any visitors & stayed indoors all day. L went to see Fanny & asked me to accompany her but did not feel like going out. Had cupcakes instead & read about latest hare-brained schemes from the treasury.

February 5th:

Day 4 in black monstrosity. Think my face has become greyish. Called for abigail to find out what happened to other gowns & learned that orange gown was mended. Strangely did not feel like orange at all but put it on nevertheless. Seems though abigail made mistake in mending hole & cut out too much fabric; gown now much too small. Asked for blue gowns & found out are still soaking in vinegar. Asked for dark green gown; was told had disappeared from my room while I was having breakfast yesterday. Abigail tells me though that wine-red gown has reappeared in stable yard, mysteriously wrapped around silver candlestick missing from dining-room. Gown very dirty but probably still wearable once thoroughly soaked in vinegar.

Received note from Mrs T stating she was not joking, harlot gown was in colour I had admired last autumn & measurements were same as had been taken last time I was in for measuring. Sent back letter telling her in no uncertain words she had lost a customer. Felt strangely liberated afterwards but then recalled had nothing to wear. Sent abigail to purchase books about House of Commons; feel need more information to properly understand parliament reports.

February 7th:

Day 6 in black monstrosity. Was so upset yesterday could not even bring self to write journal. Could not believe abigail at first when she told me soaking gowns had been stolen from my room at night. Was going to shake her but then remembered had left the room to look for book about English history in the library & that must have been when thieves entered the room. Most displeasing especially as was not able to locate book either even though am sure it used to be there for governess used to spend hours torturing L & me with it. Really should have paid better attention back then because then I would know all about the Civil Wars now & would not need to look it up.

Do wish thieves had taken black monstrosity as well but then would not have anything to wear at all. Really must see to acquiring new gowns but cannot bring self to contact Mrs T again & know not what other dressmakers to visit. Thought about asking Fanny but on second thoughts was not sure whether we have same style & budget. L said not to make a fuss and order same orange gowns as those that disappeared but somehow do not feel like orange. Do not know why & also quite curious urges should go away so suddenly.

Am quite sure G will come to visit today. Had note from her telling me she wished to discuss important matter with me. Only hope she does not bring the P.G. with her as really am in no mood to talk to him at all.

February 8th:

Day 7 in black monstrosity. Abigail convinced me to subscribe to a lending library as more budget-friendly than constantly purchasing books about new subjects that need to be researched. Lending library quite fascinating I think. Always thought they only stocked novels but abigail assured me they had volumes of every description imaginable. Gave her list of topics wish to read about & she was able to find very interesting tomes. Shall have to examine them later today.

Was of course right. G came to visit yesterday. Most charming conversation but unfortunately P.G. accompanying her. Discovered to my horror the man spikes his tea with so much sugar it
turns into vaguely tea-coloured molasses. Really think it most disgusting habit ridiculing all traditions of our country. (NB must find out history of tea consumption in England. Do not think it is native plant.)

Vile habits of P.G. forgotten however when G proposed we go out to buy fabric together as planned. Was most eager to go with her although do not think P.G. needed to look quite so smug when I packed the rest of the cupcakes for us to eat in the carriage. Told G was not sure where to go but G said she had address of merchant recommended by Strange Wife, whose name actually is Emma. Merchant indeed most genteel in manners & very helpful. G & I picked roll of each pale blue fabric with sort of flowered pattern & dark burgundy that is going to be embroidered & decided to split rolls and costs between us. Was unsure about colours but G most unnaturally determined about it & then P.G. cut discussion short by simply telling merchant to wrap fabric up & deliver it to Darcy townhouse.

Confided to G about disagreement with Mrs T & thankfully she did not laugh & was very sympathetic about harlot gown. Told me E had also recommended new tailor & we have appointment there tomorrow.

Did not go out today as weather very bad & still have no frock to wear apart from monstrosity. Wanted to continue reading about parliamentary history but instead started novel D & G gave me for Christmas. First chapters rather amusing read but unfortunately books still faintly smelling of smoke from the carpet incident.

February 10th:

Last day in black monstrosity. Do not know whether I can bear to wait another day for the new gowns to be delivered tomorrow at last. Gave strict orders to abigail to wait for gowns to arrive & to take them upstairs to my room directly & lock them into my trunk. Do not want to risk anything happening to them.

Visit with new tailor yesterday most agreeable. First was sceptical because atmosphere very different from atmosphere at Mrs T’s. Tailor rather strange lady who did not compliment G or me at all but instead clucked her tongue & called us duckies. Wanted to leave then but G said to stay as lady was complete genius & had to admit gowns on display were quite stunning. Was measured then & it turns out Mrs T was lying to me all the time & measurements she told me I had were not actual measurements as need at least an inch more everywhere. Was rather glad to be in the hands of professional now especially as Mrs Duckie promised to send frocks as soon as possible. Should really find out her name as do not think it really is Mrs Duckie.

February 11th:

New gowns have just arrived. Feel like a new person already. Mrs Duckie’s handiwork much more agreeable than Mrs T’s and new pale blue gown fits me like a glove. Gave abigail strict orders to immediately lock trunk again & never let the key out of her sight. Was tempted to leave black monstrosity outside for thieves to take away but thought it best to keep it for emergencies such as H’s funeral & also did not think it right to support crimes even if they are committed in my own house.

Really must have a word with L as do not think situation at all acceptable in the long run.
February 12th:

Feeling of complete rebirth continues. Was woken rather suddenly though this morning by L shouting in the corridors. First thought she was murdering H at last but unfortunately, when came downstairs, the man was very much alive. Was very surprised to see him at breakfast. Had I known before, would have asked cook to spike his muffins with belladonna. On the other hand H did not even appreciate goodness that muffins are & only munched on dry toast. Did not look too healthy now I think of it & maybe has nasty disease? Only hope I did not catch it as have quite a lot of plans for rest of month. (NB: Must have abigail return book on tea to lending library. Very fascinating topic. Also did not know there was connection to emancipation of American colonies. Must have abigail bring further books about history of Massachusetts Bay Company.)

Tried to ask L about unusual behaviour later on but L had locked herself into her room & did not want to come out. Felt not inclined to spend all day indoors so went to see G instead.

February 14th:

Was kept awake for most of the night by mysterious noise coming from attic. Could swear I heard raucous, drunken singing at one point but when I asked L about it at breakfast she said I was mistaken & wondered if I was losing my mind.

Decided to go out again as L behaving very abnormally & positively unfriendly towards me. Abigail adjusted my hair to fit under hat (NB: must ask Mrs Duckie to recommend new milliner not associated with Mrs T) and told me she had heard nightly noise too so am most definitely not going mad.

Was too early to make visits yet so instead asked abigail to accompany me to lending library. Most fascinating place. Could have taken all books at once but did not want to make abigail carry all. Settled on book about history of the colonies & novel promising to be full of pirate kidnappers. Never thought reading could be that much fun.

Upon leaving library, was greeted by most heavenly smell. Discovered cosy little bakery nearby & spontaneously treated abigail & self to apple pie. Had much fun abusing H together. Decided to spend afternoon at Charles’ house. C not home as usual but housekeeper had just made muffins. Sat in the study all afternoon reading about Raleigh.

February 15th:

L can say what she wants, but am definitely not losing my mind & definitely heard something in the attic again. Wonder if I should move in with C. L positively rude today & abigail & I left house early again. Decided to visit Westminster Abbey as neither of us had ever seen it before. Very intriguing place. Sir Isaac’s tomb rather impressive. (NB: must find out why exactly he is famous.)

Ran into G & her PG in the Abbey. G told me they had just left her brother at the Houses of Parliament where he wanted to observe the debate. Told G would love to observe debate but impossible now they have closed ladies’ gallery. The PG impolitely listened in & said he could arrange for me to go. Do not believe him.

Arranged with G to meet at St Paul’s Cathedral tomorrow.
February 16th:

Realise only now, was not even disappointed yesterday that had missed Mr D. Very weird. Maybe am losing mind after all as L suggested again this morning. Know though what I have heard & there definitely was someone singing in the attic & also heard people running up & down the stairs. Have decided to ask abigail to spend nights in my room as do not wish to be alone & also think she might prefer being further away from source of mysterious noise.

Coming back to former subject however am much concerned about state of own mind. Atmosphere in WA definitely proposal-friendly what with it being church & all but did not even once envision self signing parish registry as C--- D---.

Must rush now as am meeting G at St Paul’s in half an hour.

February 17th:

During the night, abigail & I were almost convinced singing voice was Louisa but now am sure I was mistaken. There is no reason L would go to the attic to sing & at such an ungodly hour. Also abigail explained meaning of certain phrases that were sung & am quite sure L would never sing that.

Spent most interesting morning at St Paul’s with G & unfortunately also her PG yesterday. Was reconciled to the Peculiar Guardian’s presence however when he explained all about fire of 1666. The PG then treated us to scones & tea at a nearby bakery. Really best scones have ever eaten, had sort of milk & sugar glazing.

Went to the library afterwards & got biography of Sir Christopher Wren.

February 18th:

Am not sure can stay at house of lui-sans-nom much longer. There definitely is something going on & L cannot convince me I am going mad.

Went over to Charles’ house early in the morning in the hope of not being found there by anybody. Wanted to finish book about Wren & pirate novel. Housekeeper very friendly & made scones just for me. Had very good morning.

Just as the innocent Athalia was discovered gagged & shackled to a bedpost in Lord Burkham’s secret hunting lodge, however, someone knocked on the door and the annoying PG was announced. Told me he knew he would find me here & gave me a parcel he had brought. Opened it & found assortment of vile-looking men’s clothes. Asked him to explain the joke & he said they were for me in order to allow me to visit Parliament *incognito*.

Asked the PG how he thought the vile things would fit me. He said they were his & as we are same height, should fit me as well. Asked the PG if he really thought would wear such unflattering garb. He said he had seen me in the black monstrosity so his breeches definite improvement. Could not fault his logic there so decided to cut discussion short & went upstairs & changed into vile things. Think striped waistcoat flatters my face.

Cannot continue now, promised the PG would only need quarter of an hour.

February 19th:

Had most amazing day yesterday even though can scarcely believe it myself. Cannot believe PG really took me to the Houses of Parliament. Really nice of him. First we had tea at Mrs Miggins’ teashop, or so it was called I think. Had really good cupcakes & scones & jam. Then went to the
gallery and saw debate about taxes. Could hardly breathe with excitement & because of several layers of flattening bandages around chest. Debate most heated. Lasted several hours & not boring once. Do not know why PG did not think it exciting but then he can go every day. Still think though he should not have fallen asleep when the PM addressed the house as argument was rather fascinating. When we left, was already night. Asked the PG to take me to a public house afterwards but he said Charles would not let him live if he heard about it. Did not want to return to Hurst House as strange things happen there after dark so PG brought me to Charles’ place. Charles still out though so had housekeeper bring me cold supper then went to bed.

Col & Mrs F—

General Sir —— and Lady F—

The Marquess & Marchioness F—of—

C—F , Duchess of—

C—F—

February 21st:

Is so much nicer at Charles’ house. Had box of clothes & box & abigail sent over yesterday & am settling in nicely. Housekeeper very friendly & abigail in tears with joy at leaving Hurst House. Think should call on G soon & maybe propose another expedition only do not know any more famous churches. Perhaps interesting exhibition somewhere. Realise have not called on Fanny in long time, probably should do so.

February 22nd:

Really meant to go out & call on F today but it looked like it was going to rain & did not want to ruin pretty new gown (NB: must visit Mrs Duckie soon & order more.) Stayed indoors instead & read book about churches in London & their history. Did not know there were so many of them. Wonder if C has ever even set foot in his library since he inherited house from Uncle Algy. Suppose he has not. Library really excellent collection, do not know why C always says he has no books.

Have still not seen C even though have been here for almost a week now. Wonder where he is. Housekeeper tells me he sometimes does not come home at nights but there must be more to it. Wonder if I should ask the PG if he knows.

February 24th:

Rain continues, most depressing. Have stayed indoors and read. Did not realise English did not always sound like English but now am reading three-hundred-year-old book about Arthurian legend & sounds very different from real English.

Am almost sure heard Charles returning late last night; certainly no one else would sing ‘Mrs Bunny’s Lament’ on top of his voice especially seeing as Charles & I made that up. When I got up this morning however he was already gone & nobody wanted to talk about him. Housekeeper pressed curl of hair of unknown origin into my hand; wonder where I put box with hair.

Really think Louisa could have called on me by now seeing as she has not seen me for a week but she does not seem to care & no one else has called either. Had note from G though saying her
brother forbade her to go out alone & her PG unable to come with her. Very weird business all of it.

February 25th:

For some reason cannot get Mrs Bunny’s Lament out of my head. Visited G today as rain had ceased. Had very good time, talked about future expeditions & had lovely raspberry jam & scones. Unfortunately the PG was there too & most embarrassing business as the PG caught me singing about poor bunny for whom days will never be sunny so had to explain to him about Mrs Bunny’s Lament & Charles singing it. The PG only made some weird grimaces when I told him about Charles & said he had thought it was something like this.

Am not quite sure he believes me. Probably thinks am total moron.

Went to F afterwards determined to renew friendship but F very much out of spirits & rather unfriendly altogether. Did not stay long as felt unwelcome. Probably hummed Mrs Bunny’s Lament to self as well.

Charles gone when I returned home, as usual, so had fire stoked in library and retired with Morte Darthur & book explaining about changes in English language.

February 26th:

Abigail & I went to Hurst House this morning to retrieve more of my things. Tried to talk to Louisa but she had butler tell me she was not there even though am sure saw her peeking out from behind curtains. Do not know what is the matter with her.

Went back to Charles’ - who was still asleep, or so housekeeper tells me – and sorted through trunks. Several items inexplicably missing, especially those of rather delicate nature.

Decided to go out & take G shopping. Unfortunately the PG decided to come with us. I bought new stack of delicates & fabric for two new dresses from merchant Emma recommended. Am amazed at quality of delicates at such reasonable price. The PG asked what I bought but did not show him even though we have shared breeches before; would not be same thing. G bought green fabric for dress & several ribbons. We arranged for appointment at Mrs Duckie’s in two days then had shopping sent home & went book-shopping with the PG. Still felt needed to compensate for theft of unspeakables & Louisa’s silence & am afraid bought too many books but the PG recommended so many & also had to find out what happened to the lovely Athalia in the next volume & library did not have it yet. Simply must know what it is that the butler saw in Graf Haubenstein’s trunk that scared him so.

Asked G and the PG for informal dinner to Charles’ house afterwards & spent pleasant evening conversing about Arthur Pendragon until Charles suddenly came home. Looked very different from when had last seen him. Do not think beard suits him. Charles entered dining room & started reciting ‘Of the Unfortunate Demise of Mr Bunny.’ Thought I should die but G & the PG kindly acted as if nothing had happened even after Charles had passed out.

February 27th:

Wonder if He Without The First Name stole my unmentionables. Surely he would not but do not think there is other explanation. Wonder if & how should mention the matter to the PG.

February 28th:

Surely cannot mention matter to the PG. To begin with, would not even know how to describe missing items in polite society.
Will go to L tomorrow & try to find out where they went. Maybe just mistake after all. Also need book from the library that I remember was there; is about the proposed origins of European languages. Do not see why I should not have every right to get it; is my father’s house & my father’s library after all & Hurst having renamed it does not change a thing about that.

Also must find out if third volume of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* is already available. Simply must find out who Lord Paddenstool’s twin brother is & also what is importance of locket Athalia’s guardian gave her before his death? Cannot believe the Merciless Pirate actually was Athalia’s sister; was convinced Theodora had perished in the fire. Realise now though that that makes Sir Ganymede’s marriage to Pulchinella invalid & that must mean Athalia will inherit North Cotherston Hall.

March 1st:

Very stilted conversation with L who denied any knowledge of whereabouts of stolen unmentionables & also did not want to talk about books that were missing. Looked very strange too. If I did not know better, would say she had paint on her face. Meant to talk to L about whether I should come back to Hurst House or stay at Charles’ but L said she could not say & maybe they would go to Somerset soon to visit friend she mentioned before Christmas. Had all but forgot about Somerset trip; not sure if I am still invited. Did not want to quarrel with L so said not much and instead went to G afterwards & told her most of recent disagreements with L apart from the more unsettling bits & the unspeakables.

Darcy then came home & G told him about the books I was looking for & Darcy looked very astonished & then disappeared & reappeared with several books about language theories & *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia Vol. III*.

Had almost left Darcy House again when Darcy stopped me in the corridor & asked me not to let G have book & not to trust Cpt. Van Swanck even if he pretended to be Athalia’s father.

Evil spoilsport.
March 2nd:

At Darcy House again to thank D for books & tell him off for telling me about Van Swanck. D thinks the abbess is the one behind the kidnapping but am sure he is wrong; must be the butler surely for he was the only one who knew Athalia was sleeping in the tower. Cannot wait for fourth volume to come out.

D says he does not believe in common European/Indian-language theory but then the PG came & supported my arguments & am sure we beat D. Had tea with D & G & the PG & was surprisingly much fun even when G asked me to recite Unfortunate Demise of Mr Bunny again. Cupcakes really exquisite & also housekeeper had tried out new recipe with spices & raisins. PG kept chuckling to himself when heavenly cupcakes were served but just ignored him. Arranged with G to see exhibition day after tomorrow but not sure which of her guardians will come with us.

March 3rd:

French really makes so much more sense now that I know about similarities with English language. Think made good progress with French lessons over last few days.

Spent half the morning learning French then started second book D had given me.

Had half hoped L might come over to talk but nobody came all day. Charles still absent although was apparently home some time during the morning but when asked taciturn housekeeper about it, got only new curl of hair of unknown origin. Really cannot locate hair box.

March 4th:

Went for first fitting with Mrs Duckie today before met up with G at exhibition. Mrs Duckie convinced that Lord Paddenstool & the butler are the same person but do not think that can be because Athalia conversed with Lord Paddenstool at the ball where Lord Burkham was almost killed in the duel.

March 6th:

Stayed in today. Meant to read but then the PG visited, alone, strangely enough. Told him was convinced Athalia’s father must be still alive but PG thinks first chapter tells us differently. We could not agree what Athalia’s exact relation to Sir Vincent was so we drew up a diagram. Had to chuckle at the PG’s poor drawing skills. Really fun half-hour but felt strangely restless afterwards.

March 7th:

Did not feel v. festive in spite of it being my birthday probably because C still behaving oddly & L seemed to have forgotten completely. Had long letter from uncle Tiberius saying that he felt it was his duty as my guardian to give me a bit of advice on my 19th birthday & then followed the usual long sermon on female obedience & politics & a guinea under the seal. Auntie Margaret sent a letter asking how my husband was faring & if she might receive cheerful news, as she put it, any time soon. Think she must have confused me with L again.

Invited G & her companion to take tea with me & she gave me a pair of v. nice gloves, much
better present than letters. Abigail gave me nice little shawl to go with new frocks. Really thoughtful of her.

March 8th:

Had note from L today asking to see me the day after tomorrow. Cannot imagine what she wants especially seeing as she forgot my birthday but she wrote as cordially as she used to so will agree to see her. Went to visit G afterwards but she was out. Darcy was in though and we spent good time eating cupcakes and dissecting Sir Vincent’s intentions. He has it all wrong.

March 11th:

Saw L yesterday. L very cheerful, apologised for recent bad behaviour & forgetting my birthday. Gave me very pretty hat (colour slightly garish but will do well enough with white frock) & explained she had stressful time in marriage. Told her I would support her should it come to a separation but she claims all good now. L invited me to come with them to Somerset in two weeks. She insisted most ardently & I could not refuse; hope everything will be as it used to be. Realised should probably go shopping for trip; host, after all, a baronet and would not wish to look dowdy. Somehow though ended up in bookshop.

Pre-ordered next volume of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* & ran into the PG in the bookshop. Thought he was rather absent-minded; asked if I had heard from L lately. Told him about trip to Somerset then he remembered urgent business & set off. Bookdealer thinks Sir Vincent really is Athalia’s father. Bookdealer’s assistant thinks Count Haubenstein & his silent companion probably agents for some Italian prince or other. Wonder if they are right.

March 12th:

Met G today & we arranged to go shopping for trip to Somerset tomorrow. PG to accompany us as G still not allowed to go out alone. Asked G what her guardians are so afraid about but she does not know & apparently is not even curious.

March 14th:

G & PG came to pick me up for shopping yesterday. Think I bought too much but host is a baronet after all and also, Louisa’s weasel-faced husband will be with us so one really cannot have too many garments of delicate nature. PG reckons he saw an early copy of *Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia IV* & he claims that very first chapter contains Athalia’s marriage to her lost love, who he says is no one else but the Merciless Pirate. Said that could not be; Merciless Pirate is Athalia’s lost twin Theodora. PG thinks the passage revealing the MP’s true identity intentionally misleading & Theodora died in the avalanche after all. Do so wish book would come out soon.

March 17th:

Think I should buy sturdy locks for my boxes before leaving; just in case Weaselface tries to break into them. Wonder where one buys them? Must ask the PG when he comes to visit next.

March 19th:

Had a note from G today saying she had caught cold & had been lying down the last few days. Poor girl, had a basket with cupcakes sent over directly. Wonder though why the PG did not come and let me know, also, must ask him about locks as am leaving in less than a week.

March 20th:

Went to visit poor G, still not quite recovered from her cold and feeling not at all well. Tried to
cheer her up talking about various things but only partially successful. G had no idea where her 
PG was either; said she had only seen him once since she had fallen ill & only for very short then; 
thinks he must be doing some sort of military business. Had all but forgot about that but suppose 
she is right. Only do wish he would call as need to ask him about locks and where to acquire 
them.

Darcy walked me home afterwards but did not want to ask him; feared he would think me silly. D 
does not think the PG really saw an early copy of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia IV* and 
agrees about Merciless Pirate being Theodora. Wonder though if maybe it *is* too obvious.

Promised to call on G again tomorrow & maybe will see the PG then. Have not seen Charles all 
week; wonder if I should worry?

March 21st:

Missing items have turned up!! Not all of them though but at at least my favourites. Was calling on 
Louisa today to confirm details for trip to Somerset & when I left housekeeper pressed parcel into 
my hand in the hallway & when I opened it at home found it to contain 2 unmentionables. Am 
sure now H had them all the time. Must try to talk to housekeeper soon.

Called on G then and helped her sort threads for her embroidery. Did not see the PG but at least G 
feeling better now. 

*Her Grace* Caroline Bingley, Duchess of London

March 22nd:

Saw the PG yesterday when visiting G and when he walked me home, told him about locks I 
wanted to buy. He said nothing but called again after tea and brought 2 sturdy locks and fixed 
them on my trunk. Was a bit embarrassed about letting him see my room but there was nothing 
private lying around & he did not stay long.

Really grateful for locks and spent most of today packing. Hope I will see Charles before I leave; 
want to say goodbye.

Thought about taking leave of Jane too but then thought it would be awkward as have not seen 
her for so long; really should have called sooner.

NB. Also should not neglect correspondence esp. now that am too be out of town.

Must write to:

Auntie Margaret & Mr Watson
Uncle Tiberius (bah)
Jane
Fanny Dashwood?
Georgiana
Charles
the PG

March 23rd, early morning:

What a night!! Louisa & H coming to pick me up in 2 hours but am not able to go to sleep 
anymore. Do not know where to begin – last night just as had finished packing & sent abigail 
away to iron gown for travelling, heard C finally coming home & telling his man to help him 
change quickly as he needed to leave again. In the heat of the moment decided to follow him to
find out what he was up to so changed into the clothes the PG had given me and went after him. Regretted stupid idea almost as soon as I left house but could not give up then – only hope nobody saw me – so in much too tight waistcoat followed C into very dingy looking neighbourhood where he disappeared into some sort of public house.

Inside were dozens of shabbily dressed men with beards just like C; one of them was reading Byron in a booming voice & they all drank something which I later found out was absinthe, I think it is called. Did not want to be noticed so slipped into a seat in a corner & almost immediately was given a glass of absinthe (NB. Never accept offer of absinthe again, very vile!!) Then C stood up & began reciting long & very bad poem about a lonely swan that tries to kill itself & they all applauded wildly & congratulated him & gave him more absinthe.

Then the PG found me & things became a bit uncomfortable esp. because as he tried to drag me out of the place, some soldiers arrived to raid it. (Come to think of it, never asked him why he was there in the first place.)

Did not even have time to tell the PG he had no right to tell me where to go & where not because we had to run so fast through very shabby alleyways that all looked the same. Soldiers were still on our heels and already arresting 2 of the bearded gentlemen who had run with us & suddenly door opened and the PG pulled me into a house. Did not immediately realise what it was but the lady calling herself Madame Suzette very friendly & offered us tea and scones. Staid there for over an hour until the air was clear and was awfully lectured by the PG as if it was my fault that C kept visiting a poems’ den that was raided. Tried to ask the PG why exactly it was raided but he only blushed & would not say so Madame Suzette told me. Did not believe her at first but the PG blushed even more so realised she had to be right. Could assure them thought that none of that had been going on in the poets’ den at least while I was there. Suppose it would have made the meeting less tedious if there had.

Do not think Am quite sure that Do wonder why

Can say have learnt some quite new so-called facts of life last night.

The PG walked me home shortly before dawn scolding me until I told him to tell me what right he had to interfere with my life.

Did not expect that answer either. Maybe should not have reciprocated but it did seem like a good idea at the time & the alleyway was very dark so nobody saw.

Luckily when I got home, C already fast asleep so soldiers did not catch him either.

Can only hope uncle Tiberius never finds out or he will send me to a convent.

Chapter End Notes

Both the absinthe and the bohemian poets' den are terribly anachronistic, for which I heartily apologise, but they just needed to be written into this.
March 26th:

In Somerset.

I do wonder whether I should send a note to Mme Suzette thanking her for her hospitality but do not have her address. Maybe should write to the PG and ask him for it.

Am settling in here very well; Sir Walter and Miss Elliot very charming and the younger Miss E friendly but taciturn. L also quite her usual self on the journey here; was like the old days even though kept getting distracted from lack of sleep during our conversation. Also did not have the heart to tell her was not really thinking about marrying D any more; she was so busy making plans for my trousseau.

March 29th:

Either am slowly losing my mind, or I have had conversation about Gowland’s Lotions before. Felt a strong sense of – not déjà vu, rather, déjà écouté, I suppose (really making progress with the French lessons) – when conversing with Sir W today. L and smug Miss E mostly talking about people I do not know, esp. a certain Mr E & H his usual disgusting self. Talked to Miss Anne today – shocked to find she had never even heard of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia*. Luckily had all the volumes with me as wanted to read passages dealing with the Merciless Pirate once again.

Also began to wonder if maybe loss of delicates in H’s presence connected to what Mme Suzette told me about certain turns in male behaviour. The PG might know but could not ask him that.

April 2nd:

For no reason at all suddenly remembered that G had told me April 1st was her cousin’s birthday. Wondered whether he spent it with Mme Suzette who appeared to be such a particular friend of his but then recalled that he had told me he was going to Kent with D. Probably not the best of birthdays if he was spending it with the old bat – though perhaps he likes her, I would not know. Not as if I were interested in his family life either.

Do wonder though how he knows Mme Suzette. Seemed to be woman of very gentle upbringing although well versed in the ways of the world, as they called it.

April 3rd:

Mme Suzette probably much better at speaking French than self, her being French and all. Wonder if the PG speaks French.

Conversation with Sir W and smug Miss E very repetitive but Miss A very agreeable, although she said she found *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* a trifle far-fetched and rather fanciful. Then however asked me for second volume with which I happily obliged her & she was not seen for the rest of the day.

Had choice between boring conversation & vocabulary list so practised French until I recalled shall never be as good as native speaker so why bother at all. But then took walk and got rid of silly ideas. Wonder if Miss A has already finished book & if I can disturb her so late. Miss talking with G about all those little matters like we always do. Probably should write her letter.
April 5th:

Housekeeper here makes the most delicious pies. Do not know where she gets all the necessary items for them but then do not really care. Am especially fond of apple pie with sort of nuts mixed with the apples.

Was talking to A today about my friends in town and mentioned dear G & the PG & she asked me what PG stood for. Could not remember. Must be some sort of nickname I suppose – but what does it mean? Do not recall anyone else using it so probably coined it myself but why?

A said perhaps it was his initials but do not think it was.

Pesky Gentleman?
Pert Gentleman?
Pretty Good – but at what?
Patronising German (no accent)

April 6th:

Come to think of it, what is his real first name?

Must stop obsessing about the following:

1. First names of various random males of my acquaintance (e.g. H, the PG) (though probably people who kiss one in an alleyway cannot possibly be considered random anymore.)
2. Whether the poor Athalia will survive and be reunited with her true love (A says she will as that sort of fiction always kind to heroines in the end)
3. Qualities foreign proprietors of locales of dubious reputation are likely to have and whether true gentlemen appreciate said qualities
4. possibility of alleyway incident being repeated
5. what exactly makes a lady thoroughly compromised

Shall take a walk now and enjoy beautiful weather.

April 8th:

My eyes! My eyes! Cannot. The mind. Refuses to comprehend. Cannot put it in words.

April 9th:

Still cannot quite process what I saw yesterday. Thought the one time I surprised Louisa and her husband was bad but this is just a completely different level. What was Louisa thinking? And what was she wearing?

April 10th:

He is a baronet though. Maybe things are done differently in those circles.

Tried to talk to A today about what we saw but we realised early on it would be better if we never mention it again. Still cannot look Louisa in the eyes.

Instead we discussed the third volume of *The Woes Of The Chaste Orphan Athalia*, which A just finished. A thinks Athalia’s father probably the instigator of the secret meeting in the cave but do not know if she can be right because clearly the note was in the hand of the abbess.

Made hints to abigail but thankfully none of the servants seem to be aware of Louisa’s incident.
Hope it remains that way.

April 11th:

A really is the only one who makes this place tolerable at all. I so miss London. Had a long letter from G today; she is not doing much it seems with her brother and the PG off to Kent but she told me about plans she has for new frock & related news of exhibitions we can visit when I am back in London. Tried to convince A to come to London with me but she says the city is not for her & anyway I cannot really leave without L.

Smug Miss E made remarks about women who do not care about appearances & let themselves go & gave me pointed look. Do not know why I should bother about appearances if it is only her & her father who would notice. Looked back pointedly & helped self to another slice of pie.

April 12th:

I do not know how Anne can tolerate being in this place, with these people, all the time. She says it is her home & her sister is living not far away & her aunt just across the park but still cannot fathom it. Asked her if she never wished to live elsewhere & she said she had at one time but then nothing had come out of it. Wondered what she was talking of but since she is v. private person did not feel like asking. She said she had lived in Bath for a time & hated it & cannot fault her there.

Wonder what Kent is like, as a place to live, I mean. Wonder if the PG plans to settle there for a longer time. Surely the bat would like to have him around having only that boring daughter. Probably wants the PG to marry the daughter; is not as if she can find anyone else to take her off her hands.

Suppose if the PG settled in Kent G and I would not really see him in London any more. Would not miss all his irritating comments but then who would take me to see Parliament and fix locks on my trunks?

April 13th:

Come to think of it, I think G mentioned once that the bat wants D to marry the daughter. That is probably why they are in Kent right now. D probably has proposed already.

Really thought I would be crushed at such a thought but feel only slightly sorry for D and think could have made him better wife than her. Must have gone completely emotionless. Or maybe it is old age settling in.

Had word with abigail about Louisa’s incident. Told her what exactly I observed then gave her a guinea & made her swear on the Bible never to mention it to anyone else. Abigail then explained some of the minor details that had been wondering about. Conversation most illuminating but am still blushing.

April 15th:

Had long letter from G again but no mention of either of her guardians being engaged to sickly cousin. Surely she would be first to know. Wrote back immediately but did not know how to broach subject of possible engagements so did not mention it.

Rather worried though that did not receive letter from Charles even though wrote to him when I arrived here. Wonder if I could ask G to keep an eye on him? Would not be proper though & she probably would be shocked if she saw him as he looks now.
Asked butler if he was quite sure no letter had come for me & he went & returned with curl of hair that seems to be Sir Walter’s.

What am I supposed to do with it?

April 16th:

Also should probably write to Jane. Think I have neglected writing that letter for too long. Wonder though where she is; would not want to send letter to wrong address and for her to pay too much postage.

Smug Miss E made remarks about how eating without restraint is vulgar. Clearly the woman has never tried her housekeeper’s buttered scones.

Could not sleep last night & instead read passage again where Athalia finds her mother’s necklace & could not help but think that colour of the stones significant. A agrees that them being sapphires possible clue but says she cannot fathom for what.

April 17th:

Really meant to write to Jane yesterday but then sun came out and A asked me to take a walk with her. Got talking about Charles & I told her how I was worried about him & mysterious behaviour (did not mention incident in the alleyway when walking home from Mme Suzette’s établissement though). A agreed it was not normal & probably not healthy and asked me was Charles normally a reader of poetry? I said not & A suggested Charles perhaps pining for a woman.

L still behaving very uncharacteristic. Tried to address issue of her behaviour with Sir W the other day but L not inclined to talk & did not know how best to describe certain things I saw.

Wonder why I have to worry so much about both my siblings when I am the youngest although am also it appears the sanest, unfortunately.

A thinks Count Haubenstein may know more about Athalia’s parentage. Says there was such a long description of how the Count observed Athalia it must signify something.

April 18th:

The Nameless One now is taking Gowland’s lotion per the advice of Sir W and has broken out in terrible rash. Could not stomach looking at him esp. because housekeeper serves really delightful muffins for breakfast.

Talked with abigail & she promised me still no talk of Louisa’s incident among the servants. At least one thing that is not going wrong. Really do not know why I have to look after them all.


April 19th:

Oh I really hope it is not G he is pining for. That would make everything really uncomfortable. She is like a sister to me & I know I really hoped for it at one time but she is so very young still & I do not think he would want to wait for years.

I am sure the PG would not like it one bit either.

April 20th:
On second thoughts, did Charles even see G lately? I think the last time they met was at Christmas.

No, was time when G & the PG came for dinner & C turned up late & inebriated (sounds better than drunk) & recited poem to us. Cannot recall if he paid any special attention to G at the time.

Surely the PG would never allow G to marry him after this display & also do not think G interested at all.

Wonder what the PG would think about smug Miss E. Hope he does not agree with her comments that cupcakes are a vulgar, upstart food for vulgar upstarts. Do not think he does though because he ate them as well. Wonder if smug Miss E ever takes pleasure in anything apart from Gowland’s.

April 21st:

Surely it cannot still be Jane. He last saw her in November & I never even told him she was in town & asked after him. D & I were agreed it was better this way.

April 22nd:

It probably is Jane & that means I destroyed all his hopes. Feel abysmal now. Not sure if Jane would have accepted him but maybe it would have been kinder to let him try & be rejected finally than to hope forever when I know it could never be.

Mentioned the matter to A without naming names & she said maybe it was kinder to let him keep some hope & final rejection might have made matter worse but also asked me why did hypothetical friend in question meddle in C’s life in the first place & why was it necessary to keep him from her? A then said some very pointed things about people who interfere in other people’s lives & really did not dare tell her I was the hypothetical friend in question. Wonder if she saw through it.

Feel horrible.

April 23rd:

Still feel horrible but cannot dwell on it much because L asked me could I spare ten guineas. Asked her what she needed it for & she claimed needed to send for medicines for H’s indigestion but if it is that why does she not simply tell apothecary to send bill? Also asked why she had no money with her & she said she had forgotten money bag in London.

L has no money bag but neat purse and I know that because I gave it to her.

Only hope she is not being blackmailed because of what happened with Sir W. I wonder if H knows.

April 24th:

Maybe should write to Jane & let her know I made a mistake? Only do not know whether she really was interested in C at all. D says she was not but then D also never realised I wanted to marry him. (Thankfully.)

Cannot believe used the past tense just now. When did sentiments change so abruptly?

Felt so bad could hardly appreciate muffins this morning but that could also have been H’s rash.
April 25th:

Really feel should go back to town just so can see C again and find out how he is doing & maybe talk about whole matter with D. Also do not know how many more guineas I can lend L because I did not bring much & need to keep some coins to tip servants.

Discrete enquiries discovered L did not try to borrow anything from the servants which is a relief at least.

Wonder if H is still conducting whatever illegal business it is he is conducting & if he made L ask me for money.
April 27th:

Had barely time to say goodbyes to A yesterday morning before I was whisked into carriage and driven back to London.

No idea at all what was going on & abigail could not say either. Very strange. Promised A to write & to send copy of the next volume of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* as soon as it was out since booksellers in Somerset always v. slow, A says.

Do hope L did not get in any more trouble or Sir W caught H at whatever dark dealings it is he has.

On second thoughts not sure if Sir W would disapprove of dark dealings. He & smug Miss E probably have dark dealings themselves.

Cannot say will miss either Sir W or smug Miss E but feel sorry for A all alone in the country with them.

April 29th:

Saw G again today & had so much to tell her. Obv. could not tell her about alleyway incident or L’s incident or the whole dilemma with C but spent a good deal of the morning abusing smug Miss E and Sir W. Asked G to help me find music to send A. Did not see D which is probably all for the better since did not know how best to mention whole matter of possible mistake we made. Did not see the PG either but after discrete enquiries with G found out neither D nor the PG in any way engaged to marry the bat’s sickly daughter.

Most refreshing to be back in C’s house with no fear of running into L doing questionable things. Really wonder what is going on with her & what happened to the dress she borrowed from me. Also have not yet got any money back from her even though she promised.

May 2nd:

Saw C briefly last night & have to say he is not looking too well. Beard is reaching grotesque proportions now & his clothes completely ink-stained & reeking of absinthe (foul beverage!). But at least housekeeper assures me he is eating enough which must count for something.

G & D called on me today. Spent some time chatting about visits to Kent & Somerset respectively. D looking somewhat under the weather though cannot say why precisely. Probably the bat got to him. D then sent G away on some mission to ask housekeeper for some recipe (though do not know why since I could just as easily have rung for housekeeper) & asked me had I heard from Miss Bennet lately. Was confused briefly then realised he was talking about Jane. Told him had not spoken to Jane since visited her some time after Christmas & why was he asking. He said just wondering since Jane must be back in Hertfordshire now but he looked somehow uneasy. Wondered if he too had been thinking about C & said I thought we had made mistake in keeping them apart. D sighed heavily and said we had indeed. Asked him how he knew but he would not say & then G came back & could not ask him further.

Wonder why the PG did not join them but maybe he is back with his regiment or just was not interested in seeing me.

May 3rd:
Seems most callous though not to call on a lady after an incident such as the one in the alleyway. Unless he was too embarrassed to call.

May 5th:

Why would he be embarrassed though? Is not as if anyone saw us and even if they did, nobody would know it was me, seeing as I was wearing the PG’s clothes.

Come to think of it, had anyone seen us we would have been arrested on account of whole clothing confusion, so pretty sure nobody saw us.

He probably just is very busy.

May 7th:

Saw D today when he called on C. Was with C for such a long time I was getting worried but then D came back downstairs & told me all was well with C. D then asked had I heard anything about new volume of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* because he was in dire need of a distraction. Unfortunately bookseller told me only yesterday there was little hope of it coming out this month. Such a shame because I could do with a distraction as well. Meant to ask D about the PG but then C came down too and actually had shaved & cut his hair.

Such a relief.

May 8th:

C’s valet proudly presented me with one of the curls they chopped off C’s head yesterday.

Do people think I am collecting them?

May 10th:

Woke up v. early & could not sleep anymore. Was far too early to call on anyone so decided to visit the library with abigail. Librarian most apologetic but did not know anything about new volume of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* either. Librarian says Sir Vincent most obviously married to the Abbess & that was why Athalia found the ring in the dungeons. Suggested I begin *The Mysteries of Udolpho* but somehow was not in the mood to begin another horror novel. Ended up with an enormous volume of *Biographies of England’s Greatest Sons* because have still not found out why Sir Isaac Newton is famous. Librarian assured me was very inspiring reading.

May 11th:

First chapter in the book deals with Anglo-Saxon kings. Am not sure I shall ever be able to tell them all apart seeing as their names are all so very similar. Have to wonder that the book only deals with the sons of England. Surely England must also have great daughters?

Went to go shopping with G. Did not really want to spend so much money on fabric esp. since L has still not paid me back but abigail pointed out that do not really have anything to wear in warmer weather. Asked abigail what had happened to last year’s frocks. Abigail blushed a lot & told me they would probably not fit me anymore. Poor thing v. embarrassed; probably shrank them in the laundry. Did not say anything then because I recalled last season’s frocks had been mostly orange & would not want to wear them anymore anyway. Come to think of it, have never asked G if her brother’s favourite colour actually is orange or if she was just making fun of me. Considering what I now know of D’s preferences, probably the latter.
Cannot believe how blind I was.

May 12th:

Asked bookseller if there was a book about England’s greatest daughters & he said he had never heard of such a thing. Promised he would inform me should he come across one but also said that apart from Queen Elizabeth there could not be very many women deserving that epithet.

Think he must be wrong but could not think of any good examples just then.

May 13th:

Surely there must have been some great women in English history. Wish I could ask the PG seeing as he always knows these things but I have no idea where he is.

Called on G today to discuss ideas for new frocks & told her about bookseller’s argument. D was in the same room reading some journal or other & when G asked him who was the greatest woman in English history he said without a doubt Elizabeth but am not sure whether he even fully listened. G suggested Queen Anne which would make at least two women which would be a start.

G has no idea where the PG is or at least would not say so. When her brother left the room she told me in confidence he & the PG had been quarrelling.

Wonder about what? Hope it was not about who gets to marry the bat’s daughter.

May 15th:

Second chapter in the book deals with William the Conqueror who I think should not really count, being more or less French. Seems unfair to have him in the book but no women.

Book mentioned Tower of London as being built by William so on a whim decided to drive there with abigail & have a look at it. Suppose it must have been quite impressive when there was nothing else around it & esp. when coming from the river. Driver told us legend connects ravens in the tower with British Kingdom but am not sure if he was maybe trying to fool us.

On the drive back for a moment thought I was seeing Jane & her plain sister walking down the road but before I had decided whether it was them & whether I should greet them they had already disappeared.

Wonder if Jane has been in London all this time. Probably should have written to her or called on her but would not know what to say now that I do not know whether D & I destroyed her future.

Saw interesting article in the newspaper today about proposed changes to tax legislation & wondered if I could risk going to the Commons again to listen to the debate but did not dare do so without the PG.

May 16th:

There most be more great women in English history than just Queen Anne and Queen Elizabeth. Must find out more. Surely there must be at least ten.
May 17th:

_Greatest Women in English History:_

_Queen Elizabeth_

_Queen Anne_

Wonder if one would count Queen Anne Boleyn as great? Librarian tells me she was a witch & adulteress but then on the other hand she was the mother of Queen Elizabeth.

May 18th:

_Greatest Women in English History:_

_Queen Elizabeth_

_Queen Anne_

I suppose Katharine of Aragon would not count either, being Catholic & foreign. Really must find out more.

Have not seen L at all lately. Must confess am slightly worried about her in spite of her abysmal behaviour towards self & her incident. Wonder if I should tell anyone but then there is question of whom. Could tell D I suppose but then he already helped so much with C (of course he was as much at fault there as me) & also do not want to rely on him constantly.

Could definitely not tell the PG who keeps avoiding me anyway, not that I care.

May 21st:

_Greatest Women in English History:_

_Queen Elizabeth_

_Queen Anne_

_Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine_

Have decided Queen Eleanor counts in spite of being French because Aquitaine then became English territory. Biographical tome went on & on about her husband & her sons but must say think Eleanor most interesting of them all. Found book about the early Plantagenets in Uncle Algic’s library & there was quite a bit about Queen Eleanor & I think she is the greatest of the family. After all what did Richard the Lionheart and John Lackland ever achieve but losing lands & life?

Still have not heard from the PG but is not as if I cared about him. After all there were no promises exchanged & alleyway incident went completely unobserved so is not as if he were in any way obliged to me. Though I suppose a true gentleman would call on a lady after such an incident.

May 22nd:

_Greatest Women in English History:_
Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine

Maybe he does not think me a lady? Maybe he thought this is the sort of thing I do with lots of
gentlemen? Not that he is a gentleman obviously if he keeps avoiding me.

Called on G today & told her about lack of success in finding Great Women. G said she vaguely
recalled a Queen called Matilda but could not remember from when or where. Name rang a bell
for me as well but could not say where I had heard it. Think it must have been somewhere recent.
G promised she would ask her brother, who was out.

Think I left my reticule at G’s. Must send her a note tomorrow.

May 23rd:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda?

D is going to kill me. First volume of The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia was in my reticule
& from G’s note, it appears that it fell out when she picked it up & she began reading it. And I
specifically promised him I would not let her read it. Hope she does not mention it to him. Should
probably talk to her.

May 24th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda

G promised to keep mum about The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia if I lent her the other
ones once she had finished the first. Agreed because there was little else I could do.

G then gave me several sheets of writing paper from her brother; was an essay he had written at
Cambridge about Queen Matilda & additional notes from him on where to find out more. Must
say D most fastidious writer ever especially compared to things C wrote at Cambridge.

C much better these days. D takes him boxing or riding most mornings & the exercise seems to
agree with him.

May 25th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
D really has most interesting points in his essay. Must ask him if he has other essays on historical figures of interest. G says better not ask him or he will not stop talking about them.

G showed me how she was hiding *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* in hollowed-out covers of *The Lady's Guide to Genteel Behaviour*. Was most shocked both at practicality of idea (wish I had thought of something like that when living with uncle Tiberius) & because I would never have expected it of G. G said she could not take credit for this as it was idea of her cousin Anne. Very surprising. Always thought that girl was sickly & insipid.

May 27th:

*Greatest Women in English History:*

*Queen Elizabeth*
*Queen Anne*
*Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine*
*Queen Matilda*

G tells me D most happy at my request. Says she has not seen him so happy since before Easter & he will let me have essays as soon as he has made compilation of most suitable ones for my research. G warned me essays probably very clever & learned as her brother never does things by halves & always most dedicated in his learning.

G then wanted to talk about *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia*. Is absolutely convinced that Athalia cannot escape Lord Burkhead’s schemes in the end but I told her to read next book & promised Athalia would not die or be seduced.

G asked me if I thought that Count Haubenstein had any similarities to her cousin the P.G. Could not really say as I am not thinking about him any more. Did not want to ask G if he was in London.

May 29th:

*Greatest Women in English History:*

*Queen Elizabeth*
*Queen Anne*
*Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine*
*Queen Matilda*
*St Hilda of Whitby*

He has been thinking of me after all! (Not that I care about that one way or another, obviously.) G showed me letter today in which he said he missed London, most of all the friends with whom he could visit Parliament & dreary locales to drink absinthe (vile stuff!). G says distance must make him romanticise things because he never visits Parliament. Close of the letter said that he gave his warmest regards to Miss Bingley & her family. G says he is somewhere in the country but she has no idea where or why.

D gave me interesting essay about sainthood & learning in early medieval England which made mention of St Hilda of Whitby & said he would try to find all he had researched about her.

Is v. refreshing to see woman who has become Great Woman not just because of whose wife or daughter she was but because of her own merits & wisdom. (Suppose Queen Elizabeth must also fall under that category because while she was the daughter of a king she had enough greatness of her own.)
May 31st:

_Greatest Women in English History:_

*Queen Elizabeth*
*Queen Anne*
*Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine*
*Queen Matilda*
*St Hilda of Whitby*

So he thinks of me as a friend. I wonder if he really means it that way?

Wanted to visit L today but she was not at home, at least to me.

Miss her so much. Would like to talk things through again with her as we used to do.

Went to visit G who can scarcely talk of anything else but *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* & is still convinced that Count Haubenstein is just like the PG. Could not talk about the matter with her because he is her cousin.

June 1st:

_Greatest Women in English History:_

*Queen Elizabeth*
*Queen Anne*
*Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine*
*Queen Matilda*
*St Hilda of Whitby*
*Queen Catherine Parr*

Had long letter from A in which she said she always thought Queen Catherine Parr remarkably clever & shrewd woman at least until she fell in love. V. interesting information about Queen Catherine in her letter but wonder what the morale of that tale is.

June 2nd:

_Greatest Women in English History:_

*Queen Elizabeth*
*Queen Anne*
*Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine*
*Queen Matilda*
*St Hilda of Whitby*
*Queen Catherine Parr*
*Queen Elizabeth Wydeville*
*Queen Elizabeth of York*

D sent essay a friend of his wrote about Elizabeth Wydeville & her daughters. V. strong women I am sure but in the end all that mattered was who married whom. Rather depressing idea.

Obviously one would want to get married but surely one would prefer to be married for oneself & not for some crown or alliance.

June 4th:
Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
St Hilda of Whitby
Queen Catherine Parr
Queen Elizabeth Wydeville
Queen Elizabeth of York
Aphra Behn

Had tea with G. G still convinced that the count is just exactly like the PG. Thinks his silent & intimidating valet whom Athalia fears is based on D. Told her I thought she was too occupied with these matters but she only said not to worry & could I let her have volume III?

Close call on that because just as I got it out of my reticule, having anticipated her request, D himself came into the room. Managed to slip book under a cushion just in time. Felt slightly bad about deceiving him, esp. seeing as he had brought me essay a friend of his had written about espionage under Charles II, which made mention of Aphra Behn, *most interesting* character and most certainly nobody’s dependant. D said she also wrote novels & poetry & took interest in *issues* but he could not recommend reading her poetry as not at all suitable for unmarried ladies as he put it. (sounds fascinating!)

Wonder why D is always so censorious, just like Robberbothom the valet.

Oh no. What is G doing to me?

June 6th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
St Hilda of Whitby
Queen Catherine Parr
Queen Elizabeth Wydeville
Queen Elizabeth of York
Aphra Behn

L was here while I was out & did not even leave a message. Housekeeper says she only staid for a v. short time & only to look for something in the attic. V. odd. L never enters the attic because of the spiders. Did not bring my money either. Shall have to send her note asking for it. Really do not want to ask uncle Tiberius for advance on allowance, he always gets so preachy.

June 8th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Saw C today at breakfast. Used this rare incident to ask him if he knew if uncle Algie had poetry of Aphra Behn in his library. C did not know & said he had to go see a man about a dog or some such thing. Will have to resume search.

June 9th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
St Hilda of Whitby
Queen Catherine Parr
Queen Elizabeth Wydeville
Queen Elizabeth of York
Aphra Behn

G says the passage where Sir Vincent makes fun of Count Haubenstein because the count refuses to marry the immensely rich Madame Valentine (who was of course really Lord Paddenstool in disguise, but neither Athalia nor Sir Vincent knew at the time) happened just like so with the PG & his father. Says the PG told the Earl that he was not going to marry a sheep-eyed girl with nothing but vapours in her head for all the riches of Mithridates because he could not possible respect her & pointed out that the Count uses the exact same words.

Most curious.

June 10th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
St Hilda of Whitby
Queen Catherine Parr
Queen Elizabeth Wydeville
Queen Elizabeth of York
Aphra Behn

Suppose that would change a couple of things, if he were looking for respect and equality in a marriage partner, but what if he thinks I’m having a head full of vapours? When he first met me I was still trying to marry D (horrid thought) & I must have been such an idiot what with the burning carpet & the rat poison & the orange dresses & the stupid feathers and …

Wait what am I saying here, this is not what I meant and …
Must take walk.
In Which Caroline Is In Town And Comes To A Shocking Realisation

June 12th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
St Hilda of Whitby
Queen Catherine Parr
Queen Elizabeth Wydeville
Queen Elizabeth of York
Aphra Behn

Am officially the greatest fool ever.

How could I have been so blind again?

Of course I love him & I don’t want him to be my friend but want to marry him & have wanted it ever since he took me to the Commons & I just didn’t realise & now it’s too late because he’s gone & won’t come back & I don’t even want to eat scones anymore & of course he’s like Count Haubenstein because he probably wrote that book & that is why he knows what’s going to happen & what on earth am I supposed to do now.

June 13th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
St Hilda of Whitby
Queen Catherine Parr
Queen Elizabeth Wydeville
Queen Elizabeth of York
Aphra Behn

Gravity. That is what Newton is famous for & I suppose everyone but me learnt that when they were a child.

June 14th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
St Hilda of Whitby
Queen Catherine Parr
Very curious incident today. Had a package delivered which apparently had been sent somewhere else first & was re-directed. Did not go through the postal services because I did not have to pay for it so who knows how it reached me. Was from a book-dealer in Bath & contained a volume on the Romans in Britain.

Must have been L who had it sent probably to make up for not giving me my money back but why did she not just send the money & why did she order in Bath?

Still no word from him but then why should I hear from him? Is not as if he could write to me & he is still out of town. Not that I would hear from him if he were in town, probably. Is not as if he were in any way beholden to me. Or I to him, come to think of it, which I suppose must count for something.

June 15th:

Greatest Women in English History:

Queen Elizabeth
Queen Anne
Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine
Queen Matilda
St Hilda of Whitby
Queen Catherine Parr
Queen Elizabeth Wydeville
Queen Elizabeth of York
Aphra Behn
Queen Boadicea

Book cannot have been sent by L. Found note slipped between the pages of a chapter dealing with a Celtish queen called Boadicea (it appears she is the tenth Great Woman) which said, You will always be quite your own woman to me and forever my heart’s Boadicea. Paul.

Bookseller probably made mistake. Wonder if I should send book back? Seems to be v. interesting though & would like to finish it.

June 17th:

But it did have my name on it & address, if misspelled.

Would be nice to hear from him if only to know where he is & what he is doing. Wish I could ask someone. Or just talk to someone. If only L were behaving more like herself. Ended up writing to A & telling her of emotional turmoil. Is not the same as talking to her in person but then on the other hand will be spared her looks of pity when she finds out how stupid I was & how hopeless the whole thing is seeing as how he thinks of me only as a friend. Not that I can blame him for he must think I am horribly stupid, not even knowing about gravity & Newton not to mention that I almost burnt down Darcy’s house with rat poison.

June 18th:

Went to see G but did not dare mention the mysterious book so ended up talking about Newton. Am still rather fascinated by the whole concept of gravity. Wonder why it never occurred to me to
think about it.

G still going on about her cousin & Count Haubenstein. Almost told her that I thought *he* had written the books but then did not want to mention his name for fear of giving things away. Also wonder if he did write those books why did he not make Haubenstein the hero?

Also will thinking of him ever hurt any less?

June 20th:

If it was not L sending the book that means she’s still not paying me back & if I do not get my money soon I really shall have to beg uncle Tiberius for an advance & I *really* do not want to do that.

Last summer he threatened if there was one more bill for orange frocks he would send me to convent in France & I do not think he will be any nicer about bills from bookseller.

Still no word from *him*. Wonder if I shall ever gather the courage to ask G about him without telling her everything at once.

June 22nd:

There was another book in the mail today & this time it was definitely not from L. Was *Philosophiae Naturalis Principalis Mathematica*. Do not understand a single word (NB: really should learn Latin) but it is very beautiful. Note inside it said, *Bodies attract each other with a force inversely proportional to the distance between them, but I have been missing you a little more every day ever since I last saw you. Paul.*

Would be perfect if only I knew who Paul was.

June 23rd:

D has found out about G reading *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia*. Apparently, G fell asleep in her drawing-room with the open book in her hands & D found her.

Thought D would be enraged & G tells me she was also rather afraid he would be angry but D only told her to remember that it was just a novel & not true to real life. Came there later that day & D took me aside & thanked me for being such a good friend to G. Must say feel rather flattered that he thinks so esp. considering how mean I was to G last year although am not sure he noticed that then.

G & D invited C & me to Pemberley in August. Cannot believe am really going to see it although slightly mortifying to remember that I once wanted to become its mistress. Wonder if *he* is going to be there.

Also when we planned trip to Pemberley last summer before G fell ill L & her brainless husband were going to come with us but have to accept that she does not want to have anything to do with me any more. Still hurts though.

June 24th:

Slim volume of poetry by Christopher Marlowe arrived; was a sort of short epic poem called *Hero & Leander*. Note said, *Had I first seen you sacrificing turtle’s blood, I could not have been more enchanted by you. Paul.*

June 25th:
Will not deny that I have been fantasising that *he* is Paul, but one must be a realist. Odds do not seem very high to me for one to have the luck to be beloved by the man one loves and what are the chances that his name actually is Paul?

Had a long letter from A, much kinder than I deserve. Said she felt my pain & asked did I think it would hurt me more to know that I had had his love but had lost it, or to continue in an uncertainty where I could keep illusions. No idea what to answer esp. as I think A wants to hear something uplifting even if she does not say so, only do not know what she would like to hear.

June 26th:

Could of course ask G what her cousin’s first name is but what would I do if she said it was Richard, or John, or Hugo, or, Heaven forbid, Mortimer?

Not to mention that I would not know how to breach the subject without her knowing what I really want.

Wonder if Paul thinks I know who he is, or if he knows he is a mystery to me. Does he expect me to react? Has he been certain all the time that I would know who he was, only I don’t, and been waiting for a reply from me? Would not know how to reply to him even if I knew what to say but maybe there is something obvious that I am overlooking & he thinks I know & some way or other I could have contacted him. Only I would only want to do that if it was him & I have no way of knowing if he his him because I am just completely clueless.

Could also of course be that books were never meant for me in the first place but that bookseller in Bath made a mistake. After all there must be more than one woman in London who would rather have books than some stupid flowers that only make her sneeze & there never was my name on any of the notes, just on the package & who knows who wrote that.

June 27th:

If *he* really were coming to Pemberley & I saw him there I might see how he feels from the way he looks at me & also if he is Paul or not. Could also ask his valet what his first name is but most likely would only receive another curl of hair of mysterious origins so shall only do that if absolutely desperate.

But then do not even know for certain if he is going to be at Pemberley & what to do in the meantime about Paul & everything.

Courtship must be so much easier on men. At least they can decide when they want to take action & do not have to wait until something happens & then must make decisions based on insufficient number of facts that could decide about the rest of their lives.

June 28th:

Feel all sorts of restless & uninspired. If only there was something I could actually do but all scenarios I could think of involved telling G about my quandary or, even worse, D.

Felt horribly closed up in the house & ended up walking around with abigail not really having any idea where to go. Did not even feel in the mood for having a cupcake at Mrs Miggins’ which is all for the better since I must be economical until uncle Tiberius sees fit to send my allowance even though it was due on the 24th, L having still not paid me back. And she so promised I should have it long before Midsummer Day.

No wonder C took up poetry & absinthe after that whole disappointment with Jane. Almost feel
like taking to absinthe as well & I have not yet had my heart actually broken, not that it sometimes does not feel like it. Now that I know how he is feeling, at least a little, feel even worse about what we did to him.

June 29th:

It is not pretty any more, how much I miss him – why is someone at the door so late at night? Cannot be Charles having forgot his key again because he is at home. Maybe Paul has taken to visit in person because he got no reply – surely cannot be him, why would he call so late -
In Which Caroline Prepares To Leave London And Enter A Convent

June 30th:

Still cannot quite comprehend it.

Louisa & her husband in Marshalsea with abhorrent debts that were due this quarter day & when they could not pay their creditors had them arrested.

And worse!

Louisa having a gambling problem running a gambling den in our parents’ house. (D says she must be the worst and most hapless proprietor of an illegal gambling house ever because they normally make money & do not lose it!)

Still cannot believe it. My sister. Painted as if she were walking the streets, running an établissement. Selling half our parents’ heirlooms to her “guests” for money. Do not even want to think about what happened to missing items. Hope the ones that were returned where thoroughly laundered. Do not know whether to rush to her side & pity her or strangle her. How could she?

D says I should not be too angry with her & that sometimes esp. on weak minds gambling can work like alcohol.

Come to think of it wonder how D found out about the whole thing even before me & C but forgot to ask him last night when he came & told us because I was just too overwhelmed by what happened.

July 1st:

D & C spent all morning holed up with lawyers discussing “options.” Looks like it will be best solution to sell our parents’ house but lawyers not sure how that can be achieved because until I turn 21 part of it is held in trust for me & uncle Tiberius my only guardian after death of uncle Algie & he would never agree to sale. Asked C what about our father’s money that he left to him but apparently that is also in uncle Tiberius’ trust until I come of age, for whatever reason that may be. Also really hope uncle Tiberius never finds out about whole matter because if he does will probably make good on his threat to send me to a convent & will never let me see L or C or London or even England again.

Asked D was there anything I could do but he said there wasn’t. Could not stand the tension anymore so decided to visit G. D kept telling me how I must not tell her anything about L because the fewer people who know the better & he & C have been spreading the rumour that L & H have gone up to Scarboro’ to visit auntie Margaret & Mr Watson.

Ended up listening mostly to G talking about possibility that Captain van Swanck is really Sir Vincent’s brother & did I think that Lord Paddenstool had killed the real Madame Valentine? Thought I would not be able to get into the spirit of the discussion but was nice not to think about L in gaol for a change & think G has it all wrong but could not tell her because she is not yet at the passage where it is revealed that Lord Paddenstool’s twin brother Hans was really behind the blackmail of Sir Vincent & Lord Burkhead.

July 3rd:

Was finally able to see L. D arranged everything & even had his aunt’s carriage deliver me so if
someone saw me I would be above reproof with an Earl’s coat of arms on it. Marshalsea rather horrible altogether. L very dejected & so miserable could hardly be angry with her anymore. Tried to abuse H but L said everything her fault & H only trying to protect her & did not steal my unmentionables. L says whole purpose of trip to Somerset was to get back money Sir W had lost to her this spring but smug Sir W refusing to pay & then was blackmailing L first with illegal gambling den & then with L’s incident which was only an attempt to get money back. L says smug Sir W’s debts substantial enough that house may be saved but she has no idea how to get the money because there is not enough written proof & gambling den was illegal so magistrate must never find out.

Said I could write to A & explain everything but L said A does not know about the debt or the blackmail & smug Sir W would never listen to her anyway.

Only good thing is that I was not deceived in A’s character but now feel dreadful for her because if L ever gets back her money it will probably come out of A’s dowry & also seems to me that A would want to know what her family is up to but am not sure if I should be the one to tell her.

L kept apologising for everything she had done to me & was most pitiable, crying & everything. Did not quite know what to say other than that all was forgiven & would visit again soon.

July 5th:

C & I quite determined we will not accept D’s very generous offer. Realise he only means well but absolutely cannot have him pay L’s debts esp. seeing as have no hope of paying him back for at least 18 months if not more.

C suggested looking into H’s fortunes but apparently the bulk of it went into renovating the house & the rest is all but spent by L. No relatives there either who could help out.

C wanted to sell his house but apparently uncle Algie left it to C in trust for his sons. Always knew the man had a mean streak.

Felt so helpless because my dowry or my share of the house might just be enough to help L but am just not able to touch it unless I tell uncle Tiberius all & everybody is agreed that is not an option.

Went to see L at Marshalsea to give her bad news. L rather dejected but at least has made friends there. Not sure what I think of Mrs Younge but Threepenny-Moll seems friendly enough.

July 7th:

C went to see Mr H while I was with L. Would have liked to hear what H had to say for himself because am not yet convinced was not his fault after all. C said he would not have me visit the men’s rooms. Suppose he is probably right. Was reminded though of how he got me smuggled into Parliament just because I wanted to see it.

Must say though is remarkable effect the crisis is having on C. He is almost his old self again. Hope he is really feeling better & not just pretending for us. Is rather heartening to see him take action instead of just moping.

July 8th:

C&D were having yet another meeting with the lawyers & then came to tell me. Seems that while they have no proof that smug Sir W owes L all the money, there are some letters of such a nature (D refused to go into details) that they think Mr H might be able to obtain a divorce with them. C now on his way to Marshalsea to ask H about his intentions.
Poor L. I always said I would support her in case of a separation but is quite another thing to be divorced while in prison for something that is not even true.

July 8th, later:

C returned from the visit to H with the rather surprising news that H flatly denied any desire to be divorced even when C assured him we would not fight him in order to minimise the scandal. C said he sounded almost injured at the suggestion of it. Never would have thought him capable of such loyalty but must say it rather cheered me up.

To think that I tried to poison him at Christmas - what was I thinking? Suppose I had succeeded then I would be in prison now & no chance of me ever leaving it other than on the gallows. How stupid was I? And he actually loves L so that was … really do not know what I was thinking then. If I even was thinking then. Seems to me I was really thoughtless back then. Good thing I have become wiser now. A very little at least. Even if still not wise enough to actually find a solution to any of our problems. At least have not tried to murder anyone lately. That must count as progress.

D sat with me for most of the time while I was waiting for C to return. Told him I felt I had grown so old & exhausted over the last weeks. (Without mentioning refraining from murder; feel that would not come over well. Can never tell anyone about that.) D just laughed & told me to wait until I was his age & then we would talk. Suppose he is right but why must he make me feel like a child? He never did that even though I think he is even older than D.

July 10th:

L very dejected today because Mrs Younge has left; do not know the details but somehow Mrs Younge came into enough money to return to her boarding-house in Southwark. Must be criminal dealings probably but then it feels like all of L’s new friends have them. Told D about this but all he was interested in was Mrs Younge’s address in Southwark. Advised him not to stay there because if her clothes and fingernails are anything to go by, Mrs Younge does not believe in washing things. Ever.

Wish a friend with criminal dealings would pay for L & H to be released but it seems we are the only family in the world who does not have those.

July 12th:

Lawyers still unable to come up with any workable solution. If they have not made progress by the end of the month, I am resolved to write to uncle Tiberius and beg for my money even if it means cloisters for me until I am twenty-one. If they allow one to leave. Not sure. Should probably find out about that before I take the veil.

July 14th:

Still no word from the lawyers. I guess that means that now I will never see Pemberley. Wonder what sort of clothes one needs in a convent.

July 15th:

And I will probably never see him again either. Would have liked to say goodbye at least & tell him how much his company meant to me & especially that he always listened to what I had to say & took me out to see things.

Introduced the matter of convents into conversation with G & she said she read in a book once they shear off your hair when you enter. Suppose that once everything is covered by a wimple it
does not really matter but cannot say I am looking forward to it.

Was very downcast for the rest of the day but could not tell G why so instead claimed a headache and went home.

I will miss him so much.

July 17th:

Went to see G & she was all excited to show me a list she had made of all people who could know about her cousin’s discussion with his father & therefore would be able to write the scene in *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia*.

First person on the list was ‘Cousin Paul.’

Thought I should die.

Was not able to contribute much to the conversation but nod encouragingly at G’s theories that one of the twelve people on her list must be the author. G should realise that she can probably exclude herself because she would know if she had written it & her brother, because he would never write a novel.

Went home with head still all dizzy but that might also have been the heat.

Abigail says she will have to take in the waists again on the gowns I just ordered. Had not the heart to tell her it will hardly matter since in a convent they make you wear large black bags like my mourning gown and then shear off your hair and cover your head with a monstrous wimple. Tried to make myself eat muffins but almost choked on them.

What am I going to do now?

July 19th:

Stayed home all day yesterday & locked myself into my room to think about things.

So his name is Paul. That does not mean he is the Paul who sent me those books. And even if he were I never answered so whoever Paul is probably has given up now because I have not had a book sent ever since L went to prison. Or maybe he found out that L is in prison (from D probably, old tattle-tale!) & now does not want anything to do with me anymore. Surely he would have contacted me before if he wanted to see me again.

Just feel as if I knew nothing anymore. How can I know if he is Paul? (Apart from that obviously that is his name.) What am I supposed to do?

How do people know what they are supposed to do in situations? Who tells them?

Every thing just turns in my head. How I miss him. How I need to help L. How I do not want to lose L. Or him. How I wish that there was anything I could do for myself instead of waiting until others have decided. Is this what it means to be grown up?

July 20th:

Still nothing new from the lawyers. L holding up as well as can be expected. Am beginning to draft letter to uncle Tiberius. At least that is something I can decide for myself. Is my money & my life & I should get some say in it even if it means he will send me to a convent. In that case at least I decided that I would risk that & did not let someone else decide. May not be much but at least
when I’m locked behind those gates I will know that I chose it.

July 22nd:

Still nothing new. Is good thing at least I learnt French this year because is probably what they speak in French convents.

Was at G’s again. She has narrowed list down to five persons, not sure how, but it seems to keep her occupied which seems all for the best because D out all day doing things for us (not sure how we shall ever thank him) & not able to spend much time with her.

July 23rd:

Have finished letter to uncle Tiberius. Only need to send it. Feel strangely calm and relieved now that is done. Is good to be in charge of one’s life.

July 24th:

Too stunned to write much. Really too stunned for anything.

Just.

Cannot write.

What did I do? *What did I do?*


So I kissed him. It’s nothing more than what he did to me in the alleyway. Entirely within my right to do that if he did it. And I fled the room right after doing this so there were no embarrassing confessions. My saying I had missed him terribly right before the incident does not count. He probably thought it was nothing more than a gesture of friendship. He has probably left the house already. Another hour or so and I am sure I can leave the attic again with no one being any wiser.

We can all live with that.

Except I do not think the Mother Superior would approve. But she will never know because I will never tell a soul & I do not think he will either & in any case, when would he ever meet the Mother Superior & does he even speak French?

Have to say it was rather nice though. No must not think about that. Is no good dwelling on that because incident will never be repeated. Never never never.

July 24th, later:

So I was wrong about the incident not going to be repeated. Have been wrong about a lot of things lately it seems.

Rather sweet to think it is Paul *George* though. How quaint I should know all along that he was PG. Whatever that stood for. Now he is my PG and that is all that matters.

July 24th, even later:

No.

Just remembered that PG stood for *Peculiar Guardian*. 
Certainly do not want him to be my Guardian. Who would want their husband to be that? Sounds incestuous & creepy & wrong.

Will just have to call him Paul.

Mrs Paul Fitzwilliam
Mrs Paul George Fitzwilliam
Paul & Caroline Fitzwilliam

Definitely has a nice ring to it.

Wonder what he is doing now? Told me he would think of me all night but probably is sleeping now because that is what people do at this time of night.

July 24th, still later. Rather 25th I suppose:

Now that I think of it, Paul never told me what he wanted to tell me about L. He said something about wanting to discuss something & then the whole incident occurred & then I fled the room & hid up in the attic & then he found me & more incidents occurred & we discussed other things like getting married & then we never came back to the original matter. Only hope it is not bad news. What if he came with bad news from lawyers?

Surely cannot join a convent now. They probably have rules against that & not even all of uncle Tiberius’ influence ---

OH NO.

UNCLE TIBERIUS WILL NEVER LET ME MARRY HIM.

How can I tell Paul???

Will never be able to tell him but suppose he will find out one day. At the latest the day when I cannot go to church and marry him. Suppose had better talk to him tomorrow. Today that is.

July 25th, just after dawn:

Is rather sweet though to think that Paul thought I wanted to marry Darcy! Well I guess I did at one point but not for a long time now & he never realised it was him all along. Tells me that is why he never came back to London after the alleyway incident. Told him I am still a little angry with him but then he blames himself because if only he had come instead of staying away & sending beautiful presents we might have settled things months ago.

Is only a very few more hours until I see him again. Suppose it would not achieve much to go to sleep now even if I could. Miss him again already but does not hurt now that I know I will see him again & he loves me & we will get married. Eventually. When uncle Tiberius agrees or when I am old. Whichever happens first.
In Which Caroline Finally Goes To Pemberley And Gets Rather Anxious

July 25th:

Could not see Paul for very long today but that was worth it because he & D have saved Louisa! Was that which he came to tell me yesterday in spite of wanting to stay away from me, that they had finally found a possibility. Turns out that Paul has a great-aunt who knew smug Sir Walter’s mother & I am not sure how but she found out about our problems & wrote Sir W a letter & the end of it is that he is going to pay the money & L & H are going to be released soon.

Paul would not tell me what she wrote, said he had to promise, but am sure great-aunt knows about dark dealings of smug Sir W somehow & they blackmailed him. Cannot wait to meet great-aunt. Sounds fabulous woman.

Cannot marvel enough at the fact that Paul did all this for me without having any hope. Am marrying the best of men.

Shame that will only happen when I am old.

July 26th:

L & H to be released tomorrow or the day after, as soon as everything has been settled & all the papers drawn up or whatever is necessary.

Saw L this morning to tell her the good news in person & she was over-joyed. Also told her about engagement at which she had to confess she was not sure she ever even met Paul. Really odd thought. Always thought if I got married it would only be to someone of whom L approved like D. Cannot say however that if L disapproved it would sway my decision one bit.

Paul came for dinner with C & me because we had hardly seen each other all day & because he wanted to ask C for my hand. C readily agreed to it & for a moment everyone was happy until C reminded us that his blessing did not count for anything because Paul had to ask uncle Tiberius.

Had to explain to Paul then about uncle Tiberius but he claimed he was undaunted by the challenge. Poor man does not know what he is getting into. Said he would see us to Pemberley when we leave & then continue on north to approach uncle Tiberius in person.

Cannot believe almost forgot about trip to Pemberley. Must make sure have everything ready. Abigail said she wanted to alter some gowns & am not sure have everything I need. On the other hand have not really any sort of money to make purchases & clearly cannot ask uncle Tiberius now on top of everything. Shall have to improvise.

July 28th:

Louisa is home! Very tearful reunion with her & Hurst. Hurst & Charles agreed that they should stay with us for the time being & probably will close the other house up until their debts are fully paid. L very enthusiastic about living together again but had to remind her that if all goes well, will not live here for much longer. Both of us a little dejected at the idea but then of course will be able to see her all the time when I am married. Whenever that may be.

July 29th:

D&G called to welcome L&H home & to congratulate on my engagement. D very warm & sincere in his wishes and G most exuberant. Had to remind her nothing was official & was meant
to be secret until we have consent from uncle Tiberius which will probably happen shortly before my 40th birthday. Hope Paul will still love me when I am old & toothless. Said he will & pointed out he would probably lose his teeth before I did, but one never knows.

C & D & Paul have finalised travel arrangements & we are to leave on the 31st. Will spend two or three nights with Paul’s grandmother before continuing on to Pemberley & uncle Tiberius, respectively. L&H to come with us, to keep L from the temptations, as H put it. Never actually realised it was possible to have a conversation with the man.

July 30th:

Have finished packing. Abigail worked wonders & altered some old gowns of L for me & only expenses were for a little trim. Was worried it might be too much work since L so much bigger than me but abigail says no trouble at all.

Paul asked H about what to expect from uncle Tiberius but H said when he proposed to L uncle Algie still alive so he approached him instead & all he had to do was let him win at whist. C suggested Paul start with toasting the King over the Water but had nothing else useful to contribute.

Cannot say look forward to being locked into carriage for days but Paul will travel with me & G so at least will see him all day. D says he will ride instead of being cooped up for hours.

Only hope it will not be too hot!

August 1st:

Spending the night at the house of one of Paul’s cousins who is not there but ordered the staff to shower us with fresh fruit and cold meats. Must say is much nicer than spending the night in an inn like yesterday even though everything was clean & we brought our own sheets.

G kept wanting to talk about what the possible connection was between Sir Vincent & Madame Valentine & what the Mother Superior knows about it. Was interesting for the first two or three hours but then discussion began to run in circles & Paul threatened to not let her read the next volume until she is of age & she was quiet after that. Tried to find out if Paul really knows the author of The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia but he would not say a word & kept distracting me in most unfair ways.

Must say though is v. nice to travel with Paul sitting by my side. Makes up for most of the inconveniences. If only there was not the threat of uncle Tiberius & the convent looming at the end of the journey it would be thoroughly enjoyable.

August 3rd:

At Paul’s grandmother’s. Have met blackmailing great-aunt. Rather intimidating, truth be told, but hopefully seemed to like me. Wondered if maybe she knew something with which to blackmail uncle Tiberius but she said had never even heard of him. No wonder since he never leaves Lancashire I suppose. Shame though because things would be so much easier if only we could prove he once harboured the Young Pretender.

Get a big knot in my stomach whenever I think about uncle Tiberius & I am not even the one who has to meet him. Paul tells me not to worry & that he will wait for me if we cannot marry but I just know it is going to be horrible. Do not want to wait & pretend we are nothing to each other but casual acquaintances for two years. What if they send him abroad & I cannot go with him?

August 4th:
D continued on to Pemberley this morning, said he needed to meet his steward. No idea if it was that or just getting away from the blackmailing great-aunt’s inquisitorial questions. I gather she is somehow related to the Bat which explains a lot of things. G wanted to go with him but the Dowager Countess absolutely insisted we had to stay for another night.

Was rather reluctant to leave as well because it would mean saying goodbye to Paul. Was glad to have another day with him & he proposed long walk in the grounds. Dowager Countess insisted L & H accompany us but Paul managed to get us lost & we ended up in secluded little grove by the brook. Cannot say have ever spent an afternoon in a more blissful fashion.

If uncle Tiberius refuses to consent will have to find blackmailing material on him in person. Must ask Lady Grace for advice on how to go about these things. Will offer to let her borrow all volumes of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia*; she seemed to be very interested in them when G mentioned them. Absolutely cannot wait two years to marry Paul.

August 5th:

Was woken before dawn by G who wanted to leave for Pemberley the minute the sun was up just so she could see D again. Pointed out that she had seen him not even a day ago but to no avail. Had to drag myself to the carriage still half asleep & only hope we did not forget anything. Could not even sleep properly in the carriage because G kept chattering about her blasted brother. Finally Paul gave her a very stern look & then I was able to doze on his shoulder for some thirty minutes.

Most surprised to find upon our arrival at Pemberley that D was in a state of equal unrest. Apparently Jane Bennet’s plain sister & some relatives were touring Pemberley the day before & now D wanted us all to come along & pay a visit the moment we had climbed out of the carriage. C & of course G most eager to comply but L & H excused themselves citing need to sleep & Paul & I begged out of the excursion as well.

At least absence of others meant got to say goodbye to Paul in private. Miss him already. Wonder when he will arrive in Lancashire & be able to see uncle Tiberius. Wonder if uncle Tiberius will even agree to meet him.

Seems we are to entertain plain girl & her family tomorrow. Really do not feel in the mood for it. Could not even appreciate being at Pemberley though I have to say it is very pretty because all I can think about is what will uncle Tiberius say?

August 6th:

No word from Paul this morning but tell myself that is only to be expected because he spent all day yesterday on the road & could not have sent anything. Surely does not mean that uncle Tiberius locked him in the cellar. Miss him so much.

Plain girl & her family here all morning. D took the uncle fishing or some such thing & Eliza & her aunt left to us. Could not really think about anything else but what Paul was doing right that moment so think got rather snappish with them. Miss Eliza all smug & full of herself in a completely sickening way going on & on about her travels. As if it were so special to be travelling. I could have been travelling too this summer. D all excited at her being there & going on about how she is just so special & pretty just because she is of age already & can get married any time she wants & I am at the mercy of uncle Tiberius entirely.

Must ask L if I was very rude to her. Must try to be more civil when we see her again for dinner tomorrow although I do not know why we have to see them every day.
Wish Paul was here & all was well.

August 7th:

Still no word from Paul. Hope that means all is going well & he is returning soon & no need to write.

D even more distracted today than he was the last days. Was out early this morning to pay yet another visit to Miss Elizabeth Bennet and her fine eyes but apparently she had to leave because someone or other of her family fell ill. D has locked himself up in his study & refused to come out ever since.

August 7th, later:

Uncle Tiberius has refused. I always felt he would but is something else entirely to know it for certain. I knew it the moment Paul dismounted & looked at me & when he embraced me all I could do was cry. Only good news is uncle Tiberius has no plans yet to send me to a convent. At least none that he told Paul about.

It is so damnably unfair. Is not as if I cared one jot about the stupid money. He can keep that if he wants & have more pamphlets printed urging everyone to support that ancient self-styled Duke of York or whatever it is he does these days. I only want to get married & why can he not see that? Paul says that uncle Tiberius found him lacking in moral substance & altogether corrupted & unworthy & most importantly of questionable loyalties. Paul tells me again & again it does not matter, we will wait. Cannot express how much I love him for that but it will never do. Must find other way.

D finally emerged from his study an hour & a half after Paul had come back. Was even more distracted but managed to find some words of sympathy before telling Paul that he had to leave for London early next morning on some sort of business & Paul to see to it that the rest of us got back to London safely. Then he dragged Paul into his study to discuss “the details” in spite of my protests. Wonder what sort of business it is this time & or if he is trying to escape again.

August 8th:

Think it bodes well for my marriage that Paul & I seem to be thinking the same thing so often. When I went to tell him this morning I had found a solution he had just seen D off & come to the same conclusion. Think I love him even more than I did yesterday just because he agreed with me it was the best solution if unconventional.

Think might have shocked everyone at breakfast a little when I announced we were going to elope on Monday but then everyone there already knew of our plight & surely much better this way than to leave them wondering when we are gone and the horses are missing. L immediately said she would come with us. Had thought when eloping one only took a trusted servant but then would really like for L to be there so did not argue with her. H will accompany her of course because he wants to make sure she is not tempted.

G wants to come as well but Paul & I do not think D will like that.

August 9th:

Spent the day getting things in order; is not every day one gets married & want to look perfect even in unusual circumstances. Abigail & Mrs Annesley took things in hand & think everything is splendid now. Can hardly wait.

Paul has asked C to stand up with him since D unable to come. G complained again that she
wanted to come as well so Paul finally agreed but only on the condition that Mrs A come as well. Which is all for the better because a cousin of Mrs A is a priest in Brydekirk, which appears to be just north of Gretna. Much nicer to be married there instead of over an anvil.
August 10th:

So exciting to be eloping! Is almost like a scene from *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* & I think G got rather giddy at the prospect as well & at one point tried to convince us uncle Tiberius was charging after us trying to have me abducted & brought to the convent.

Really do not want to imagine that. Although suppose that while uncle Tiberius might want to do so he would never *pay* for the horses he would need to charge after me so am probably safe.

Paul tells me he sent D a letter informing him about the elopement. Not sure if that was the wisest course but then Paul really felt bad about not having D there so I guess he at least wanted to tell him as soon as possible.

Spending the night with one of Paul’s aunts. Manchester v. smoky but aunt charming. Gave me a lace shawl to wear for the wedding.

August 11th:

In Westmorland with yet another cousin of Paul’s. Am not sure will ever be able to keep the family straight but Mrs Fitzhugh awfully sweet & gifted me with her own bridal shoes; says she will not be able to wear them any time soon now she is in the family way.

L & Mrs A insisted on sitting me down after dinner and “explain certain proceedings” to me. Seemed to assume I was nervous. Did not want to disabuse them of that notion so just smiled & nodded & did not say had found book in the Pemberley library with all the relevant details that I had not yet gathered from *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia.* (NB: Wonder if D knows that books have those passages & still lets G read them.) Is nice after all that they cared even though slightly embarrassing.

August 13th, early morning:

Ow. Ow. Sunlight hurts.

Think whisky may be even viler than absinthe though certainly tastes better.

Also, my husband snores.

My husband.

Hee. I have a husband.

Ow.

Must drink water & return to bed.

August 14th:

Must confess events of my wedding day still kind of a blur to me. Remember that we were almost late because driver had taken a wrong turn so had nearly no time at all to get ready. Paul v. sweet in the carriage insisting nobody get nervous when he was most nervous of all. Looked v. fetching though in his uniform. Ceremony was lovely & cousin Fergus who must be twice Mrs A’s age a real dear but after that things get a little unclear. Think we were invited to a toast in our honour by
the local squire who apparently is another of Mrs A’s cousins & then cannot remember much. Must have been about the whole village of Brydekirk that had come to toast us. Then we toasted the King over the Water. Uncle Tiberius would probably have given up all resistance at that. Shame he will never know but is probably better not to tell anyone about momentary lapse in loyalty. Think at one point was taught a song about the bonnie banks of loch something or other & then we sang something in Scots that I think was not very nice towards King George though not sure which one. Paul says my performance was very sweet but am pretty sure he was already asleep on the table by then. Am quite certain C performed the Bunny Lament to great success but certainly was sober enough to carry Paul upstairs to our chambers after that. Vaguely recall tumbling into bed shortly afterwards with only most cursory attention to the normal ablutions & think Paul was already completely out of everything by then.

Events of the next morning much clearer & certainly more memorable even if the splitting headache was a bit distracting in the beginning. Turns out books certainly cannot teach one everything.

All in all think was probably the best wedding any girl could have. Still cannot keep silly grin from creeping over my face whenever I talk about my husband, or so L tells me. Love him so much think I am going to burst from happiness any minute now.

August 16th:

L & H have decided to stay with cousin Fergus for a while who has promised to help L with her problem. Is probably most sensible course but am going to miss her dreadfully. Was one thing to think about us settled in different parts of London but another thing entirely to have settled her almost a week’s travel away. Am feeling the loss already & have not even said goodbye to her.

Such a shame we have to be back on the road tomorrow. Really do not want to face D when he finds out where we took his sister but then am quite certain Mrs A took her away before the toasting became too raucous.

August 17th:

In Westmorland again. Still feel sad at having to take leave of L for who knows how long but Paul comforts me as best as could be. Received heartfelt congratulations from Mr & Mrs Fitzhugh.

Will spend tomorrow night in Manchester once more & reach Pemberley on the 19th, probably to leave G there with Mrs A before C, Paul & I return to London.

Had long discussion with Paul about how to inform his family. He wants to tell them in person. Suggested he write a letter as he did with Darcy but he said he was not sure that was best course of action.

Cannot believe have not yet thought about what Paul’s family (excepting D&G of course) will think of me. Will probably think me beneath Paul’s notice & far too young. Hope they will not hate me too much.

Must finish writing for today, my husband calls.

Hah.

Still sounds weird. And wonderful.

August 19th:

Oh my.
So Darcy did get that letter.

Was already at Pemberley when we came there; had apparently arrived shortly before us. Was not in the best mood to say the last. Am not sure about whatever business it was in London (NB: must ask Paul if he knows) but apparently it did not go too well & then he was also angry we had taken G with us. Was afraid he would fire poor Mrs A even though she had come only to protect G, but he lauded her for being the only sensible person in the party & thinking of her cousin so we at least did not get married over an anvil. Then Paul started shouting back at him (brave man!) about how it was not D’s business in the first place how & where we got married & he could take his precious reputation elsewhere & began to outline just where elsewhere was & just when I thought it might be time to cover G’s ears or bring her somewhere else altogether, they sort of punched each other’s shoulders & then D congratulated us both & asked how the journey had been.

Men.

August 21st:

Going south in a few days but for the moment enjoying married life at Pemberley. Do not feel inclined to write much; Paul wants to take me down to the river to enjoy the warm weather & promised cook was going to pack basket of cupcakes.

Feel like haven’t eaten a cupcake in ages what with all the fretting recently. Paul seemed unusually amused at the idea; must ask him what he means by it. Also must really ask him why Darcy is in such a foul mood half the time.

August 22nd:

Still do not understand what is so funny about the fact that cupcakes are tasty & I like them. Paul keeps saying that my love for them was what first endeared me to him. Not sure if that is flattering or not but since he is the best of husbands I will allow him this little idiosyncrasy.

NB: Must really ask him what is the matter with Darcy.

August 23rd:

G getting all dejected at the idea of us leaving in three days & keeps begging D to take her with him but D adamant that she cannot come to London.

Wanted to offer to take her with us but since Paul & I still have not decided where to go once we have reached London offer probably would not meet D’s approval. Promised G though that once we were settled somewhere would definitely invite her which seemed to cheer her up immensely.

Paul says not to worry and I don’t but can’t help but feel odd at the thought that we have as of yet no idea where we will make our home. Paul usually stayed with either D or his parents when he was in London but really do not want to move into his mother’s house when I have never even met her; what if she & I do not get along at all? C said that we could stay in his house for as long as we liked & we probably will go there first but cannot be indefinite stay as I want my own home eventually.

Paul asks me would I like to live somewhere in the country & I said I would not mind but he would have to sell his commission for that & he still seems to be having doubts about it. Also what part of the country to choose? Would like to be both north to be close to Louisa and south so can see Charles.

Am convinced though we will work it out. Paul & I have gone over finances and determined that
even without my inheritance we will have enough money to live comfortably if we are suitably economic.

August 24th:

G reminded me that we had not yet informed anyone but Darcy about the marriage & asked did we want to keep it a secret or could she tell her cousin about it in her letter? Paul & I decided there was no call for secrecy any longer so he sat down to write to his parents & the Viscount only for D to tell him that he had already informed them. At least D had the grace to be sorry about that.

So first thing we have to do when we go to London is see Paul’s parents and apologise that they had to hear from Darcy of all people. Who probably painted our elopement in the most horrible colours.

Realised though that apart from that there are some people I wanted to tell so wrote letters to Auntie Margaret & to Anne. Still feel bad about Anne’s family’s fortune & wonder whether I should tell her where it went but then maybe she does not even know it is gone yet. Although in that case maybe I should really tell her so she knows? Do not want to ask Paul what he thinks because would have to reveal what are only suspicions about Anne’s past in order to make everything clear to him. He does not know how much she helped me when I felt so doubtful.

Wondered whether I should write to any of the girls at school but have not heard from any of them in ages & they would probably sneer at it having been an elopement & my not even buying new gowns & wedding breakfast consisting of little else but whisky. I know I would have. Thought about writing to Fanny but then she never returned any of my visits or asked about L or anything. Will probably let her know eventually when I am returned to London.

Then Paul & I sat down & carefully composed letter to uncle Tiberius. We were decided we would not beg him for forgiveness as we have nothing to apologise for but then we also did not want to be too disrespectful since it would be nice to have my money even if we can make do without it if we must. D agreed to read the letter & he replaced a few words with longer ones. Normally would not tolerate that kind of thing but is just what uncle Tiberius loves.

Also sent letter to L asking how she is settling in & telling her about how we are debating where to settle & did she think she would leave Scotland soon?

August 26th:

G came to a compromise with D that she could travel south as far as to her grandmother’s house with us & spend the rest of the summer there.

G ecstatic because apparently her cousin wrote that she would be there as well. Fear that means that the Bat will be there as well but guess that cannot be helped & anyway have nothing to fear from her now since I no longer want to marry D.

That is unless she had plans for Paul too but there is nothing she can do about that either.

Would explain though why D is in such a bad mood if the Bat is waiting for him. (NB: Really should ask Paul what is up with D; perhaps it is not the Bat after all.)

Had a letter from L today. She is settling in well & tells me about the walks she & H take daily because H thinks the exercise will help her to keep her mind away from gambling. Says she feels like something is missing but there simply is no opportunity for her to gamble anywhere around esp. because cousin Fergus strictly opposed to any form of it & will not tolerate it in his house so she cannot even get her hands on a pack of cards. L says this is exactly what she needs & also that
the housekeeper’s daughter is now teaching her how to do lace so she has things to do of an evening.

August 27th:

Hmph. When packing, Paul found my box of curls & now keeps teasing me. Apparently one of the curls is from him.

Well I didn’t know that, did I & I did not voluntarily collect them in the first place.

No need for him to be so ridiculously amused by it. Pah.

Mrs A asked me this morning, now that I was going back to town, and to the Dowager Countess and BGA beforehand, did I not want to begin wearing caps?

Had not even given that a thought before; somehow L & I never talked about those when we got my things ready.

Hmph. That embarrassing time we spent discussing proceedings in the bedroom had much better been spent choosing a cap for me because the one Mrs A offered to lend me is absolutely hideous though I didn’t tell her so. Suppose I shall have to find a cap I like one day but I want to have the thinnest, flimsiest possible – do not like idea of hiding my hair when it may just be my best feature and I would rather -

Gah! Husbands! Asked me what I was writing about & I told him & he completely did not understand the problem & only said he could name several features of mine that were -

Foregoing that thought, would really like to wear really thin lacy cap but the pretty ones with real lace probably cost a fortune I don’t have so I shall have to resort to Mrs A's until I find something better. At least in London I can raid L's drawers for a replacement although her mobcaps to be sure are rather on the pouffy side.
August 28th:
Paul is going to murder D & I cannot say I would blame him. Turns out not only did D tell Paul's parents about our wedding, he also invited them to Pemberley to come & see us or rather see Paul since they did not seem so delighted to see me. Wonder what D told them about me. Or probably they heard about the incident with the carpet on fire. Cannot blame them if they have reservations after hearing about that.

Was only lucky we arrived at the Dowager Countess' at the same time as they did or we would probably have missed each other on the road.

Do not quite know what to think of Paul's parents & they seem to feel the same about me. Well am sure was not at my best when they saw me, being tired from the long journey & also wearing hideous cap from Mrs A. G tried her best to compliment me on it but could say nothing better about it than that it was charming.

Only good thing is the Bat & her daughter have not yet arrived but am told it is only a matter of days.

Dinner was a very tedious affair. Felt completely embarrassed the way everybody looked at me, Paul kept shooting D nasty looks & the DC seemed to have somehow quarrelled with her son. Only G & the blackmailing great-aunt were cheerful & kept chatting about The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia. Was amazed that the BGA claimed to have read them all in less than a fortnight. BGA said she enjoyed them even more than Tom Jones but also said the latter was a bit more scandalous. Wonder if I should read it.

August 30th:

Feeling of unease continues. Spent most of yesterday taking long walk around the park with Paul but could not help but notice that his mother & father kept shooting me weird looks whenever they saw me afterwards.

Might of course also be because I must have lost Mrs A’s cap somewhere on our walk though have no idea where & could not find it anymore today & think my hair might have looked a trifle wild. Asked abigail did I have anything that I could use as a cap but she says we did not pack any when we left London because I decided they were all ugly.

D left for London today on whatever mysterious business it is that makes him all grumpy (NB: Keep forgetting I meant to ask Paul about it) but we were informed that the Bat sent a letter telling us she will arrive tomorrow. Oh joy.

September 1st:

Bat sent us a letter saying she & the daughter are enjoying time with D in London & will take a few more days to come here. Wonder how anyone could enjoy time with D with the mood he is in right now but perhaps whatever business he had is resolved now. (NB: Keep forgetting to ask Paul.)

Am not particularly enjoying myself here either except when I am with Paul although had fun with G & C last night. G convinced C to begin reading The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia because she said she could not stomach him looking bored anymore & so she forced him to sit
down and start it. C very impatient at first; always asked of us to tell him what was important & what he could skip but then apparently he got in the mood of it & was still reading when we retired & apparently read until dawn which is why nobody saw him today.

Had painfully stilted conversation with Paul's mother about I am not even sure what but she kept looking at me & mustering my gown. Do not think there can be anything wrong with it because it is one of Mrs Duckie's nicest creations & with my new, accurate measurements that Mrs Taylor always got wrong. Perhaps she thought I would set it on fire as well.

September 4th:

D is back looking a trifle less grim in the face but also brought with him the Bat & daughter. Daughter very inoffensive but the Bat very much not so & kept going on about how magnificent she was until her mother told her to stop. Then G & C & the BGA kept discussing Madame Valentine’s will & what was in the mysterious chest Captain Van Swanck brought with him from Germany.

Bat kept huffing & wanted to be told what they were talking about then when she was told huffed even more & informed us she & her daughter never read novels. What a miserable life that must be.

Then she said something about how my situation was so very peculiar & think she was referring to the whole business of uncle Tiberius (NB: wonder if he ever read our letter or threw it away unanswered?) but then she said it could never happen to her daughter which does not make much sense unless daughter has a spiteful mad uncle too. Though that is entirely possible in that family.

September 5th:

Bat keeps making veiled hints at me that are so veiled I do not even know what she means when she talks about my 'expectations' & winks at me & then says I must be pleased with my success. At first thought it was her way of congratulating me on the marriage but now wonder if she perhaps found out about L’s problems? Must ask Paul if he told her.

C made a sketch or something of Captain Van Swanck’s family tree & wanted to show it to us to explain new theory he has but nobody could make sense of it, not even Paul. Bat forbade her daughter to look at it saying it would give her a headache.

Paul’s parents still very distant but had a nice letter from Lord & Lady Ringo congratulating us which must count for something.

September 6th:

Abigail presented me with very pretty little cap she had sewn from an old neck-kerchief of C. Quite ingenious & much nicer than the one I lost in the grove. Is not exactly lace but looks v. fashionable. Has sort of embroidery on it too. Still do not quite like covering my hair but at least look presentable now. Poor girl said she had to go through three attempts just to get it right. Good thing C rips so many cravats.

Got a sort of compliment on it from Paul's mother, at least think it was a compliment, and another weird remark from the Bat. Not sure what made her say I was beginning to fill out my role or even what she meant.

September 8th:

Bat behaved very weirdly at dinner today. Apparently had taken C’s sketch with her when nobody was looking & examined it & then regaled us with a lecture about how nothing on it made sense
because there were several incidents on it of Salic Law being disregarded along with common sense, as she put it. Kept switching to German in her conversation & Paul tried to translate for me but am not sure I understood everything.

Paul's mother & father looked quite bored & the Bat's daughter was vacant in her expression as usual but the rest of us were quite amazed about how the Bat could know so much about a novel she had not even read.

Then the Bat broke off her lecture & said something to me about how my radiance seemed to be increasing every day at which the Earl hissed something in French about how they would not discuss that at the table. Cannot help but think he does not like me very much although Paul says both his parents very fond of me. Cannot say I have felt much of that yet.

September 9th:

*So that* is what she meant! Well, I can see how they came by that impression but still … Paul though angrier about it all than I am. Actually think parts of it are almost funny.

What happened was that this morning Paul's father asked Paul into the library to talk to him & when Paul came out again he was absolutely furious and laid on his mother & aunt about what they were thinking about me & I thought Paul's father had finally revealed to Paul they did not like me because I set people's heirloom rugs on fire, as I had presumed all the time. Was quite flabbergasted & did not know what to say or if to say anything when Mrs A took me aside & said she needed to talk to me so we repaired to another room.

Mrs A apparently unsure how she could put the matter to me but in the end resolved on telling me bluntly that Paul's parents & aunt convinced I was going to have a child & that was why we married so quickly & in Scotland. Suppose it makes sense if you do not know the particulars which it appears D omitted when he told them such as *that I was in danger of being transported to a French convent* which obviously is only a trifling matter and therefore need not be mentioned.

Wonder if that is what a lot of people will be thinking but Mrs A said talk will die down when I do not have a child in the next seven months – then asked was I quite sure if I would not?

One embarrassing relation of further facts (that the book in the Pemberley library apparently forgot to mention) later & I could tell her that I was definitely not going to have a child in the next seven months. Quite a relief to know that actually. Had been wondering. Would not want to have a child & no house nor room to put the cradle.

Did not know what to say to Paul's family after that so went for a walk in the grounds where I met D looking grim & deep in thought as usual. Wanted to tell him off for letting Paul's family believe we had to marry for *that* but D hardly listened & instead said he was convinced now we had to tell C that we were mistaken about Jane. Said he was probably right & proposed I would do it, seeing as I am his sister & all but D said he would take C back to Hertfordshire for the shooting & do it there after he had seen Jane once again. D argued C could be spared the pain of finding out if Jane not interested in him anymore.

Agreed with D but wonder how *he* of all people will be able to tell what Jane feels?

September 10th:

Turns out Paul had been wondering too so last night explained to him what Mrs A had said & that I was v. definitely not going to have a child & also tried to make him see it from his parents' standpoint seeing as they had never even met me before so the conclusion was not as far-fetched especially seeing as some people forgot to mention certain details such as *my impending*
transportation to France.

Thought it best then to address the matter directly so this morning went to Paul's mother to talk to her in private & tell her about no child & uncle Tiberius. Really did not feel like discussing the matter with the Bat but am confident she will hear about it sooner or later & stop the comments.

Talk with the Countess embarrassing enough but she v. apologetic & said she should have asked me directly then invited us for Christmas. Have no idea where we will be in December.

September 11th:

D&C left for Hertfordshire. G very dejected but keeps cheering herself up with long talks about *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* with the blackmailing great-aunt. Paul's mother has begun to read it as well & keeps alternately laughing & shaking her head.

Paul's father patted my hand today at breakfast & said I would do. Suppose that to be a compliment. Bat so far has not said anything apart from that parting from her daughter must have been v. painful for D. Obviously she did not realise D has been looking as if he were tortured with hot irons for the past month. Really must ask Paul about that.

September 13th:

Very confusing turn of events. Sat in the small drawing-room with the Bat this morning reading *Tom Jones* waiting for Paul to return from his morning ride so he could continue to read it to me. Bat was writing letter, probably to D informing him how much he was in love with her daughter, when suddenly she looked up at me & said she regretted making assumptions about my situation. Was about to thank her when she continued that she could not be faulted for being in the wrong because I had grown as wide as a carriage horse since she last saw me.

Was speechless for a full minute after that & could not even say a thing when the Bat waltzed out of the room. Went after her when I had regained control of my limbs but apparently took a wrong turn in the East gallery because suddenly ended up in a small drawing-room with a nice view of the park & a writing desk in front of the window. Was about to leave again when I saw the name of Count Haubenstein on one of the papers on the desk. Turned out papers contained scene in which Count Haubenstein exposes Captain Van Swanck as a fraud because of his ignorance of the Salic Law & then proposes marriage to the lovely Theodora - then scene broke off.

Surely the Bat cannot have written that but who else would know about the Salic Law?

September 15th:

Surely cannot be authentic scene from the book. How would it get here?

Must have been written probably by G or the BGA because they were impatient for the next volume.

September 16th:

Remember now what G speculated this summer about the writer of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia* coming from her family & believing it to be Paul. Can definitely not be Paul because is not his handwriting & surely he would tell me but maybe it is his father?

Might also be his mother. Maybe her surprise & all the blushing when she read the books was just an act.

September 19th:
Is definitely not Paul's father either. Although he would be scheming enough to do it.

Asked me today could he talk to me in private. Wondered what that was about but followed him into the library anyway. Turns out that Paul's father wrote to uncle Tiberius of all people when he first heard about our marriage & then saw fit not to tell us about that at all even when we made up. Not sure where he got the address but apparently he told uncle Tiberius in great detail what he & the rest of the family thought why we were getting married & that they had not known about anything of it. No wonder we never received a reply to our letter.

Paul's father said he had received reply from uncle Tiberius this day saying that letter had only confirmed what he always thought & he knew exactly now what to think about the marriage & knew better than to let me or my degenerate husband ever see a penny of my money if he could prevent it. Then followed a long list of my transgressions and a comparison to various fallen women in Biblical history. Did not know there were quite so many women of dubious character in old Israel & list would have been v. illuminating if circumstances not so serious.

Did not quite know what to say. Paul & I had of course known this could happen but is altogether different when it does happen & through no fault of our own. We will manage of course but still feel rather disappointed.

Knew not what to say to Paul's father after that so just rushed out of the room wanting to find Paul & cry into his shoulder & hear him tell me everything would be alright.

Paul & I stayed in our room tonight but received note from the Earl saying he wanted to make amends. Paul tossed note into the fire & said a couple of unrepeatable things but managed to calm him down & not go after his father tonight. Will clear that up tomorrow.
In Which Caroline Goes To Kent And Comes Home

September 23rd:

Still with the Dowager Countess. Paul wanted to leave the morning after we found out about the letter but convinced him better to stay & see what happens seeing as we have no real place to go to anyway apart from C's house but that would be weird with C still in Hertfordshire.

Mood v. frosty here. The Bat & daughter left for London citing Darcy coming back to town soon as reason. G & Mrs A went back to Pemberley yesterday to resume their lessons. G v. tearful at parting but promised her we would see each other again for Christmas. Thanked Mrs A again for cap even if it was ugly & I lost it & all the help with the wedding & the things she explained to me.

Is v. awkward here now with Paul no longer talking to his father & I am sure the Countess feels it just as much as I do.

Think the Earl is too proud to issue an actual forthright apology & Paul too proud to ask for one.

Stupid men.

Have not even had an opportunity to find out anything else about the mysterious scene I found & frankly felt not in the mood for that.

September 24th:

Really would like to find a solution about where we shall go next. At least we know now for certain we shall not have any of my money for the foreseeable future & can plan accordingly. Paul says we will work it out but so far is mostly sulking. Maybe we should go to London after all & take it from there.

September 26th:

Have talked to Violet & she finds situation just as unbearable as I do. Suggested we come live with them in London. Thanked her for the offer but told her it would be just as horrible as it is now here, or even worse for we would not even have the BGA's comments about politics to distract us.

Violet agreed with me there & promised to think about something else.

September 27th:

Gah! Men! Violet says the Earl will only offer to help Paul if Paul asks for it & Paul says he will never beg his father for anything.

Violet & I are decided talking will not bring anything about it & sat in the conservatory wondering what could be done when the BGA came up with the perfect solution.

We will lock them in the library.

September 29th:

Oh my.

The Earl certainly was in earnest when he said he wanted to make amends.
He has given us a house.
An actual house.
We have a house.
An estate.
With income.

**A HOUSE.**

The house is in Kent, not far from the Bat (which is I suppose why the Earl hardly ever uses it). A sister of the Earl's father used to live there but it has been empty since she died three years ago. It is not large, but it has a good steady income & we can have it.

Our own house.

If Paul messes this up by quarrelling with his father again I will kill him.

October 1st:

Going to London tomorrow to settle everything with lawyers & so Paul can do whatever he needs to do to resign his commission. Not sure about the details because *we have a house & we will live in our own house soon.*

Apparently D is back in town as well & left C in Hertfordshire. Wonder why he left alone. Maybe D told C about what we did & they quarrelled. Must ask D what he said & then write to C & apologise.

October 4th:

Back in town & staying with Paul's parents for the time being. Most surprised the Bat & daughter not beleaguering D anymore but have retreated to Kent. Probably could not stand D's foul mood anymore. Wanted to ask D about what he said to C but could not catch him alone after dinner today as he did nothing but brood.

Had letter from A that had been sent to C's house. A very heartfelt in her congratulations & wishing us best of luck. Asked also had I heard anything about new volume of *The Woes of the Chaste Orphan Athalia.* Wonder if I should tell her about mysterious excerpt I found & present the suspects to her; A always so succinct in her evaluations. Could of course also ask Paul but what if it is him after all?

Do not think it is though because he would not keep thing like that from me. Must be the Bat.

And now I feel bad about keeping things from Paul but is luckily only v. minor thing.

October 5th:

Received express letter from C this morning saying he was engaged to Jane! About time too, had been wondering what took him so long seeing as he has been in Hertfordshire for almost a month now.

Read letter to Paul who kept grinning & when I asked him why said did I not think this quite heightened D's chances with Jane's sister? Took me a moment to realise he meant the fine-eyed *Miss Elizabeth Bennet* but it all makes sense now.
Cannot believe how I was so blind & forgot all about how D kept talking about her last year.

So he was pining for her & Paul says he has been at least since Easter.

Oh my.

Do not know whether it would be mean to laugh but the idea of D having been crossed in love these past six months is just unbearably funny.

Asked Paul if we should give D a gentle hint that going by the cow-eyed looks she gave him when she was at Pemberley the lady will have him but Paul said he would not meddle with that for the world & seeing how my meddling turned out in C's affairs must say is probably better not to. D will sort it out eventually. Hopefully.

Letter from L saying she is feeling much calmer than she was in London & enjoying Scotland immensely. Apparently she has received letter from uncle Tiberius telling her how she had failed me in her duty as my elder sister to keep me from sin. L asked if I felt terribly neglected because she had not guided me enough. Wrote back immediately to give her new address of *our own house* & told her *that we have a house* & not to worry about uncle Tiberius anymore.

October 7th:


Earl has had servants keep house in order so no large repairs necessary & we can move in immediately now that everything in London has been settled. Will probably want to replace furniture by and bye but first want to assess house & see what we want to change. Also must save money for new furniture first.

Could not help but send letter to uncle Tiberius informing him about address change & telling him to direct further communication to me & my husband there. Wondered if I should send it but Paul read it over & said he was the luckiest man on earth having married a woman who could be so deliciously polite and contemptuous at the same time.

Not sure that is a compliment but certainly do not mind the way the silly man expresses his marital felicity.

Will have to stop at Rosings tomorrow as it is on the way & apparently the Bat is giving us a box-load of curtain material. Or so she says. Is probably rather fabric to cover me since she thinks I am looking like a horse.

But will just not think about that when I am there & smile & thank her prettily for her gift because even if they come with her condescension, Violet says curtains first-rate material.

Will not say anything about how only because her daughter looks like an insect does not mean I am fat.

I am healthy-looking.

October 8th:

Arrived in Kent with long line of carts full of trunks following us. Never realised we had that many things but then more than half of the boxes full with Paul's books. At least whatever may be wrong with our house (*our house*) we will have the foundation of a very good library & will try our best to make it as grand as Pemberley's.
Stopped at Bromley just as the Bat had advised us & mentioned her name at the Bell only to be presented with an enormous bill because apparently her Batship orders a whole roast pheasant whenever she is there.

We have to stay at Rosings tonight because the Bat simply would not let us continue on even though it is little more than an hour to our house (OUR HOUSE). Begin to understand why the Earl did not want the house for himself.

Bat tedious as usual at dinner this day but at least the daughter tried to actually speak to us; not much & usually in a whisper but she seems friendly enough. Gave us very pretty volume of Donne’s poetry as a late wedding present; very nice indeed. Bat waxed endlessly about her generosity in letting us have her old curtains & had brought her silly parson to help her telling her how grand she was & if they weren't so pretty I'd have long told her to keep them. Also we really want our money back because we certainly are not going to pay for the stuffed swans she needs to keep her fortitude.

Cannot wait for tomorrow when we get to our house.

October 9th:

We are going to our house today. OUR HOUSE.

Leaving as soon as the carriages are ready but I think I did something stupid just now. Bat forced us to have breakfast with her before we leave & even had her silly parson come to it. So we had to endure yet another lecture about how amazing & selfless & ultimately just unbearably wonderful the Bat was, both by herself & her minion. Then she got talking about Pemberley & her eyes glazed over & got all misty as she talked about 'the approaching union' & the 'joining of the fortunes' & whatever & I could see the daughter pretending to gag into her tea which set Paul off laughing. Was then that things got slightly out of control because the Bat asked what was so funny & the daughter rolled her eyes & imitated the Bat's facial expressions & Paul almost choked on his kippers & I just blurted out that Darcy was surely already on his way to Hertfordshire to propose to Miss Elizabeth Bennet and her fine eyes.

Then it was the Bat's turn to choke on her tea & everybody rushed to help her & Paul shook his head at me & grinned and muttered something about a storm I had unleashed & then the Bat all red in the face kept calling for her daughter & her carriage & Paul said we had better be off so I went upstairs to get my bonnet.

Wonder what keeps our horses for so long. The Bat's carriage left twenty minutes ago. Hope Paul got our money from her before she set off wherever she went.

October 9th, evening:

We are in our own house! It is so very beautiful, all bricks & over-grown with roses & from the attic windows you can see the sea!

Bedrooms are mayhap a bit snug but v. beautiful with large windows overlooking the gardens. Very pretty drawing-room downstairs with balconies leading into garden & library has very nice shelves which are almost empty now but will probably soon be filled.

If that is we ever get our money back from the Bat & can actually afford to buy books in the near future. Cannot believe Paul let himself be fobbed off like that.

October 12th:
Feels like we have lived here forever. Do not think I ever was happier apart from the tiny matter of the Bat still having our money. Paul promised though to write letter to her asking for it reminding her we have to buy food for us & our servants.

Is still a novelty being actual, real mistress of so many servants & not just standing in like I did with C. Luckily housekeeper is v. experienced woman & helps me. Not sure she takes me serious at all but so far have not had disagreements with her. Hope abigail gave a good account of me in the servants' halls.

Abigail gave me another set of new caps this morning all after the original pattern but with different embroideries. Was rather moved at this because had not asked her to do so. Expressed my thanks for all she had done for me in the past year & asked her what she thought about our move. Glad to hear she likes it here. Did not realise before how much I constantly rely on her. If I had any spare money right now would make her present but it will have to wait.

October 13th:

Received letter from D today that was so blotted & illegible that we first thought it was from C. D just wrote to inform us he was riding to Hertfordshire to hunt with C & cryptic remarks about 'wanting to learn the lay of the land' and having recently received news that made a positive outcome of some important matters more probable than before. (NB: Wonder if it was G who told him that Miss Elizabeth Bennet's fine eyes got all goggly whenever she saw him?)

Probably D thinks I do not know what he means but know exactly what he is talking about. Could not help grinning all day & Paul kept teasing me about it. Told him if he did not succeed with his aunt soon he had better hope D was successful because he would have to ask him for money.

October 16th:

Cannot believe how peaceful it is here. Paul is burying himself in the estate management & occasionally asks me to help him with the sums. I said I could do more but he says he wants to at least feel as if he was providing for his family. Silly man, as if I married him for his money. When he is busy I keep myself busy with redecorating & arranging things. Want to have house pretty-looking & everything ready because we are going to have visitors for Christmas!

Have written to L & G inviting them for Christmas. Want to ask C & D as well but probably had better wait to find out how exactly the matter stands with their Bennet sisters.

Abigail teaches me to sew & embroider. Really is much easier than I thought. Always looked so complicated at school. Am going to tackle knitting next.

October 21st:

Letter from D saying he needed to relay a v. important matter to us & then after several more polysyllabic paragraphs he finally informed us he and Miss Elizabeth Bennet had become engaged. Was surprised it had taken him that long.

Realised had not yet written to C & Jane so rectified that immediately. Still did not quite know what to say especially about the whole matter of separating them so letter probably rather awkward-sounding. Hope shall see Jane soon in person to clear things up with her. Suppose will also have to make friends with the large-eyed sister. Invited all of them for Christmas. Hope we will have money by then.

In hindsight I am not sure I ever let Jane know I am married & living in Kent now but surely C will tell her that so it all makes sense.
October 27th:

Received answer from Jane. Not sure it was exactly warm but then cannot blame her for that. Was very kind in her congratulations though & said she & her sister were going to be married just before Christmas & would leave for the Lakes then but they would look forward to visit us in the spring. Hope I can patch up matters with her eventually.

Had long letter from G very enthusiastically agreeing to come here for Christmas especially because her brother was not there but she did not know whether he would consent. Paul wrote back saying *he* consented & that was enough.

November 1st:

Could not trust my eyes today. Bat's daughter sent us bank note saying her mother kept forgetting to pay us but she did not want us to have any inconveniences. Very charming letter, much Wittier than the daughter is in person, and signed very warmly.

Completely flabbergasting however was her hand. Ran upstairs immediately to compare it with the sample in my desk & there is no doubt possible.

Really must keep up correspondence with her. Should probably call her Anne since she begged me twice to do so. Wonder if she will come if I invite her for Christmas. Would probably mean inviting the Bat as well.

November 15th:

Has grown v. cold recently. Took long walk by the sea today with Paul. Air rather frosty and winds heavy but cannot remember ever having been happier. Told Paul I could burst just from everything & things got very silly & we danced on the sand.

Came back to find a letter from L saying she had the best of news. If it is a boy, they are going to call him Mortimer after his father. So that riddle is solved at last, just when I had all but forgot about it. Began to knit cap for baby as Paul read to me tonight.

Sat in our drawing-room observing the fire as Paul read sonnets to me in his wonderful voice & suddenly felt completely thrilled just knowing I was home.

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