Northanger Abbey

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen was born into a money-strapped but intellectual family in the village of Steventon in Hampshire, England. She was the seventh of eight children and had only one sister, Cassandra, who was three years older than Jane. To supplement his income as a clergyman, Austen's father farmed the land around his home and educated young boys who boarded in the rectory. Austen's family home was a jovial place, with plays often performed in the barn, and aunts and cousins frequently coming to visit. The family's richer relatives wrote and visited often, conveying the news and fashions from Paris and London to the rural vicarage. Austen began to write as a teen, reading her works of fiction aloud to her family. Austen never married, but she was proposed to once by a well-off, but personally unattractive man. She accepted his proposal, then called the marriage off the next morning. Austen visited Bath several times in the late 1790s, then moved there with her parents in 1801. It was during these years that she wrote *Northanger Abbey*. After her father's death, she and her mother had little money and moved around for several years, before settling in Chawton. All through the first decade of the 19th century, Austen worked on her novels. Four works were published in her lifetime and two (including *Northanger Abbey*) were published after her death from kidney disease at the age of 41.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the English Reformation of the 1530s and 1540s, King Henry VIII created the Protestant Church of England and sought to undermine all institutions of Catholic power. To this end, he passed a law for the Dissolution of the Monasteries. This act allowed Catholic lands and buildings to be seized by the state. Many of them were sold to wealthy families of the era, while others fell into disrepair. The many monks and nuns who lived on these properties were expelled from their homes, while a new class of English landowners came to power. Although these events occurred more than 250 years before the time period when *Northanger Abbey* is set, their impact can still be felt throughout the novel. The suffering of the nuns and monks expelled from these places is a theme in the Gothic novels that Catherine loves to read, and the fact that these buildings and lands were taken over by landowners who did not care about their traditions is reflected in the character of General Tilney, who renovates without any regard for the historic value of Northanger Abbey.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Catherine is obsessed with Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and Sentimental novels like Frances Burney's *Camilla* and Samuel Richardson's novel *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* are referred to throughout the book and form important touchstones for the plot. While sentimental novels focused on a heroine who faced many trials and tribulations on her way to finding love, eliciting a sympathetic reaction from the reader, gothic novels took this plot and placed it in an exotic and frightening setting. *Northanger Abbey* satirizes the conventions of Sentimental novels, as well as the gothic novels which formed an important subset of the Sentimental novel.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Northanger Abbey
- **When Written:** 1798-1803
- **Where Written:** Steventon, Hampshire, England; Bath, Somersetshire, England
- **When Published:** 1817
- **Literary Period:** Austen's novels are early examples of the 19th century realist tradition and satires of the sentimentalist novels popular at the time when she wrote.
- **Genre:** Novel
- **Setting:** All of the book's settings are in Southwestern England. Bath is a town in Somersetshire. Fullerton is an imaginary place in the real county of Wiltershire. Woodston and Northanger Abbey are imaginary places in the real county of Gloucestershire.
- **Climax:** Henry Tilney discovers Catherine snooping around Northanger Abbey and she confesses her suspicion that his father is a murderer.
- **Antagonist:** General Tilney
- **Point of View:** Northanger Abbey is told with a third-person limited perspective and an intrusive narrator. The narrator usually tracks Catherine's experiences and thoughts, but occasionally describes other characters' perspectives on the action. The narrator also sometimes speaks directly to the reader, as an essayist presenting a position might do. For instance, when Catherine is deliberating over what to wear to a ball, the narrator cuts in to present some general thoughts on whether it is worthwhile to spend time thinking about fashion.

EXTRA CREDIT

Fiction and Fashion. Jane Austen took a deep interest in fashion and was an excellent seamstress.

What's in a Name? Jane Austen may have drawn names for several of *Northanger Abbey*'s characters – including Henry Tilney – straight from obituaries she read in the newspaper.

PLOT SUMMARY

Northanger Abbey begins by introducing us to its heroine, Catherine Morland, an unexceptional but kind girl of seventeen. She has grown up in the countryside, the eldest daughter of a parson in a family of ten children. Catherine is a plain child, but gets prettier as she gets older. She also begins to care about her **clothing** and obsessively read novels.

Catherine is thrilled to be invited by a rich, childless couple from her neighborhood, Mr. Allen and Mrs. Allen, to take her first trip away from home. When she arrives in the vacation town of Bath, Catherine is disappointed to find that Mrs. Allen, who cares about little other than clothing, knows no one. Catherine meets a young man of twenty-four named Henry Tilney. She finds him charming and hopes to see him again soon.

Soon after, while in the Pump-room (one of the central meeting points in Bath), Catherine and Mrs. Allen meet an old classmate of Mrs. Allen's named Mrs. Thorpe, and Catherine becomes fast friends with Mrs. Thorpe's daughter Isabella. The Thorpes already know Catherine's older brother James, who goes to school with Mrs. Thorpe's son, John. Catherine and Isabella become inseparable, but Catherine continues to look for Henry Tilney, who seems to have left Bath.

One day to Catherine's surprise, she and Isabella run into their brothers in the street. Catherine does not notice that James and Isabella have feelings for one another. Catherine is introduced to Isabella's brother John, a rude man who talks of little but horses, but who asks Catherine to dance with him at a ball that night. Despite thinking John seems ill-mannered, Catherine has too little confidence in her own judgment to decide that she does not like him.

At the ball, John leaves Catherine to talk to a friend about horses, and James and Isabella leave her to dance together. Catherine feels that she looks as if she could not find a partner. To her surprise, Henry appears and asks her to dance. She sadly declines his offer, because she is already engaged to dance with John. John returns and they dance, but Catherine continually looks back at Henry. During the dancing Catherine meets Henry's sister, Miss Eleanor Tilney. Catherine hopes Henry will ask her to dance again and feels crestfallen when she sees him lead another woman to the dance floor. John wants to dance again, but she refuses him.

The next day, Catherine hopes to meet Eleanor and get to know her better. Instead, John, Isabella, and James convince her go on a drive with them. Catherine rides with John, who scares Catherine by saying that her brother's carriage is unsafe, then takes this back when she becomes alarmed. Catherine is confused by John's self-contradiction. Returning from the drive, Catherine is upset to learn that Mrs. Allen ran into the Tilneys while she was out.

The Thorpes continue to get in the way of Catherine developing her relationship with the Tilneys. At another ball, Catherine is asked to dance by Henry, but John interrupts, saying Catherine promised to dance with him. Catherine dances with Henry anyway and has a wonderful time.

Catherine plans a walk with the Tilneys for the next day, but when it rains, she is unsure if the Tilneys will come. John convinces Catherine to go on another carriage ride by saying he saw the Tilneys driving out of town. From the carriage, Catherine sees the Tilneys walking through town. She is angry at John, who seems to have lied about seeing the Tilneys, but he refuses to stop the carriage so she can get out.

Catherine apologizes to Henry Tilney for missing their walk that night at the theater. She also sees Henry's father, General Tilney, talking to John Thorpe and looking at her.

The next day Catherine reschedules her walk with the Tilneys for the following day, but the Thorpes and James beg her to change her plans to go on another drive. Catherine refuses, but John reschedules her walk with the Tilneys without her permission. Catherine runs to the Tilneys to take back what John has done. After an enjoyable walk, Eleanor Tilney invites Catherine to come dine with them the next night.

The next day, Isabella tells Catherine that she and James are engaged, but she worries the Morlands will not approve of her as a daughter-in-law. Catherine had not suspected their romance and is shocked and overjoyed. As Catherine is leaving the Thorpes' lodgings, John waylays her. He talks in abstract terms about their marrying, but she hardly listens and understands nothing.

At the next ball, Catherine dances with Henry, while Isabella, who told Catherine she did not intend to dance, dances with Henry's older brother Captain Frederick Tilney, who has just come to town. Catherine expresses surprise to Henry Tilney, who observes that Catherine does not understand other people's motives, because she only considers how she herself would behave in any situation, and she is more good-natured than others.

The next day, Isabella learns how much the Morlands will give her and James. Isabella seems disappointed about the amount of money and suggests that Mr. Morland has not been generous. Catherine feels hurt, but Isabella says she is only disappointed that she and James must wait several years to marry.

Catherine is thrilled to receive an invitation to travel to the Tilneys' home at Northanger Abbey, where she will live in an **old building** like the ones in the books she loves to read.

The next day in the Pump-room, Isabella encourages Catherine

to marry John. Catherine is dumbfounded to hear that John wants to marry her, but tells Isabella that she is interested in Henry, not John. Captain Tilney then enters and sits down next to Isabella. Catherine overhears them flirting and feels jealous on James's behalf.

In the days before Catherine's departure for Northanger, she observes this flirtation with growing alarm. She asks Henry to tell his brother to leave Bath, but Henry says no outside interference should be needed to ensure Isabella's loyalty to James.

Soon after, Catherine leaves Bath with the Tilneys. On the ride there, Catherine tells Henry how excited she is to go to a real abbey like the ones she has read about. Henry spins a tale about the mysterious and frightening events likely to happen to her in an old building like Northanger. Catherine is spellbound, though she knows Henry is teasing her.

Catherine hopes to uncover a mystery at Northanger. After finding nothing exceptional in her room, Catherine develops a theory that the General is a villain and murdered his wife. She sneaks alone to Mrs. Tilney's room, where she is discovered by Henry. Learning of her suspicions, Henry urges her to be a better judge of situations in the future. She feels humiliated and sure he will never love her now, but he is only kinder to her after this.

Catherine receives a letter from James saying that his engagement to Isabella is off. He advises Catherine to leave Northanger before Captain Tilney arrives to announce that he is engaged to Isabella. Distressed, Catherine tells Henry and Eleanor about her brother's letter, but they say their father will not approve of the marriage since Isabella has no fortune. Catherine is puzzled, because she has heard General Tilney say he does not care about money. Soon after, the General hints that he hopes Catherine and Henry will marry. Catherine hopes that Henry feels the same way.

Isabella writes to ask Catherine's help in resolving a misunderstanding with James, but Catherine now sees through Isabella's hypocrisy and resolves to forget her former friend.

Soon after, the General leaves for London for a few days and Henry leaves Northanger. One night the General returns unexpectedly. He sends a distraught Eleanor to tell Catherine that she is to be unceremoniously expelled from the house the next morning. Catherine is shocked, but tries to hide this from Eleanor.

A miserable Catherine returns home, where she is greeted joyfully. Her family resents the way she has been treated, but counsels that she forget about it. Catherine mopes around the house, but no one guesses that she is in love.

Three days later, Henry unexpectedly arrives at Fullerton and asks Catherine to marry him. He explains that the General was misled in Bath by John to believe that Catherine was very rich, then subsequently told by John in London that she was quite poor. The General wanted Catherine to marry Henry when he believed she was an heiress, then rushed back to expel her from Northanger when he learned she was not. Henry, to his father's shock, refuses to obey the command to forget her.

The Morlands give their permission for Catherine and Henry's marriage on the condition that the General give his. Eventually, after Eleanor marries a rich Viscount, and the General learns that Catherine is not as poor as he had been led to believe, he gives his permission, and Catherine and Henry are married.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Catherine Morland – A seventeen-year-old raised in a rural parsonage with nine brothers and sisters, Catherine Morland is open, honest, and naïve about the hypocritical ways of society. Her family is neither rich nor poor, and she is unaware of how much stock many people put in wealth and rank. Catherine was a plain little girl, and her parents never expected very much from her, though she has grown more attractive as she has entered her late teens. Catherine loves novels, but has not read many because not many new books are available in the out-of-the-way town where she was raised. She is especially obsessed by Gothic novels set in **castles and abandoned abbeys**, and hopes to experience some of the thrills portrayed in these novels herself. At the start of the novel, she has very little experience judging people's characters or intentions, and does not trust her own intuition. When she is taken to the holiday town of Bath by the Allens, wealthy friends of her family, and meets the Tilneys and Thorpes, she begins to learn the ways of the world. Over the course of the novel, she proves herself capable of learning from the experiences she has throughout the novel, even as she maintains her honesty, goodness, and loyalty to those whom she loves.

Narrator – The identity of the Narrator is unknown, and the narration usually occurs in the third-person. The narrator has special access to Catherine's thoughts and feelings, but also sometimes gives a brief sense of what the other characters are thinking and feeling. The narrator also occasionally intrudes into the narrative to provide a broader perspective on an issue raised by the story, like the importance of **dress** or the plight of novelists who are looked down upon. In these moments, the narrator resembles an essayist, seeking to put forward a thesis and provide supporting arguments.

Isabella Thorpe – A conniving, beautiful, and charming social-climber of twenty-one, Isabella befriends Catherine because Isabella believes the Morlands to be as wealthy as their neighbors the Allens, and she wishes to marry Catherine's brother James. Isabella often uses reverse psychology, saying the opposite of what she means to influence others to do what she wants them to do. Isabella's hypocrisy and desire to marry

for money are clear to those, like the Tilney siblings, who are more experienced than Catherine.

John Thorpe – A college friend of James Morland and brother to Isabella Thorpe, John Thorpe is an unscrupulous, rude braggart. He is a boring conversationalist who is only interested in horses, carriages, money and drinking, and lies whenever he thinks it will impress others or force them to give way to his will. He wishes to marry Catherine because he believes her to be wealthy, but he is so rude and self-centered that, although he sees himself as courting Catherine, she completely fails to understand his true intentions.

James Morland – Another Morland (Catherine's brother) who fails to suspect those he meets of hypocrisy, James is a loving brother, son, and friend who is easily manipulated by the Thorpes. He falls in love with Isabella and never seems to realize that she is a fortune-hunter. Eager to go along with Isabella and John, James pressures Catherine to do things she believes are wrong, showing that he has a weaker, less moral character than Catherine.

Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney) – Henry Tilney is the second son of General Tilney and is Catherine Morland's love interest. Like Catherine's father, he works as a parson in a rural community. He is witty, charming, and perceptive, with a much larger frame of reference and experience than Catherine has, but is also sincere and loyal. He is especially concerned for his sister Eleanor's happiness and welfare. Unlike his father, he is unconcerned with becoming even richer than he is already.

General Tilney – A rich man with many acquaintances, the General is obsessed with his social rank and the wealth of his family. His children all know that he would never want them to marry someone without wealth or high rank. He shows exaggerated kindness to Catherine because he believes her to be rich. The General fixates on home improvement, furniture, and landscaping his property (**Northanger Abbey**). He is very harsh and even dictatorial with his children, who know that he expects absolute obedience from them.

Eleanor Tilney (Miss Tilney) – A well-mannered, sensible, and sensitive young woman, Eleanor Tilney becomes friends with Catherine in Bath. Eleanor, whose mother died nine years before the action of the novel, suffers from loneliness when she is at home at **Northanger Abbey** with only her brusque and tyrannical father for company. General Tilney encourages her friendship with Catherine because he believes Catherine to be wealthy and wants her to be Henry's wife, but Eleanor is very happy to have the company and friendship of another woman.

Mrs. Allen – A very dim-witted, childless woman, Mrs. Allen is a neighbor of the Morlands who invites Catherine to accompany her and her husband to Bath for a holiday. She thinks about nothing but **clothing** and how much it costs, and remembers very little from most conversations, merely repeating things that those around her say back to them. Supposed to serve as a guardian to Catherine during the trip to Bath, Mrs. Allen is too incapable of independent thought to properly guide Catherine through social situations. She runs into Mrs. Thorpe, a woman she knew fifteen years before at boarding school, which leads to her and Catherine spending much of their time in Bath with the Thorpes.

Mrs. Thorpe – A widow who thinks and talks only about her children, Mrs. Thorpe hopes for her children to marry well. Mrs. Thorpe went to boarding school with Mrs. Allen and knew her to have married a rich man. She believes the Morlands to be wealthy based on their friendship with the Allens.

Mrs. Morland – A wife and mother to ten children, Mrs. Morland is not very aware of the dangers of society for a young, inexperienced woman of seventeen. She allows her eldest daughter Catherine to go to Bath with Mrs. Allen, whose character makes her an inadequate chaperone, and never imagines that Catherine might fall in love while there.

Mr. Morland A parson in a rural village, Mr. Morland is the father of ten children, including Catherine and James. Although he is not wealthy, he has enough money to make sure all of his children can live comfortably. This level of wealth is a disappointment to both Isabella Thorpe and General Tilney, who believed the Morlands to be wealthy and hoped to hope to raise their own social status by marrying into the Morland family.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Mr. Allen – A gruff but kind man, Mr. Allen is tolerant of Mrs. Allen's dimwittedness and does what he can to serve as a guardian for Catherine.

Frederick Tilney (Captain Tilney) – The oldest of the Tilney siblings and an officer in the British Army, Frederick Tilney has never fallen in love with a woman. He flirts with Isabella Thorpe, who believes he will marry her, but Frederick has no intention of doing so.

Mrs. Tilney – The mother of Frederick, Henry, and Eleanor, Mrs. Tilney died nine years before the action of the novel. Catherine preposterously suspects her husband, General Tilney, of having killed Mrs. Tilney.

Sarah Morland – Catherine Morland's younger sister.

Maria Thorpe – Isabella and James Thorpe's younger sister.

Anne Thorpe – Isabella and James Thorpe's younger sister.

Mrs. Hughes – Eleanor Tilney's guardian during her visit to Bath.

Miss Andrews – A friend of Isabella's, Miss Andrews is described by her as insipid.

Signor Montoni – a villain in the Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which Catherine has been reading. Catherine compares General Tilney to a Montoni when she imagines that

he has murdered or imprisoned his wife.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

NOVELS AND THE HEROINE

From its very first sentence, *Northanger Abbey* draws attention to the fact that it is a novel, describing its protagonist Catherine Morland as an unlikely heroine. Catherine is "unlikely" because, in most of the novels of the late 18th and early 19th century, heroines were exceptional both in their personalities and in their lives' circumstances, while Catherine is a rather average young woman. Throughout *Northanger Abbey*, Austen mocks typical novelistic conventions for their predictability, though never suggesting that this formulaicness makes novels unworthy of being read. Elsewhere in the novel, Austen also upends conventions of the typical courtship novel, especially in the way she describes the deepening relationship between Catherine and Henry.

Jane Austen wrote *Northanger Abbey* during a period when the popularity of novels had exploded and novel-reading had become an obsession, especially for women. British society was divided on the value of these books and debated novels' impact on the values and behavior of the women who were their most avid readers.

The most popular works of the second half of the 18th century fell into the related genres of sentimental and Gothic novels. Sentimental novels often portrayed the difficulties faced by a heroine in her pursuit of love and happiness, while Gothic novels placed this same plot into an even more dramatic context, by setting them in spooky **old castles** during exciting historical times and by including supernatural elements. Many critics condemned such novels as silly, and worried that the dramatic stories of love would influence young women to disobey their families when selecting a spouse. On the other side of the debate, proponents of the novel said that reading about the experiences and emotions of different characters strengthened readers' ability to feel compassion and act morally in their own lives.

Northanger Abbey sides strongly with the pro-novel side of this debate, but also does not portray the effects of novel-reading in an entirely positive light. In general, the book presents novels as influencing readers to explore the world and seek to understand it, although this sometimes leads to trouble. That trouble, however, can often lead to better self-understanding and a broader understanding of the world.

When Catherine seizes on the wild idea, drawn from novels, that General Tilney murdered his wife nine years earlier, *Northanger Abbey* is mocking the way that readers of novels can take their dramatic content too much to heart. Yet in this instance, Catherine's mistaken idea leads her into an embarrassing encounter with Henry, which ultimately teaches her to be a better judge of situations. Although her reading of novels led her into trouble, it also forced her to confront her own ignorance and to grow and mature.

Northanger Abbey is able both to defend and parody novels, in the end, because *Northanger Abbey* itself is an innovation in the novel form. In the book, Catherine Morland learns that the drama of her real life is no less vivid than the worlds she reads about in novels. This discovery of Catherine's functions as a kind of turning point for novels themselves, a marker signaling a shift in what constituted a novel. Soon after Austen published *Northanger Abbey*, novels more generally shifted away from the sentimental works that dominated the eighteenth century to the realist novels that dominated the nineteenth. It was a shift that Jane Austen anticipated.

SINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY

Northanger Abbey describes the experiences of Catherine Morland, a sincere young woman raised in a small, rural parsonage, as she comes into her first sustained contact with the worldly and sometimes hypocritical world of society. Catherine has grown up being told explicitly how others viewed her and her behavior, but those she meets in Bath society sometimes lie about or hide their true opinions to influence or manipulate others. Specifically, Catherine is taken in by the hypocrisy of Isabella Thorpe, who thinks the Morlands are rich and therefore seeks Catherine's friendship because she hopes to marry Catherine's brother James. Catherine similarly misunderstands the motives of General Tilney, who seeks to marry his son Henry to Catherine for the same reason. Meanwhile, both Isabella and General Tilney belittle the importance of wealth when in conversation, because they want to hide their motives. Their hypocrisy is eventually unmasked to Catherine once they realize that they were mistaken about the Morlands' affluence and then change the way they behave towards the Morland brother and sister. But to a reader of the time, these characters' hypocrisy and their ulterior motive of marrying someone for wealth rather than love would have been clear from the start. Their protestations not to care about money are much too overstated to be believable by anyone with a bit of experience.

While Catherine's sincerity makes her vulnerable to manipulation by hypocrites, the novel is not simply criticizing such sincerity. In fact, the novel shows how Catherine's sincerity also earns her the affection and loyalty of true and

caring friends. Henry and Eleanor Tilney find Catherine's sincerity refreshing, a bit comic, and ultimately extremely attractive. For them, her sincerity goes hand in hand with her other fine qualities: loyalty, curiosity, and lack of pretension. In the end, the contrast between Catherine's sincere love for Henry and Henry's father's hypocrisy in courting her only because he believed her to be an heiress convinces Henry that he must stand up to his father and marry Catherine, despite her lower social standing. Through the course of the novel, Catherine learns to better understand when others are not being forthright, but does not cease to be so herself. Although her assumption that others are sincere is a sign of her innocence, her own sincerity is not mere naïveté, but one of her most admirable character traits.

The novel, then, distinguishes between sincerity as naïveté and sincerity as honesty. The happy ending to Catherine's story, along with the unhappy one to Isabella's, shows that the novel prizes the latter view—sincerity as honesty. Although Isabella sought to marry to raise her position in the world and Catherine (despite her family's lack of wealth) had no such intention, Catherine's sincerity earns her this more comfortable and desirable fate.

WEALTH AND RESPECTABILITY

Northanger Abbey, like all of Jane Austen's novels, looks closely at the role wealth plays in social relationships, especially those between young people considering marrying. For Austen, social rank is not only determined hierarchically, with the wealthiest and those with the highest rank in the aristocracy at the top and all others below. Instead, most of the characters in *Northanger Abbey* are not aristocrats (with the exception of Eleanor Tilney after she marries a Viscount, much to her status-obsessed father's excitement), but members of the landed gentry. In Jane Austen's portrayal of this class, which drew its wealth from the land it owned and rented to tenants, fortune is important, and rich members of the gentry might strive to marry their children to members of the nobility. But these are far from the only factors that determine social status. Instead, true respectability is wrapped up in possessing the quality of genteelness – of being a gentleman or gentlewoman – which is dependent on each individual's manners.

Northanger Abbey presents a variety of characters who do not understand the importance of good manners to social status and only a few who do understand this distinction and are, therefore, truly genteel. Henry Tilney is more of a gentleman than his father, for example because he is polite and principled, along with being worldly and well-educated.

Northanger Abbey also satirizes a variety of the ways in which people betray their obsession with money. Some characters fixate on a certain category of material possessions and find themselves unable to talk about anything else, however much they bore their listeners. John Thorpe's intense interest in horses and carriages, Mrs. Allen's interest in **clothes**, and General Tilney's interest in home improvement all betray their fixation on money and what it can buy, while also making them seem a bit ridiculous. A true gentleman or gentlewoman would show a better sense of what social situations called for and would exercise restraint in expressing themselves.

Another way of parodying the obsession with money is by displaying the lengths that characters will go to hide this obsession. Both Isabella Thorpe and General Tilney claim to care nothing about money, when it is in fact the *only* thing they truly care about. Eventually, when they realize that the Morlands are not as rich as they had believed, their behavior towards the Morlands changes and their hypocrisy is unmasked.

General Tilney's terrible treatment of Catherine once he realizes she is not rich proves that he is not actually respectable. As Mrs. Moreland says upon Catherine's return, General Tilney "had acted neither honourably nor feelingly – neither as a gentleman nor as a parent." Even today, to send a teenager like Catherine home alone without making sure she had money and without consulting her parents would be considered both unkind and inappropriate. At a time when the protection of young women was so much more of a concern to all, General Tilney's action showed disrespect for the social codes that governed relationships. This action was not only rude, it was beyond the pale and put his status as a "gentleman" into doubt.

At the same time *Northanger Abbey* does not discount the importance of money. It is a sign of Catherine's naïveté that she does not see through the hypocrisy of Isabella, John, and General Tilney, who all say that they care little for money. Because, as any person familiar with the world should know, of course they must care about money at least to some extent. Money is important! Catherine's own happy ending attests as much. That Henry returns her love is wonderful, but just as excellent is the fact that marrying Henry will bring Catherine much more wealth than she or her family ever thought possible, and the comfort and security provided by that wealth.

EXPERIENCE AND INNOCENCE

Like most of Jane Austen's novels, *Northanger Abbey* is concerned with whether a young person will mature into a good judge of character. Some well-meaning adults in *Northanger Abbey* have blind spots that keep them from being objective judges of character, while other adults are manipulative, cruel, and hypocritical. As she navigates relationships with these different types of people, the pressing question for the young protagonist Catherine Morland is whether, in growing up and moving from innocence

to experience, she will become wise. This wisdom is tied to being judicious about whom to trust.

Catherine is principled and strong-willed, but also aware that her lack of experience makes her unable to judge how to behave in every circumstance. She wants always to act with propriety, especially when it comes to acting modestly and appropriately when interacting with men, and hopes to rely on the advice of others.

At the beginning of the novel, Catherine does not realize that she cannot trust every older and more experienced person to guide her. This is perhaps because Catherine is one of ten children, and her own mother has been so preoccupied with raising young children that "her elder daughters were left to shift for themselves" without much in the way of advice about how best to behave as they began their lives as adult women. As we see at the novel's conclusion, when Mrs. Morland fails to suspect that Catherine is suffering from heartache, Mrs. Morland is an example of a woman who, despite having ten children, has never lost her innocence about the world. She is a good woman, but not a wise one. It is likely because of Mrs. Morland's innocence that at the beginning of the novel she allows Catherine to go to Bath under the care of Mrs. Allen, an adult without the wisdom to help Catherine navigate Bath society.

Catherine also assumes that no one she knows would choose to take an unkind, immoral, or inappropriate action on purpose. When Isabella does something improper, Catherine assumes that she is only doing the wrong thing out of ignorance of what the right thing is. She does not understand that part of growing into adulthood is having to make one's own choices, wrong or right, and stand by them, and she often wants to intervene to let someone know that they are acting badly.

As Catherine gains experience, she also learns the importance of thinking for herself. When Catherine meets the unpleasant, rude boor John Thorpe and the domineering General Tilney, she assumes at first that her negative judgments of them are mistaken. It takes her time and a great deal of evidence to realize that John Thorpe, despite being her brother's friend, is a liar and an unpleasant companion. As she tries to make sense of her impressions of General Tilney, Catherine takes a different tact. She relies on the knowledge she has gained from books rather than knowledge she has gained from life and imagines General Tilney to be a horrible criminal, rather than just manipulative and wealth-obsessed.

Catherine is embarrassed when Henry discovers what she had been imagining his father to have done, and realizes how farfetched it was to assume that General Tilney was similar to a villain in a gothic novel just because she does not like him. But at the same time, she is growing to trust her own judgment. She realizes that she was not entirely wrong about the General, that although he is not a murderer, he may have major character flaws, and that in all people "in their hearts and habits, there was a general though unequal mixture of good and bad." In the end, when Catherine learns that the General drove her from his house because he realized she was not an heiress, she decides that "in suspecting General Tilney of either murdering or shutting up his wife, she had scarcely sinned against his character, or magnified his cruelty." Although this is an exaggeration, it shows that Catherine has come to feel confidence in her own judgment.

In a future not described in the novel, it seems reasonable to think that Catherine will be more confident in her judgment and more reasonable in the judgments she makes. She has gained experience of the untrustworthy from her encounters with the Thorpes and General Tilney, and learned also that she was right to place her trust in the good character of Henry and Eleanor Tilney. Overall, then, *Northanger Abbey* shows that, although experience does not always bring wisdom, if a young and innocent person pays attention to her surroundings and the lessons that experience teaches, she can mature into a person with good judgment that guides her to place her trust with those who deserve it.

LOYALTY AND LOVE

Northanger Abbey is a courtship novel that goes against certain important conventions of "courtship novels," especially to make the point that loyalty is the surest sign of true love. In most of the sentimental novels written during the time when Austen was working on *Northanger Abbey*, the heroine is exceptionally beautiful and the hero is head over heels in love with her. In *Northanger Abbey*, on the other hand, the roles are reversed. Catherine is attracted to Henry, and it is her obvious love for him, rather than his admiration of her, that binds him to her. Even once he feels affection and commitment to her, he still recognizes that his feelings for her did not originate as a deep attraction to her, but that "a persuasion of her partiality for him had been the only cause of giving her a serious thought." Indeed, it is only when his loyalty to Catherine is put to the test by his father's command that he forget about her that Henry decides that he loves her. Henry's sense that he would be acting disloyally by following his father's command serves to cement his affection for Catherine.

The central importance of loyalty to love is also emphasized in the novel's portrayal of a false love. In the novel's other central relationship, Isabella Thorpe's disloyalty to James Morland in flirting with Frederick Tilney betrays both her lack of true feeling for James and the fact that she is more concerned with marrying someone wealthy than with marrying someone she loves.

When Catherine is distressed by the flirtation between Frederick Tilney and Isabella (who is by this point James's fiancée) and asks Henry to tell his brother to leave Bath,

Henry's refusal to interfere with his brother is also a testimonial to the importance of loyalty to relationships. Henry explains that any interference on his part would not benefit James, because for Isabella's love to be worth anything she must be loyal to the man she loves without regard to the other men she meets. Similarly, the General's interference between Henry and Catherine only strengthens their resolve to be together. An essential part of love between spouses or prospective spouses is a refusal to let any third person come between them.

Northanger Abbey portrays courting couples as needing to have their loyalty to one another tested before a relationship can be said to have a solid basis for marriage, but it also makes a larger point about the nature of love itself. In many of the conventional novels that Austen parodies, love is an almost magical state of emotional attachment and physical attraction. In *Northanger Abbey*, Henry Tilney states that marriage is a contract in which the two spouses must work to be agreeable to one another and keep each other from ever regretting having married. Austen makes the case that for a marriage to work, there should be a conscious decision to enter into a contract and abide by it.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

OLD BUILDINGS / NORTHANGER ABBEY

Northanger Abbey parodies the gothic novels that Catherine Morland reads avidly, many of which are set in old buildings like castles and abbeys. Catherine, influenced by her gothic novels, hopes to have an adventure exploring one of these mysterious old buildings. But instead of involving herself in a thrilling narrative, Catherine's interactions with these old buildings (most notable Northanger Abbey itself) force her to get to know her own character and to improve her own capacity to judge situations independently. The pursuit of self-knowledge and personal happiness, the novel suggests, can be just as dramatic and difficult as the pursuit of the mysterious, supernatural, or criminal. Similarly, the novel suggests that a person's own self is like an old building, full of nooks and crannies and secrets that must be explored to be understood.

CLOTHING

Northanger Abbey presents clothing as one of the things that shallow or status-obsessed people fixate on. It is a sign of bad taste to think only of what one wears like Mrs. Allen does, or to dress flashily as Isabella Thorpe does. That said, *Northanger Abbey* is by no means anti-fashion. Instead, dressing well and elegantly, like Eleanor Tilney, and taking an interest in the economics of clothing, as Henry Tilney does, show worldliness and good taste.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin Classics edition of *Northanger Abbey* published in 2003.

Volume 1, Chapter 1 Quotes

No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be an heroine. Her situation in life, the character of her father and mother; her own person and disposition, were all equally against her.

Related Characters: Narrator (speaker), Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

The heroines of the Sentimental and Gothic novels popular at the time when Jane Austen wrote *Northanger Abbey* usually had certain qualities in common with one another. These heroines were beautiful, gifted at music and drawing, sensitive, moral, and modest. They were also generally either very rich or very poor, and often fell in love with men from a different class. From the novel's first sentence, then, the Narrator signals that this book will challenge prevailing ideas about who deserves to be the novel's central figure. The narrator satirizes the idea that anyone can be "born to be" a heroine, or born to be a "nobody." Every woman, even an average young woman from a middle-class home with a background like Jane Austen's, has her own life story which is no less interesting than dramatic adventures that would be unlikely to happen to anyone.

Volume 1, Chapter 2 Quotes

When the hour of departure drew near, the maternal anxiety of Mrs. Morland will be naturally supposed to be most severe. A thousand alarming presentiments of evil to her beloved Catherine from this terrific separation must oppress her heart with sadness, and drown her in tears for the last day or two of their being together; and advice of the most important and applicable nature must of course flow from her wise lips in their parting conference in her closet. Cautions against the violence of such noblemen and baronets as delight in forcing young ladies away to some remote farm-house, must, at such a moment, relieve the fulness of her heart. Who would not think so? But Mrs. Morland knew so little of lords and baronets, that she entertained no notion of their general mischievousness, and was wholly unsuspicious of danger to her daughter from their machinations.

Related Characters: Narrator (speaker), Catherine Morland, Mrs. Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 19

Explanation and Analysis

With biting satire, the Narrator describes how novels of the era typically described the scene in which a heroine leaves home and her mother for the first time. The possible dangers of being kidnapped, manipulated, or raped hung over the head of the modest, beautiful, teenage heroine in these novels. Here, the Narrator (and thus Austen) pushes back playfully against this formulaic convention and suggests that it is represented so often in novels that readers will be shocked to read about a mother who does *not* weep in fear for her daughter's safety. In this way, the novel once again points to the innovation it is making in choosing an average girl from an average family like Catherine's.

But while the extreme distress of heroine's mothers in Sentimental novels is gently mocked here, there is also a gentle mockery of Mrs. Morland. In letting her seventeen-year-old daughter leave home for the first time without giving her any warnings about those who might seek to take advantage of her, Mrs. Morland is proving herself to lack wisdom about the world. Although Catherine may not be heading into a dangerous world packed with villains, she is likely to at least receive male attention that will be new to her, given how isolated her upbringing has been up to this point. She will also be meeting all kinds of people, men and women, who may seek to take advantage of her for one reason or another. Mrs. Morland foresees none of this and thus has no warnings to give Catherine at all.

Volume 1, Chapter 4 Quotes

Miss Thorpe, however, being four years older than Miss Morland, and at least four years better informed, had a very decided advantage in discussing such points; she could compare the balls of Bath with those of Tunbridge; its fashions with the fashions of London; could rectify the opinions of her new friend in many articles of tasteful attire; could discover a flirtation between any gentleman and lady who only smiled on each other; and point out a quiz through the thickness of a crowd. These powers received due admiration from Catherine, to whom they were entirely new; and the respect which they naturally inspired might have been too great for familiarity, had not the easy gaiety of Miss Thorpe's manners, and her frequent expressions of delight on this acquaintance with her, softened down every feeling of awe, and left nothing but tender affection.

Related Characters: Catherine Morland, Isabella Thorpe

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine is thrilled and bowled over to meet a friend who can serve as a role model. Isabella is fashionable, pretty, sociable, and well-integrated into Bath society. Catherine knows only the dim-witted Mrs. Allen, while Isabella has studied Bath society, is trying to master it, and is more than happy to explain every phenomenon they see in Bath to her younger friend. Catherine is utterly devoted to Isabella, and Isabella (seemingly) to Catherine. Catherine looks up to her friend to learn how best to conduct herself and how to understand the behavior of other young people. For instance, Isabella can point out when someone is "quizzing" someone else, or playing a practical joke on them, and explain the meaning of the "quiz." For the inexperienced, country-bred and literal-minded Catherine, this kind of social activity specific to the young in fashionable society would have been particularly hard to decipher without Isabella's guidance. Isabella's strong opinions about fashion, however, indicate that she may be status-obsessed and vain.

Volume 1, Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ Isabella was very sure that he must be a charming young man and was equally sure that he must have been delighted with her dear Catherine, and would therefore shortly return. She liked him the better for being a clergyman, "for she must confess herself very partial to the profession" and something like a sigh escaped her as she said it. Perhaps Catherine was wrong in not demanding the cause of that gentle emotion—but she was not experienced enough in the finesse of love, or the duties of friendship, to know when delicate raillery was properly called for, or when a confidence should be forced.

Related Characters: James Morland, Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney), Catherine Morland, Isabella Thorpe

Related Themes:

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine has confided to Isabella that she met a man named Henry Tilney and found him charming, but that she has not seen him since. Isabella (we later learn) hopes to marry Catherine's brother James, so she is trying to become as close as possible to Catherine. She flatters Catherine by saying that Henry Tilney must have been just as interested in Catherine as she was in him. Isabella then goes on to hint that she also has a love interest that she would like Catherine to ask her about—another clergyman, just like Henry. Catherine, however, is far behind Isabella in her understanding of both romance and the indirect ways people hint at their romantic feelings. By saying she is interested in men who are clergymen and then sighing, Isabella is providing Catherine with the opportunity to question her about which specific clergyman she is in love with, but Catherine comes from a family that always speaks directly and honestly, so she lacks the experience to interpret such hints. Catherine knows that Isabella has met her brother James and knows that he is in training to be a clergyman, but she does not know to put these pieces of information together with the new information about Isabella's preference for clergymen and her eager friendliness towards Catherine to arrive at a suspicion that Isabella may have feelings for James.

Volume 1, Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ These manners did not please Catherine; but he was James's friend and Isabella's brother; and her judgment was further bought off by Isabella's assuring her, when they withdrew to see the new hat, that John thought her the most charming girl in the world, and by John's engaging her before they parted to dance with him that evening. Had she been older or vainer, such attacks might have done little; but, where youth and diffidence are united, it requires uncommon steadiness of reason to resist the attraction of being called the most charming girl in the world, and of being so very early engaged as a partner; and the consequence was, that, when the two Morlands, after sitting an hour with the Thorpes, set off to walk together to Mr. Allen's, and James, as the door was closed on them, said, "Well, Catherine, how do you like my friend Thorpe?" instead of answering, as she probably would have done, had there been no friendship and no flattery in the case, "I do not like him at all;" she directly replied, "I like him very much; he seems very agreeable."

Related Characters: Mr. Allen, John Thorpe, Isabella Thorpe, James Morland, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 48

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine's brother James has arrived in Bath with Isabella's brother John. It is Catherine's first time meeting John, and she finds him ill-mannered, entitled, and difficult to talk to. Catherine has grown up in the countryside, however, and has seemingly never before met a man of her age and class to whom she was not related. Thus she feels herself to be too inexperienced to trust her own first impressions of John's character, and instead decides to trust her older brother's judgment in choosing John as his friend. She also feels that, as Isabella's brother, John likely shares some of Isabella's qualities, and Catherine has been thoroughly won over by Isabella's flattery. Catherine also remembers the experience of going to a ball with only Mrs. Allen and having no one to dance with, so she is happy to know that she will not have to feel left out of the dancing and worry about being looked down upon as a girl who could not attract a partner at the ball tonight. It does not occur to her yet that being committed to dance with a partner she does not like will prevent her from being able to accept an invitation to dance from someone she likes better.

Volume 1, Chapter 8 Quotes

She could not help being vexed at the non-appearance of Mr. Thorpe, for she not only longed to be dancing, but was likewise aware that, as the real dignity of her situation could not be known, she was sharing with the scores of other young ladies still sitting down all the discredit of wanting a partner. To be disgraced in the eye of the world, to wear the appearance of infamy while her heart is all purity, her actions all innocence, and the misconduct of another the true source of her debasement, is one of those circumstances which peculiarly belong to the heroine's life, and her fortitude under it what particularly dignifies her character. Catherine had fortitude too; she suffered, but no murmur passed her lips.

Related Characters: Narrator (speaker), John Thorpe, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 52

Explanation and Analysis

John Thorpe had asked Catherine to dance at that night's ball, but he has now walked away to talk to his friends, leaving her without a partner. She is left sitting alone with the older women as she was during her first ball in Bath, and she feels that all eyes are on her, speculating as to why she cannot find anyone to ask her to dance. This trivial occurrence which causes Catherine so much distress is written about in terms that would have been familiar to readers of the Sentimental novels popular at the time when Jane Austen wrote *Northanger Abbey*. Heroines in these novels suffer neglect and abuse, sometimes even rape, for which they are then unfairly blamed. The typical heroine would keep silent about the true story behind any disgrace in a display of modesty that contemporary readers would have thought laudable. The Narrator suggests that Catherine's embarrassment at being without a partner at the ball is a trivial occurrence, but that it causes her heroine a distress that is just as worthy of being described as the more consequential trials faced by the typical heroine.

Volume 1, Chapter 9 Quotes

Catherine listened with astonishment; she knew not how to reconcile two such very different accounts of the same thing; for she had not been brought up to understand the propensities of a rattle, nor to know to how many idle assertions and impudent falsehoods the excess of vanity will lead. Her own family were plain matter-of-fact people, who seldom aimed at wit of any kind; her father, at the utmost, being contented with a pun, and her mother with a proverb; they were not in the habit therefore of telling lies to increase their importance, or of asserting at one moment what they would contradict the next.

Related Characters: John Thorpe, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 64

Explanation and Analysis

John and Catherine are on a carriage ride and John has bragged about his carriage, saying it is a much better carriage than her brother James's. Catherine, worried about James's safety, demands to know whether John believes that James's carriage is really unsafe. John continues to say what a rickety old carriage James has and that it is likely to crash, but when Catherine grows alarmed for her brother's safety, John immediately retracts everything he has said and says the carriage is perfectly safe.

As the narrator states here, Catherine lacks experience with this kind of behavior. Firstly, she has never encountered this sort of vanity. John lies about and exaggerates the quality of his own carriage and belittles other people's carriages in order to make himself seem better in relation to others. He believes that having a luxurious and speedy carriage will make him seem more distinguished and wealthy, and thus more attractive to (the presumably wealthy) Catherine. John also has no qualms about immediately reversing his statements if he finds that they are not producing the desired effect, caring nothing for the integrity or truthfulness of his assertions. Catherine, however, does not understand what could possibly motivate someone to take such diametrically opposed positions. It is still unclear whether Catherine will ever learn to understand hypocrisy and the vanity and manipulation that so often motivates it.

Volume 1, Chapter 10 Quotes

❝ It would be mortifying to the feelings of many ladies, could they be made to understand how little the heart of man is affected by what is costly or new in their attire; how little it is biassed by the texture of their muslin, and how unsusceptible of peculiar tenderness towards the spotted, the sprigged, the mull or the jackonet. Woman is fine for her own satisfaction alone. No man will admire her the more, no woman will like her the better for it. Neatness and fashion are enough for the former, and a something of shabbiness or impropriety will be most endearing to the latter.—But not one of these grave reflections troubled the tranquillity of Catherine.

Related Characters: Narrator (speaker), Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 71-72

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine anticipates seeing Henry Tilney at the next ball, and is lying awake considering what she will wear. The Narrator has said that Catherine has been told by a Great Aunt that dress is "at all times a frivolous concern," but this is a mimicry of an overstated idea. The Narrator's real position seems to be that dress is not utterly unimportant, as some moralizing older people would tell young girls at that time, nor is it important in the way that young women sometimes think it is. Although wearing something expensive and flashy is not likely to elicit men's admiration, the narrator says that men are drawn to women who look neat and fashionable. They do not care about the specific fabric or cut of the clothing, but are more interested in the way the clothing makes the woman look. Women, on the other hand, are competitive about clothing because they see it as a marker of wealth and social status. Dressing in very fashionable clothing will make other women jealous and draw their dislike.

The narrator does not actually advocate that a woman seek to dress badly in order to please other women. Instead, she points out this jealousy to suggest that the meaning of clothing for class can be distorted. While some women sought to display their wealth by wearing flashy clothing, others realized that this was not the behavior of a modest gentlewoman and that simple, up-to-date attire suggested that they were wealthy enough not to seek to prove their wealth with ostentatious fashions.

❝ "You will allow, that in both, man has the advantage of choice, woman only the power of refusal; that in both, it is an engagement between man and woman, formed for the advantage of each; and that when once entered into, they belong exclusively to each other till the moment of its dissolution; that it is their duty, each to endeavour to give the other no cause for wishing that he or she had bestowed themselves elsewhere, and their best interest to keep their own imaginations from wandering towards the perfections of their neighbours, or fancying that they should have been better off with any one else."

Related Characters: Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney) (speaker), John Thorpe, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 74

Explanation and Analysis

John Thorpe has just stopped Catherine on her way to the dance floor with Henry Tilney and complained that she was supposed to be his dance partner instead. John had not, in fact, asked Catherine to dance, but had merely assumed that he would be able to do so at the ball, but he detains her for several minutes, even telling her that he will arrange for Henry (whom he does not know) to buy a horse. Henry remarks on John's rudeness by saying that John had no right to interrupt them on the way to the dance floor, because an engagement to dance is an agreement similar to a marriage contract. Catherine is puzzled by this comparison, so Henry explains that dancing, like marriage, is an activity in which loyalty to your partner is paramount. Although Henry is being playfully imaginative as he makes this comparison, he also gives deep insight into his view of love and marriage. For Henry, loyalty to a commitment is more important than attraction or desire. Once two people have committed to one another, it is their duty to look out for one another and not to allow other people to come between them. This speech gives insight into Henry Tilney's values, which will be borne out later in the novel when his commitment to Catherine is tested by the intercession of his father.

Volume 1, Chapter 13 Quotes

It was painful to her to disappoint and displease them, particularly to displease her brother; but she could not repent her resistance. Setting her own inclination apart, to have failed a second time in her engagement to Miss Tilney, to have retracted a promise voluntarily made only five minutes before, and on a false pretence too, must have been wrong. She had not been withstanding them on selfish principles alone, she had not consulted merely her own satisfaction; that might have been ensured in some degree by the excursion itself, by seeing Blaize Castle; no, she had attended to what was due to others, and to her own character in their opinion.

Related Characters: Eleanor Tilney (Miss Tilney), Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 97

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine has refused to change her plans for a walk with the Tilneys to go on a drive with the Thorpes—so John Thorpe takes it upon himself to reschedule Catherine's walk with the Tilney's without her permission. Catherine refuses to accept this and is running away from Isabella, James, and John to rush to the Tilneys and confirm that she *does* want to go on the walk they had planned. Once again, John Thorpe has proven that he has no scruples when it comes to lying to get his way. Catherine on the other hand, has a strong sense of propriety and of loyalty to a promise given.

Catherine has already let the Tilneys down once, when John lied and told her he saw them leaving town to convince her to go on a drive with the Thorpes instead of waiting for the Tilneys to go on a walk. On this occasion, she saw how angry it made Henry Tilney when he thought she had purposefully ignored her commitment to take a walk. Henry has told her that he believes commitments should be honored, and Catherine shares this priority. For Henry and Catherine, it is important to follow through and keep your word not only when you want to, but at all times. This is a distinction that Henry sees as important to being well-mannered, honorable, and a gentleman or gentlewoman.

Although Catherine's priority is to keep her promise to the Tilneys, she insists to herself that this is not only out of a selfish desire to spend time with Henry, but out of a commitment to do what is right. She feels sure of her own motives in insisting on sticking to her plan with the Tilneys, because she has a competing desire to see and explore Blaize Castle, which John Thorpe told her was a grand old castle like those described in the Gothic novels she loves. Catherine has said before that interest in reading the Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* has stopped her from being too forlorn in Henry's absence. In fact, her interest in old buildings is often just as keen as her interest in Henry Tilney. It is as if Catherine has not yet decided whether she would prefer her story to be like a Sentimental novel, centered around a romance, or a Gothic novel, in which the romance takes place in an exotic and frightening location. What Catherine does not know, however, is that Blaize Castle was built only a few years before, so the promise that it is an old castle is just another of John Thorpe's lies.

Volume 1, Chapter 14 Quotes

But Catherine did not know her own advantages—did not know that a good-looking girl, with an affectionate heart and a very ignorant mind, cannot fail of attracting a clever young man, unless circumstances are particularly untoward. In the present instance, she confessed and lamented her want of knowledge; declared that she would give any thing in the world to be able to draw; and a lecture on the picturesque immediately followed, in which his instructions were so clear that she soon began to see beauty in every thing admired by him, and her attention was so earnest, that he became perfectly satisfied of her having a great deal of natural taste.

Related Characters: Narrator (speaker), Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney), Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 106-107

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine is taking a walk through the countryside around Bath with Henry and Eleanor Tilney, who begin to discuss which elements of the landscape would be best to capture in a drawing. Drawing was a skill cultivated by gentlewomen of the era; if a girl was good at drawing, it showed that her parents had invested in drawing instruction and meant her to have a life of wealth and leisure. Due to her inexperience with the world of high society, Catherine does not know that drawing is both a talent and a sign of social status. She sincerely wishes she knew about drawing because she wishes to be able to converse with the Tilneys intelligently and to make them like her. Henry, who has made fun of the hypocrisy and pretentions of many of those he meets in Bath, may like that Catherine is innocent of the class implications of drawing. He also finds her interest and faith

in what he says a sign of her attraction to him, which, in turn, makes him feel a certain loyalty and affection for her.

Volume 1, Chapter 15 Quotes

❝ "Morland says exactly the same," replied Isabella; "and yet I dare not expect it; my fortune will be so small; they never can consent to it. Your brother, who might marry any body!"
Here Catherine again discerned the force of love. "Indeed, Isabella, you are too humble.—The difference of fortune can be nothing to signify."
"Oh! my sweet Catherine, in your generous heart I know it would signify nothing; but we must not expect such disinterestedness in many. As for myself, I am sure I only wish our situations were reversed. Had I the command of millions, were I mistress of the whole world, your brother would be my only choice."
This charming sentiment, recommended as much by sense as novelty, gave Catherine a most pleasing remembrance of all the heroines of her acquaintance; and she thought her friend never looked more lovely than in uttering the grand idea.

Related Characters: Catherine Morland, Isabella Thorpe (speaker), James Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 114

Explanation and Analysis

Isabella and James are engaged, but James has not yet gotten his parents' permission for the marriage. Isabella believes the Morlands to be wealthy and fears that they will object to her as a daughter-in-law on the grounds that she has no fortune. Unaware that Isabella thinks the Morlands are wealthier than they are, Catherine believes all of Isabella's anxiety to arise from her fear of losing the man she loves. In fact, if Isabella knew the actual extent of the Morlands' fortune, she would not be interested in James at all, but she conceals her true motives by hypocritically saying how little she cares for money and overstating her absolute devotion to James. Catherine has read many novels about love across class lines, so Isabella's hypocritical speech seems to Catherine just like a sincere and romantic declaration drawn from a Sentimental novel. To Catherine, the fact that her family is not much richer than Isabella's makes Isabella's fear of rejection seem like an even more potent sign of Isabella's love for James.

Volume 2, Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ "It is not on my own account I wish for more; but I cannot bear to be the means of injuring my dear Morland, making him sit down upon an income hardly enough to find one in the common necessaries of life. For myself, it is nothing; I never think of myself."
"I know you never do, my dear; and you will always find your reward in the affection it makes every body feel for you. There never was a young woman so beloved as you are by every body that knows you; and I dare say when Mr. Morland sees you, my dear child—but do not let us distress our dear Catherine by talking of such things. Mr. Morland has behaved so very handsome you know. I always heard he was a most excellent man; and you know, my dear, we are not to suppose but what, if you had had a suitable fortune, he would have come down with something more, for I am sure he must be a most liberal-minded man."
"Nobody can think better of Mr. Morland than I do, I am sure. But every body has their failing you know, and every body has a right to do what they like with their own money." Catherine was hurt by these insinuations. "I am very sure" said she, "that my father has promised to do as much as he can afford."

Related Characters: Catherine Morland, Mrs. Thorpe, Isabella Thorpe (speaker), Mr. Morland, James Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 129

Explanation and Analysis

Isabella has received a letter from James informing her of how much they can expect to receive from his father upon their marrying—and it is a much smaller amount than Isabella had hoped for. Mrs. Thorpe may have been the source of the Thorpes' mistaken idea that the Morlands are a very wealthy family; she went to school with Mrs. Allen and knows the Allens to be wealthy. She may have heard from her son John that he had met someone named James Morland and told John to cultivate a friendship with James, just as Isabella has cultivated a friendship with Catherine, in the hope that her children would marry into money.

Isabella's disappointment in the provision promised by Mr. Moreland does not prevent her from continuing to hypocritically declare how little she cares for money. She claims that she is disappointed only because she feels that by marrying her, James will miss out on his fair share of the family wealth. It was not uncommon for parents to give a smaller amount of money to children who wanted to marry someone that the parents did not approve of. Isabella and Mrs. Thorpe seem not yet to have realized that Mr. Morland

has provided for his son as generously as he can. They believe that Mr. Morland is withholding his money out of a desire that his son marry a richer woman. They may hope to test this theory out, then, by dropping such broad hints to Catherine that they are disappointed in what Mr. Morland will provide.

Volume 2, Chapter 2 Quotes

"'Well, proceed by all means. I know how much your heart is in it. My daughter, Miss Morland," he continued, without leaving his daughter time to speak, "has been forming a very bold wish. We leave Bath, as she has perhaps told you, on Saturday se'nnight. A letter from my steward tells me that my presence is wanted at home; and being disappointed in my hope of seeing the Marquis of Longtown and General Courteney here, some of my very old friends, there is nothing to detain me longer in Bath. And could we carry our selfish point with you, we should leave it without a single regret. Can you, in short, be prevailed on to quit this scene of public triumph and oblige your friend Eleanor with your company in Gloucestershire? I am almost ashamed to make the request, though its presumption would certainly appear greater to every creature in Bath than yourself. Modesty such as yours—but not for the world would I pain it by open praise. If you can be induced to honour us with a visit, you will make us happy beyond expression. 'Tis true, we can offer you nothing like the gaieties of this lively place; we can tempt you neither by amusement nor splendour, for our mode of living, as you see, is plain and unpretending; yet no endeavours shall be wanting on our side to make Northanger Abbey not wholly disagreeable."

Related Characters: General Tilney (speaker), Eleanor Tilney (Miss Tilney), Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 132

Explanation and Analysis

General Tilney has walked into the room just as Eleanor is about to invite Catherine to come stay at her home, Northanger Abbey, and he issues the invitation himself. It is the first time in the novel that he gives a long speech and its content reveals a great deal about him. He says that he will let his daughter continue, but then cuts her off seemingly without even realizing it. This reveals that he is not a very considerate or accommodating parent.

The General then goes on to invite Catherine in very flattering and self-effacing terms. This scene comes only one chapter after we see that Isabella Thorpe has been disappointed to find out how much money the Morlands have, so the General's flattering speech to Catherine suggests that he is another hypocrite seeking to cultivate a relationship with Catherine in order to improve his social standing in the false belief that she is an heiress. But based on Eleanor and Henry's obvious good education and Eleanor's elegant way of dressing, it does not seem likely that the Tilneys really live as plainly as the General contends.

Volume 2, Chapter 3 Quotes

"A little harmless flirtation or so will occur, and one is often drawn on to give more encouragement than one wishes to stand by. But you may be assured that I am the last person in the world to judge you severely. All those things should be allowed for in youth and high spirits. What one means one day, you know, one may not mean the next. Circumstances change, opinions alter."
"But my opinion of your brother never did alter; it was always the same. You are describing what never happened."
"My dearest Catherine," continued the other without at all listening to her, "I would not for all the world be the means of hurrying you into an engagement before you knew what you were about. I do not think any thing would justify me in wishing you to sacrifice all your happiness merely to oblige my brother, because he is my brother, and who perhaps after all, you know, might be just as happy without you, for people seldom know what they would be at, young men especially, they are so amazingly changeable and inconstant."

Related Characters: Catherine Morland, Isabella Thorpe (speaker), Frederick Tilney (Captain Tilney), James Morland, John Thorpe

Related Themes:

Page Number: 138

Explanation and Analysis

Isabella's hypocrisy often takes the form of attributing her own thoughts and desires to someone else. In the past, Catherine has not picked up on this, because Isabella has attributed these desires to James or to "young men" in general. But in this case, Isabella describes her understanding of what passed between Catherine and John while actually giving a description of how she sees the situation between herself and James. When Isabella says

that Catherine may have given John encouragement without meaning anything by it, she is mostly describing her own regret at having become engaged to James. When Isabella says that John may be just as happy without Catherine as with her, she is suggesting that James may never really have loved her as much as he thought he did. And when she says that she would not judge Catherine severely if Catherine led John on, she is suggesting that Catherine should be similarly lenient about forgiving her, if she ends up jilting James. Isabella still wants to keep Catherine as a friend, seemingly because she now hopes for them to both marry into the Tilney family.

Catherine does not agree with anything Isabella is saying, whether these ideas are to be applied to her situation with John, or more generally. Catherine has no concept of idle flirtations that do not lead to marriage. She would be even more horrified at the idea of someone dissolving an engagement after they met someone else richer or more attractive. Catherine, like Henry, is a deep believer in the importance of loyalty to love. This speech of Isabella's, on the other hand, articulates the opposite theory: that love can be fleeting and commitments can be broken at a whim.

Volume 2, Chapter 4 Quotes

"My dear Miss Morland," said Henry, "in this amiable solicitude for your brother's comfort, may you not be a little mistaken? Are you not carried a little too far? Would he thank you, either on his own account or Miss Thorpe's, for supposing that her affection, or at least her good-behaviour, is only to be secured by her seeing nothing of Captain Tilney? Is he safe only in solitude?—or, is her heart constant to him only when unsolicited by any one else?—He cannot think this—and you may be sure that he would not have you think it. I will not say, 'Do not be uneasy' because I know that you are so, at this moment; but be as little uneasy as you can. You have no doubt of the mutual attachment of your brother and your friend; depend upon it therefore, that real jealousy never can exist between them; depend upon it that no disagreement between them can be of any duration. Their hearts are open to each other, as neither heart can be to you; they know exactly what is required and what can be borne; and you may be certain, that one will never tease the other beyond what is known to be pleasant."

Related Characters: Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney) (speaker), James Morland, Frederick Tilney (Captain Tilney), Isabella Thorpe, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 144

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine has told Henry Tilney that she is worried about the growing flirtation between his brother Frederick and Isabella, who is engaged to Catherine's brother James. Catherine then asks Henry to tell his father to intervene and send Frederick away, but Henry refuses. Catherine is still moving from girlhood, when anyone who misbehaved was told that they were doing the wrong thing, to womanhood, when there are many decisions that individuals make on their own. She does not realize that Frederick, James, and Isabella are all adults and cannot simply be told that they are behaving badly and should do something differently.

In explaining his refusal, Henry stresses the importance of loyalty to love. He explains that a relationship must be based on an understanding between two people: only these two people can be responsible for their own conduct as it affects one another. It is up to the two halves of a couple to decide what is and is not acceptable behavior. What Henry does not say, but follows from this principle, is that if Isabella cannot remain loyal to James without any outside interference, James will be best served by learning that fact before he marries her, so that he can break the engagement.

Henry's insistence on the importance of a commitment between two people that cannot be interfered with by anyone else foreshadows how he will act later in the novel, when his father tries to interfere in his relationship with Catherine.

Volume 2, Chapter 8 Quotes

To be kept up for hours, after the family were in bed, by stupid pamphlets, was not very likely. There must be some deeper cause: something was to be done which could be done only while the household slept; and the probability that Mrs. Tilney yet lived, shut up for causes unknown, and receiving from the pitiless hands of her husband a nightly supply of coarse food, was the conclusion which necessarily followed. Shocking as was the idea, it was at least better than a death unfairly hastened, as, in the natural course of things, she must ere long be released. The suddenness of her reputed illness; the absence of her daughter, and probably of her other children, at the time—all favoured the supposition of her imprisonment.—Its origin—jealousy perhaps, or wanton cruelty—was yet to be unravelled.

Related Characters: Eleanor Tilney (Miss Tilney), Mrs. Tilney, General Tilney, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 177

Explanation and Analysis

The General has said that he will stay awake after Catherine and Eleanor go to bed. Excited to be staying in an old building like Northanger Abbey, Catherine is on the lookout for signs of something mysterious or sinister that would be familiar to her from the Gothic novels she loves. She finds the General unpleasant and domineering, but she is not used to making such judgments for herself. Instead of imagining him to be a harsh man whose company she dislikes, Catherine concocts a theory that the General is a dramatic and murderous villain. When she hears that the General plans to stay up after everyone else goes to bed, she instantly remembers the way that Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* keeps the heroine's aunt locked up in the castle. She knows of no motive for a crime against Mrs. Tilney, nor is she sure that Frederick and Henry were not home at the time of their mother's death. But despite these many gaps in her knowledge, Catherine decides that she has finally found a mystery worthy of investigating. Earlier in the novel, Catherine was afraid even to think ill of someone—but now she swings to the opposite extreme, thinking the absolute worst of the General. Both attitudes reflect her lack of experience analyzing other people and the world around her.

Volume 2, Chapter 9 Quotes

"If I understand you rightly, you had formed a surmise of such horror as I have hardly words to—Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you—Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing; where every man is surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies, and where roads and newspapers lay every thing open? Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting?"

Related Characters: Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney) (speaker), Mrs. Tilney, General Tilney, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 186

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine has been looking at everything she sees at Northanger Abbey through the lens of the Gothic novels she has read, and has concocted a theory that General Tilney either murdered his wife or keeps her prisoner somewhere in the house. She has just realized that this was a foolish fantasy after sneaking into the deceased Mrs. Tilney's room to investigate, when she runs into Henry and reluctantly reveals to him that she suspected his father of committing some terrible crime against his mother. Henry, who knows that Catherine was excited about visiting an Abbey because so many Gothic novels are set in such old buildings, instantly understands that the basis for her suspicion was not her real observations, but the things she has read about in books. Henry has already had several conversations with Catherine during which he appreciated her ability to listen, learn, and mature. It is likely because of this trusting relationship that he gives her such a direct lecture about how far she let herself get carried away by baseless fantasies.

Henry has two main points. First, that Catherine should consider the society that they live in and what is probable to happen in it. Whereas in Gothic novels, the abbey or castle where a heroine may be kept captive is often far away from any town, on a cliff in the Italian countryside, Northanger is located in the middle of England. Catherine has been brought up in English society to respect the moral principles and codes of conduct that govern it (and presumably to assume, as Henry does, that England and the Christians living in it are more "civilized" than people in more exotic locations). She herself worries that she will violate these principles out of ignorance and inexperience and has a deep respect for them. Henry then feels that she should recognize that these principles restrain and guide other people's actions just as they do hers.

Second, Henry urges Catherine to think for herself and consult her own understanding instead of relying on other guides, whether they are novels or unreliable people around her. One of the book's central questions is whether Catherine will learn to analyze the behavior and motivations of other people. In suspecting the General of murdering his wife, she has failed at this analysis very dramatically—but Henry has faith that she can do better.

From what he knows of her, he thinks that she can learn from this failure and begin to exercise her own judgment moving forward.

Volume 2, Chapter 10 Quotes

Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the midland counties of England, was to be looked for. Of the Alps and Pyrenees, with their pine forests and their vices, they might give a faithful delineation; and Italy, Switzerland, and the South of France, might be as fruitful in horrors as they were there represented. Catherine dared not doubt beyond her own country, and even of that, if hard pressed, would have yielded the northern and western extremities. But in England it was not so; among the English, she believed, in their hearts and habits, there was a general though unequal mixture of good and bad. Upon this conviction, she would not be surprized if even in Henry and Eleanor Tilney, some slight imperfection might hereafter appear and upon this conviction she need not fear to acknowledge some actual specks in the character of their father, who, though cleared from the grossly injurious suspicions which she must ever blush to have entertained, she did believe, upon serious consideration, to be not perfectly amiable.

Related Characters: Catherine Morland (speaker), General Tilney, Eleanor Tilney (Miss Tilney), Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 188

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine had felt sure that Henry would no longer like her after he discovered her horrible suspicions about his father, but Henry, recognizing that she will feel embarrassed, treats her with kindness. Catherine soon moves on from the humiliation of the moment to reflect on what she can learn from it. She begins to compare the characterizations in Gothic novels to those of the people she knows. Her conclusions are in some ways exactly the ones that Henry suggested she ought to draw: that she should look around her and recognize that she lives in a society that is tightly controlled both by laws and codes of conduct, where gruesome crimes are unlikely to go undiscovered. She also takes his other piece of advice to heart, however, and begins to try to think for herself. In doing this, she recognizes that she may have been wrong about the General being a murderer, but this does not mean that he is a paragon of virtue. She recognizes that everyone has their good and bad qualities, and that she should take her own perceptions seriously and use her own mental powers to assess the people around her.

Volume 2, Chapter 11 Quotes

He went; and, it being at any time a much simpler operation to Catherine to doubt her own judgment than Henry's, she was very soon obliged to give him credit for being right, however disagreeable to her his going. But the inexplicability of the General's conduct dwelt much on her thoughts. That he was very particular in his eating, she had, by her own unassisted observation, already discovered; but why he should say one thing so positively, and mean another all the while, was most unaccountable! How were people, at that rate, to be understood? Who but Henry could have been aware of what his father was at?

Related Characters: General Tilney, Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney), Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 198

Explanation and Analysis

Henry Tilney has left Northanger to return to his home at Woodston and prepare for a visit from his family and Catherine. The General said that they would come on Wednesday, but that Henry should not worry about providing them with an elaborate meal. Henry has nevertheless rushed off to prepare this meal, much to Catherine's amazement. Although Catherine is progressing in her ability to assess people's characters, she is still unable to see through most hypocrisy. Catherine wants to decode the General's intentions, but is puzzled. For instance, the General's children believe that there is no way he would support the marriage of Isabella and Frederick, because of Isabella's small fortune. But Catherine cannot understand why Eleanor and Henry believe the General cares about money, because the General often speaks about how little money means to him, and, moreover, he obviously seems to want her and Henry to marry, although she herself has a small fortune. But the General also often talks about his modest taste in food, décor, and real estate, while Catherine has observed that he cares a great deal about these things. As Catherine meditates on the question of why the General says he does not care about food, while in reality he is extremely picky about it, the question of why he wants her

to marry his son, if he cares so much about money and she has no large fortune, cannot be far from her thoughts. The fact that the General speaks hypocritically is becoming clear to Catherine, but what this means for her future with Henry remains a mystery to her.

Volume 2, Chapter 12 Quotes

"I am quite uneasy about your dear brother, not having heard from him since he went to Oxford; and am fearful of some misunderstanding. Your kind offices will set all right:—he is the only man I ever did or could love, and I trust you will convince him of it. The spring fashions are partly down; and the hats the most frightful you can imagine. I hope you spend your time pleasantly, but am afraid you never think of me. I will not say all that I could of the family you are with, because I would not be ungenerous, or set you against those you esteem; but it is very difficult to know whom to trust, and young men never know their minds two days together. I rejoice to say, that the young man whom, of all others, I particularly abhor, has left Bath. You will know, from this description, I must mean Captain Tilney, who, as you may remember, was amazingly disposed to follow and tease me, before you went away. Afterwards he got worse, and became quite my shadow. Many girls might have been taken in, for never were such attentions; but I knew the fickle sex too well. He went away to his regiment two days ago, and I trust I shall never be plagued with him again."

Related Characters: Isabella Thorpe (speaker), Frederick Tilney (Captain Tilney), James Morland, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 202-203

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine has already heard from James that his marriage with Isabella has been called off, because she is presumably going to marry Frederick Tilney. Now, after it has become clear to Isabella that Frederick will not propose to her, she writes to enlist Catherine's help to salvage her relationship with James. In this context, and set down in a letter where each statement can be carefully considered, Isabella's true motivations could not be any more transparent. For instance, when Isabella writes that "many girls might have been taken in," she suggests that, in her place, anyone would have believed that Frederick Tilney meant to marry her judging by how much attention he paid her. Logically, though, it would not matter if Frederick did or not deceive Isabella about his intention to marry, if Isabella truly loved James and wanted to marry him, as she says earlier in the letter. But Isabella cannot help bragging about how much attention she received from Frederick, which makes her hypocrisy even more glaring.

Isabella is right about one thing: Frederick was fickle. He never intended to marry her, only to lead her on. But when she describes all men as "the fickle sex," after her disloyalty to James led to the breaking off of their engagement, it becomes clear that she is once again assigning faults to others that are actually her own.

Volume 2, Chapter 13 Quotes

That room, in which her disturbed imagination had tormented her on her first arrival, was again the scene of agitated spirits and unquiet slumbers. Yet how different now the source of her inquietude from what it had been then—how mournfully superior in reality and substance! Her anxiety had foundation in fact, her fears in probability; and with a mind so occupied in the contemplation of actual and natural evil, the solitude of her situation, the darkness of her chamber, the antiquity of the building were felt and considered without the smallest emotion; and though the wind was high, and often produced strange and sudden noises throughout the house, she heard it all as she lay awake, hour after hour, without curiosity or terror.

Related Characters: Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 212

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine is being expelled from Northanger Abbey by the General without any explanation. She here looks back on when she first arrived at Northanger, when she naively hoped to uncover a mystery like those she had read about in Gothic novels—when she *wanted* to be scared and agitated. Now she faces the mystery of why the General would turn on her so suddenly, but it is not a tantalizing, romantic mystery with supernatural undertones, although she still finds it inexplicable and painful. Catherine has matured a great deal since coming to Northanger in search of drama. She has realized that she much prefers a normal country parsonage, like the one where she grew up and the one where Henry lives, to an old building that could be the scene

for a Gothic novel.

This comparison of Catherine's real anxieties to the anxieties portrayed in a Gothic novel also recalls the opening lines of the novel, which mocked the conventions of many of the novels of the time in only choosing certain types of heroines—beautiful, talented, very rich or very poor—and only placing them in certain very dramatic situations—kidnapping, elopement, rape. The novel suggests that this moment of suffering for the unremarkable, middle-class Catherine is just as meaningful to her and worthy of reading about as any of the dramatic scenes of suffering portrayed in the Gothic novels that were most popular during that era.

Volume 2, Chapter 14 Quotes

❝ Without suffering any romantic alarm, in the consideration of their daughter's long and lonely journey, Mr. and Mrs. Morland could not but feel that it might have been productive of much unpleasantness to her; that it was what they could never have voluntarily suffered; and that, in forcing her on such a measure, General Tilney had acted neither honourably nor feelingly—neither as a gentleman nor as a parent. Why he had done it, what could have provoked him to such a breach of hospitality, and so suddenly turned all his partial regard for their daughter into actual ill-will, was a matter which they were at least as far from divining as Catherine herself; but it did not oppress them by any means so long; and, after a due course of useless conjecture, that, "it was a strange business, and that he must be a very strange man," grew enough for all their indignation and wonder; though Sarah indeed still indulged in the sweets of incomprehensibility, exclaiming and conjecturing with youthful ardor.

Related Characters: Mr. Morland, Sarah Morland, General Tilney, Mrs. Morland, Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 218-219

Explanation and Analysis

Catherine has just unexpectedly returned home to her family at Fullerton from Northanger Abbey after the General unceremoniously sent her away with no warning to her parents, unsupervised, and at the first possible moment. In a society in which unmarried gentlewomen were always watched over and looked after, this was a shockingly inappropriate action by the General. Catherine's parents had given responsibility for her care to the Allens when she went to Bath, and the Allens had entrusted her care to the General. The General was letting down this entire chain of guardians and their code of conduct by sending Catherine away on her own. Even the mild-mannered Morlands are clear that no gentleman would allow a young, unmarried gentlewoman to travel in this way.

But the Morlands, young and old, are not experienced analyzers of other people's motivations. The skill that Catherine has been cultivating during her trip to Bath—the ability to think for herself and form judgments about the actions and motivations of other people—is a skill that her parents lack nearly as much as her younger sister. Although Catherine's parents are good people, they are not particularly curious or wise. They do not even try to form a theory for why the General behaved as he did.

Volume 2, Chapter 15 Quotes

❝ She was assured of his affection; and that heart in return was solicited, which, perhaps, they pretty equally knew was already entirely his own; for, though Henry was now sincerely attached to her, though he felt and delighted in all the excellencies of her character and truly loved her society, I must confess that his affection originated in nothing better than gratitude, or, in other words, that a persuasion of her partiality for him had been the only cause of giving her a serious thought. It is a new circumstance in romance, I acknowledge, and dreadfully derogatory of an heroine's dignity; but if it be as new in common life, the credit of a wild imagination will at least be all my own.

Related Characters: Narrator (speaker), Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney), Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 227

Explanation and Analysis

Henry has followed Catherine to Fullerton after General Tilney kicked her out of Northanger Abbey, and has proposed to her. This proposal contrasts with those typical of the Sentimental novels of the time in several ways. First, all of those novels respected the convention of the day in giving the man the lead in beginning a romance. Although Catherine is younger and less sophisticated than Henry, she is the real driver of their relationship. It is her obvious attraction to Henry that then attracts him to her. Although the Narrator says that this is "derogatory of an heroine's dignity," it is a clear improvement on the lot of many of the heroines of Sentimental novels, who are so often pursued

by immoral villains instead of by men they like. Henry's sense that Catherine liked him, combined with his impression, as he got to know her, that she would remain loyal to him, trust in him, listen to him, and learn from him, made him feel tenderly to her when she made mistakes and loyal to her when she was mistreated by the General.

❝ The General, accustomed on every ordinary occasion to give the law in his family, prepared for no reluctance but of feeling, no opposing desire that should dare to clothe itself in words, could ill brook the opposition of his son, steady as the sanction of reason and the dictate of conscience could make it. But, in such a cause, his anger, though it must shock, could not intimidate Henry, who was sustained in his purpose by a conviction of its justice. He felt himself bound as much in honour as in affection to Miss Morland, and believing that heart to be his own which he had been directed to gain, no unworthy retraction of a tacit consent, no reversing decree of unjustifiable anger, could shake his fidelity, or influence the resolutions it prompted.

Related Characters: John Thorpe, General Tilney, Catherine Morland, Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 230-231

Explanation and Analysis

General Tilney has expelled Catherine from Northanger Abbey after learning that she is not an heiress. He has told Henry to forget about marrying her, but Henry, to the General's shock, is determined to defy his father. This fight between father and son represents a battle between wealth and true respectability. Henry has never before defied the General in this way, and likely always grew up imagining that he would marry a woman rich enough to please his father's greedy vanity. But now the General has thrown out everything else that makes a gentleman a gentleman in his treatment of Catherine, defying the code of conduct that requires the proper supervision and care of a gentlewoman. For Henry, money may be important, but behaving honorably and respectably is more so.

As a true gentleman, Henry cares about his honor, which is bound up in remaining loyal to Catherine. He feels that by courting her and leading her to believe that he wanted to marry her, he has bound himself to her. Although there is not yet an explicit engagement between them, he knows that she loves him and that he and his father have given her every reason to believe that he will marry her. Her love and his encouragement of it demand his loyalty, even in the face of his father's newfound disapproval.

Finally, as a hypocrite caught in his lies, the General does not want to accept the consequences of his mistake. Although the General said to Catherine that he did not care about money, he never expected to be forced to follow through on his many insincere declarations that he cared only for the happiness of his children. The General had hoped to set an example for Catherine, showing her that she should marry Henry even if she were richer than he was. Instead he will have to allow Henry to marry Catherine despite her relative lack of wealth.

Volume 2, Chapter 16 Quotes

❝ To begin perfect happiness at the respective ages of twenty-six and eighteen, is to do pretty well; and professing myself moreover convinced, that the General's unjust interference, so far from being really injurious to their felicity, was perhaps rather conducive to it, by improving their knowledge of each other, and adding strength to their attachment, I leave it to be settled by whomsoever it may concern, whether the tendency of this work be altogether to recommend parental tyranny, or reward filial disobedience.

Related Characters: General Tilney, Henry Tilney (Mr. Tilney), Catherine Morland

Related Themes:

Page Number: 235

Explanation and Analysis

The novel's last sentence emphasizes the importance of a commitment between two people to make love work. In this instance, Henry and Catherine's love is tested by the interference of the General, who seeks to split them up once he realizes that Catherine is not an heiress. It is Henry's decision to stand by Catherine through this that proves he loves her, and eventually the General gives his permission for Henry and Catherine to marry. The experience of having to wait and hope for permission that might never come provides Catherine and Henry with yet another test of their love. They can only communicate during the period of separation by letter, and through these letters they are able to learn about how they each deal with difficulties. Unlike Isabella and James, who failed to stay unified and committed to one another in the face of outside interference by Frederick, Catherine and Henry pass this test, and thus "begin perfect happiness" together.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 1

Northanger Abbey begins with a description of its unlikely heroine Catherine Morland as a child. Catherine is the fourth child of ten, and the oldest daughter of a sensible mother and a clergyman father with a comfortable but not very large fortune. As a child, Catherine is neither very beautiful, nor very accomplished at drawing or playing the piano, nor very good as a student. But neither is she mean or stubborn.

By pointing out that its heroine may seem unlikely, the novel begins by drawing attention to the fact that it is *a novel, while also addressing itself to readers of its time, who were accustomed to female protagonists being consistently portrayed as paragons of virtue and beauty.*

By adolescence, Catherine's appearance is less plain and she begins to have more of an interest in being **well-dressed** and to lose her taste for playing sports and getting dirty. Her parents begin to think she might be "almost pretty," which she takes as a wonderful compliment. Catherine's mother is very busy taking care of the six younger children and pays little attention to the development of her elder daughters. As a teen Catherine begins to read romantic plays and poems and learn about romance from them. By the age of seventeen, she has never had a crush on anyone or made anyone fall in love with her, which, however, is perfectly understandable, because she knows no one of her own age and rank. But, the Narrator observes, Catherine is destined to become a heroine, and a heroine must meet a hero. The Morlands' neighbor Mr. Allen, who owns much of the land around their home, invites Catherine to travel with him and his wife, Mrs. Allen, to Bath.

By emphasizing that Catherine is an average young woman, the novel pokes fun at the vast majority of novels written about exceptional people. The novel suggests that it is worthwhile to make average women the heroines of novels, as even average women dream of romance and go out into the world to have adventures. Even though Catherine's adventure is not an exotic one, it is a big change for her. As the narrator foreshadows, it is by going away with the Allens that Catherine will be able to meet "a hero." Not only will Catherine be going to a new place, she will travel there with the well-off Allens, which will be likely to impact who she socializes with when she is in Bath.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 2

Catherine is pleasant-looking, unaffected, affectionate, cheerful, and uninformed. As she prepares for this adventure in the wider world (her trip to Bath), it might be expected that her mother would worry about her daughter being seduced by wicked noblemen, but Mrs. Morland is too unexperienced with the world to have this concern. And although Catherine might have been expected to promise to write her sister daily, she did not. The Morlands were simple people, and they parted with Catherine without drama. Similarly, neither robbers nor storms interrupt Catherine and the Allens' journey to Bath.

The threat of seduction by a wicked nobleman is an idea drawn from the Gothic novels that many of Northanger Abbey*'s readers would probably know, while sisters so close as to find any separation painful could be found in many sentimental novels. The Morlands are not only too practical for melodrama, but also too inexperienced to anticipate danger. Catherine is, after all, going into a society where she will meet people who may want to take advantage of her, but her mother does not think to give her any warnings about this.*

It is necessary to describe Mrs. Allen, so that the reader can guess what kind of dramatic part she will play in Catherine's story. Mrs. Allen is a good-tempered gentlewoman, but neither beautiful, nor smart, nor accomplished, nor charming. She is obsessed with **fashion**, however, and so she and Catherine spend their first days in Bath shopping for clothes and getting their hair styled. After this makeover, Mrs. Allen compliments Catherine, saying she looks "as she should."

Mrs. Allen, like Mrs. Morland, is not wise and worldly. The only way she can help prepare Catherine to meet new people is by sprucing up her wardrobe, so that Catherine will look as though she has money. It is a further sign of Mrs. Morland's innocence and failure to judge character that she entrusts her daughter's care to Mrs. Allen.

On their first night out, Mrs. Allen takes so long getting ready that they arrive late to a ball. It is very crowded and they don't know anyone there. Catherine wishes to dance and Mrs. Allen wishes aloud repeatedly that Catherine could dance. But the two women know no one, and so no one can possibly ask Catherine to dance. Tea is served, and after jostling through the crowd to find a seat, they sit down alone together at the end of a long table where a party of strangers is sitting. Catherine feels awkward at seeming to barge into this party. Mrs. Allen wonders aloud whether her clothes have been damaged by the crowds, and repeats her wish that she had some acquaintance at the ball. Mr. Allen comes to collect the two ladies to go home. As the crowd thins out, Catherine can be seen by young men, and, as the Narrator remarks, it is time for a heroine to be noticed. No one is stunned by her beauty, but Catherine does overhear two gentlemen say that she is a pretty girl, and she is very content.

The first night out in Bath shows how little Catherine will be able to depend on Mrs. Allen to guide her socially. Outside of the topic of clothing, Mrs. Allen rarely has an original thought, doing little but repeating things that have already been said to her. The rules of social conduct, meanwhile, dictate that no one can ask Catherine to dance at a ball without having been introduced to her by a mutual acquaintance. Mrs. Allen is only interested in seeing people's clothing and being seen by them, so she does not recognize how awkward a situation this is for Catherine. Once again, the difference between Catherine and the typical stunningly beautiful heroine is underlined. But Catherine does not need to stun the crowds with her beauty; she is happy to be called pretty.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 3

Mrs. Allen and Catherine settle into a routine, but no matter how much Mrs. Allen wishes she knew anyone, she knows no one. One day in the Lower Rooms, one of Bath's two main ballrooms, Catherine is introduced by the ballroom's master of the ceremonies to a twenty-four or twenty-five-year-old man named Mr. Tilney, with whom she dances. After dancing, Mr. Tilney and Catherine sit and talk, and she finds that he is both a good conversationalist, gentlemanlike, and "very near" handsome.

Catherine is finally introduced to someone via an established channel for meeting a partner, through the master of the ceremonies. This man's role was to assess visitors' social status and introducing them to people they might get along with. Catherine is very pleased with her introduction to someone so "gentlemanlike." The master of the ceremonies may have believed her to be wealthier than she is due to her connection to the Allens.

Mr. Tilney parodies the usual small talk of strangers who become acquainted in Bath, asking Catherine about the minute details of her activities there. Catherine has never heard someone speak in this manner and, although she finds him funny, she is unsure whether it would be rude to laugh. Mr. Tilney continues, saying Catherine surely keeps a journal, because it is by keeping journals that ladies write much more charming letters than men write. Catherine doubts that women write better letters than men, and it turns out that Mr. Tilney was joking: he believes men and women equally capable of excellence in everything "of which taste is the foundation."

In the first conversation between Catherine and Henry Tilney, it is immediately made clear that one is innocent and the other experienced. The experienced Mr. Tilney's jokes, however, show that he is not jaded and hypocritical just because he knows the world so much better than Catherine does. Instead, he gently mocks the conventions of small talk in Bath and letter writing by ladies, which he sees as affectations assumed by people hypocritically trying to fit in.

Mrs. Allen interrupts their conversation by asking Catherine to help fix a pin in her sleeve. Mr. Tilney engages Mrs. Allen in a detailed conversation about fabrics, saying that he sometimes buys them for his sister. Mrs. Allen is very impressed by his expertise and talks to him about **clothing** until dancing begins. Catherine wonders if perhaps Mr. Tilney draws too much pleasure from making fun of others' weaknesses, but still agrees to dance with him again. He asks her what she is thinking about, but she blushes and does not say.

Here, as Mr. Tilney engages the foolish Mrs. Allen on her favorite topic, Catherine begins to wonder if he is being cruel. After all, Mrs. Allen's obsession with clothing seems to Catherine a harmless weakness, which should be humored but not encouraged. She does not yet realize that the worldly Henry Tilney often takes a minute interest in many topics and can even derive pleasure from a talk of this kind with Mrs. Allen.

Catherine goes home, hoping to meet Mr. Tinley again and continue the acquaintance. Although it might be inappropriate for a lady to fall in love before a gentleman does, the Narrator says it "cannot be ascertained" whether Catherine dreamt about Mr. Tilney even before he had ever dreamt of her, which would probably be improper. Mr. Allen makes inquiries about Mr. Tilney and learns he is a clergyman from a respectable family.

The narrator suggests that Catherine, going against conventions (particularly in novels) for women of the time, may be developing feelings for Mr. Tilney before he has let her know that he is interested in her. More practically, Mr. Allen establishes that Mr. Tilney is respectable and an appropriate acquaintance for Catherine.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 4

Catherine eagerly looks for Mr. Tilney the next day in the "Pump-room," but he is nowhere to be seen. More luckily, however, when Mrs. Allen repeats for the umpteenth time her wish that they knew anyone in Bath, this wish is finally, unexpectedly fulfilled. Mrs. Allen is approached by a Mrs. Thorpe, an old schoolmate, and they are joyful at this reunion, despite having never missed one another during their fifteen-year separation. They catch up, talking over one another, but Mrs. Thorpe has the advantage of having more to say, because she has six children and Mrs. Allen has none. Mrs. Allen comforts herself, however, with the thought that Mrs. Thorpe is not as **well dressed** as she is.

The Pump-room was the principle place where people went to meet and socialize during the day, while also drinking the mineral waters that were said to improve health. Although Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Thorpe knew each other many years before, Mrs. Allen knows little about Mrs. Thorpe's current life and does not think to consider whether the Thorpes are appropriate companions for Catherine, as Mr. Allen had done with Mr. Tilney. Instead, the two older women express a feigned joy to meet again and then try to outdo one another. Neither of them has the restraint or taste to think about the other's interests, a quality the novel associates with true gentlemen and gentlewomen.

Mrs. Thorpe's three daughters approach, and when they are introduced to Catherine, exclaim how much she looks like her brother. They explain that Catherine's brother James is a friend of their brother John, and Catherine remembers that her eldest brother spent time at the Thorpes' house over Christmas. The oldest Miss Thorpe, Isabella, offers to walk around the room with Catherine, and they strike up a friendship, discussing balls, **fashion**, and flirtations. Isabella Thorpe is four years older and more experienced than Catherine, but she is so friendly that Catherine does not feel intimidated. Isabella even walks Catherine to the door of Mr. Allen's home, and Catherine is very glad to have made such a friend.

Isabella immediately wins Catherine over with her friendliness and willingness to share her knowledge of Bath. Catherine does not think that Isabella may have any ulterior motives or be anything but sincere in showing her so much friendliness. She follows Mrs. Allen's lead in trusting the Thorpes and sees the fact that her brother James is friends with them as further proof that it is appropriate for her to socialize with the Thorpes, and that indeed she ought *to befriend them.*

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 5

That evening at the theater, Catherine nods pleasantly across the room to Isabella, while also looking for Mr. Tilney. She looks for him again the next day, which the Thorpes and Allens spend together, but sees him nowhere. Isabella encourages Catherine, saying she is sure Mr. Tilney likes Catherine and will return to Bath. With a loaded sigh, Isabella also confesses to also liking clergymen very much, but the inexperienced Catherine does not ask what about this profession makes Isabella seem so wistful.

Catherine grew up in a very straight-talking family. Just as she struggled to understand when Mr. Tilney was joking during their first conversation, she now fails to take the hint Isabella drops about who Isabella loves. Meanwhile, she is glad to receive Isabella's opinion on her prospects of seeing Mr. Tilney again, not realizing that Isabella may be flattering her.

Daily, Mrs. Allen exclaims how happy she is to have met Mrs. Thorpe in Bath so that they have some acquaintance. She and Mrs. Thorpe spend all their time together, although when they are together Mrs. Allen talks only of her **clothing** while Mrs. Thorpe talks only of her children. Catherine and Isabella quickly become the best of friends, calling each other by their Christian names, spending all their time together in fair weather, and staying in to read novels together when it rains.

The fact that Catherine and Isabella call one another by their first names so quickly would have set off warning bells in the heads of readers of Austen's time. Among proper gentlemen and gentlewomen, this form of address was generally reserved for family and lifelong friends of the family. The innocent Catherine is guided by those around her and does not think that this rush toward intimacy might suggest that Isabella wants something out of their relationship.

Although many novelists do not portray their heroines as novel-readers, the Narrator explains, this is unjust. Writers of novels should stick together, since they are so often attacked in the press, and one way to do this is to portray their characters as readers of novels. Reviewers often treat all novels as trash, despite the pleasure these books provide readers. Acclaim is given to people who write books like the abridged History of England, which has been written hundreds of times already, but not to novelists. People deny that they read novels and readers of novels are ashamed to admit that they read them.

The narrator points to the hypocrisy of many who profess to despise novels, including novelists who write characters who despise novels, indicating that it is a sign of sincerity to admit to finding these books entertaining. To pretend to be too good for novels is a misguided attempt to seem to belong to a class of serious people without time for the emotions explored in these works.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 6

Isabella and Catherine meet in the Pump-room and have a warm and affectionate conversation. Isabella says that she saw a beautiful **hat** in a shop window. She asks Catherine if she has continued to read the novel *Udolpho*, and Catherine tells her which part in the book she is reading. Catherine speculates enthusiastically about what will happen in the coming chapters, saying she is sure there will be a skeleton hidden behind the black veil. Isabella says that she has a list of other terrifying novels given to her by her friend Miss Andrews.

Catherine is avidly interested in the novel she is reading, The Mysteries of Udolpho *by Ann Radcliffe, and is eager to learn what happens next and to read other similarly scary stories. Isabella, on the other hand, sees novels more as a fashionable topic of conversation, on par with the hat she saw in the window. She has a list of other fashionably frightening books given to her by a friend.*

Isabella says that Miss Andrews is beautiful but men never appreciate her beauty, and adds that she sticks up for her friend by scolding them. Catherine is surprised that Isabella would scold men for not being attracted to someone. Isabella says that no one would ever slight Catherine, who is very attractive to men. Catherine is again surprised and blushes, but Isabella says that Catherine has the animation which Miss Andrews lacks. Isabella says that she saw a young man looking at Catherine as if he loved her the day before, but she knows that Catherine can only think of one man. Catherine says that Isabella should not encourage her to think about Mr. Tilney because he may never return. Isabella says she is sure Catherine would be miserable if she did not believe that Mr. Tilney would return, but Catherine responds that she cannot be miserable so long as she is reading *Udolpho*, and they resume talking about the book.

Catherine does not recognize Isabella's flattery for what it is, but instead looks to the more-experienced Isabella as a source of wisdom. Isabella talks coyly about Catherine's feelings for Mr. Tilney, but at this point, having only met the man once, Catherine honestly admits that she has not pledged her heart to him and is too caught up in her book to feel very sad at his absence. Catherine does not overstate how much she cares for Mr. Tilney for dramatic effect, in the way the fashionable Isabella thinks appropriate.

Isabella says she thinks it odd that Catherine has never read *Udolpho* before, but says that she assumes that Catherine's mother will not allow her to read novels. Catherine says that her mother likes novels, but that in the countryside, they rarely receive new books. Catherine mentions *Sir Charles Grandison* as a title her mother likes. Isabella says that she had heard that this was a terrible book.

Sir Charles Grandison *(1754) was more than 40 years old by the time* Northanger Abbey *was written. Isabella's disdain for this book is another sign that she is mainly interested in novels as a sign of her own fashionableness and worldliness.*

Isabella asks Catherine what she will wear that evening, because she wants to **dress** exactly like Catherine, something which men sometimes notice. Catherine says she does not care if men will notice, and Isabella agrees that she never does anything to please men. Isabella asks what kind of complexion Catherine prefers in a man, then after Catherine responds Isabella notes that Catherine's description matches the description she gave of Mr. Tilney exactly. Isabella describes the complexion she prefers in a man, then says that Catherine must never comment on this if they meet someone with that complexion. Catherine promises that she never will. Isabella says she has said too much and they should drop the subject, which puzzles Catherine.

Even though Isabella clearly talks a great deal about male attention and how to get it, Catherine does not realize that Isabella actually seeks male attention, even when Isabella explicitly says that they may attract attention by dressing in the same way. Catherine also does not understand that Isabella expects her to try to guess the secret of whom Isabella loves. Catherine would be incapable of teasing Isabella about a crush, as the more experienced Isabella expects Catherine to.

Isabella says that she sees two young men staring at them and that they ought to move. After they move, she asks if the men are still looking at them. She suggests that they go to look at her new **hat**, and Catherine says that they may run into the two young men if they leave right then. Isabella says that she never changes her behavior to suit young men, and they set off to follow Isabella's plan to see the hat, while actually walking quickly in pursuit of the two men.

Catherine does not notice that Isabella is courting male attention, which Isabella denies, despite the fact that they are actually following two young men out into the street. Catherine's innocent obliviousness and Isabella's barely concealed hypocrisy are both on absurd display to comic effect.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 7

Catherine and Isabella follow the two young men, but are prevented from crossing the street by traffic. Isabella is complaining about this, when she realizes that one of the carriages being driven on the street, very recklessly, is her brother's. As it turns out, Isabella's brother is accompanied by Catherine's brother, whom she is surprised and pleased to see. James Morland greets his sister warmly, although Isabella seeks his attention with her smile. If Catherine had watched James's face as he spoke to Isabella she might have realized that there was an attraction between them.

Catherine innocently assumes that her brother has come to see her and that Isabella's brother has come to see the rest of his family. The fact that she has always grown up far from any young man of her social rank is on clear display. She does not even suspect the possibility of a love affair despite the clear evidence on both Isabella and James's faces that they have a connection.

John Thorpe, Isabella's brother, approaches the other three. He is stout and not very tall, and acts as if he is always at his ease, which comes across as rudeness. He begins to ask Catherine questions about his horse and carriage, topics about which she knows little, and cannot make conversation. He claims that they have come 25 miles in two and a half hours, although James Morland says they have come 23 miles in three and a half hours. John asks Catherine how much she thinks the carriage cost, and she says she cannot guess. When he tells her, she says she is not sure whether that was a good deal or a bad deal, and he says it was neither: he could have gotten it for less but he didn't want to haggle.

John Thorpe is another character who shows that he is no gentleman by failing to suit his conversation to the person with whom he is speaking. Moreover, he brags about things that no one else cares about or is impressed by, seeking to show that he is the owner of a marvelous horse and carriage by lying about how long it took them to reach Bath. He brags about the price he paid for the horse and carriage, wanting to be seen both as having gotten a good deal and having been generous with his money.

The gentlemen then decide that they will escort the two ladies back to the Thorpes' lodgings. Isabella pays such complete attention to James that she only looks at the two young men that she and Catherine had followed from the Pump-room three times. John Thorpe walks with Catherine and continues to talk to her about his horse, and tells Catherine that he will drive her around in his carriage every day. Catherine thanks him although she is not sure that this is proper. Isabella says that she would like to ride with them too, but John Thorpe says he did not come to Bath to drive his sisters about town. After this, John talks exclusively about whether passing women are pretty or ugly, and Catherine is not confident enough in her judgment to make any reply.

Although Catherine has not yet figured out Isabella's desires, the reader gets a hint that, while Isabella wants James's attention, he is not the only man she is interested in. Meanwhile, John continues to choose a topic of conversation of no interest to Catherine, then suggests a date which Catherine is not sure would be appropriate behavior for two young unmarried people. When he says he will not drive his sisters around, Thorpe shows that he is vain about who he is seen with. Finally, he chooses another, even more inappropriate topic of conversation by commenting on women's appearances.

After a while Catherine asks John if he has ever read the novel *Udolpho*. He says that he never reads novels, which are all trash, except that he reads books by Mrs. Radcliffe occasionally. In embarrassment, Catherine tells him that *Udolpho* also was written by Mrs. Radcliffe, but he is not embarrassed and goes on to criticize another novel.

The narrator warned us in the last chapter that denying enjoyment of novels is a sign of hypocrisy, and here John Thorpe shows how far this hypocrisy can go. He does not even know the author of the books he calls trash.

They arrive at the Thorpes' lodgings and John Thorpe rudely greets his two other sisters, saying they look ugly. He tells his mother to find a place for him and James to stay near them. Mrs. Thorpe is charmed to see her son. Catherine does not like John Thorpe's manners, but she reserves judgment because he is Isabella's brother and James's friend, and because he asks her to dance at a ball that night. When James asks her if she likes John, she says that she does.

It is clear how little Catherine trusts her own judgment now. John Thorpe is obviously rude, but instead of wondering why her brother is friends with him, Catherine imagines that her own impressions of John must be inaccurate. While she lacks the confidence to draw this conclusion, it is clear that this is not because she is unperceptive.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 8

That night at the ball, the Thorpes and Allens meet. James wants to dance with Isabella, but Isabella declares that she will not dance with James until Catherine can dance with John, who is in the other room. Catherine is grateful for this, but several minutes later Isabella says that James is impatient to dance and goes off to dance.

Isabella wants to show loyalty to Catherine by waiting with her until John returns, but she also wants to dance with James. To show her interest in James, she does the opposite of what she says, as if she is irresistibly drawn to him, then puts the blame for leaving Catherine alone on James's shoulders.

Catherine is left alone with Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Thorpe. She feels sure everyone around her believes that she was unable to secure a partner. This kind of trial often occurs in the life of a heroine, observes the Narrator. After ten minutes, Catherine sees Mr. Tilney across the room, but he does not see her. Mr. Tilney is talking to a young woman, but Catherine does not assume him to be married, throwing away a chance at falling into despair. She assumes this woman must be his sister, because he has not acted like a married man, and she is guided only by what seems likely.

This minor setback for Catherine is compared to the trials and tribulations faced by the typical heroine of a sentimental novel on her path to find love and happiness. But Catherine's sensibleness means that, unlike the typical heroine in a novel, who might have fainted at the sight of the man she loves with another woman, she assumes that there has been no secret wife, but only a sister she already knew about.

Mr. Tilney gives Catherine a smile of recognition, then approaches her party along with Mrs. Hughes, a woman who is accompanying his sister Miss Tilney and knows Mrs. Thorpe. He addresses himself to both Catherine and Mrs. Allen, who says that she is very glad to see him and feared that he had left. Mrs. Allen goes on to say how pleasant it is in Bath and complains that Mr. Allen does not want to stay. Mr. Tilney asks Catherine to dance, and, with real bitterness, she turns him down, because she must keep her promise to dance with John.

Like Catherine, Mr. Tilney's sister is accompanied by a woman who can look after her. Instead of trying to ease Catherine's social life in Bath, however, Mrs. Allen engages in some of the small talk about life in Bath that Mr. Tilney had mocked the first time he and Catherine met.

Finally, John Thorpe appears. He does not apologize for keeping Catherine waiting and talks about his friend with whom he plans a swap horses and dogs. Catherine is not comforted in her loss of an opportunity to dance with Mr. Tilney, and looks back at him frequently. Catherine is also separated from Isabella and James and reflects that she was mistaken in believing herself lucky to go to a ball already set to dance with a partner.

Having already gone to one ball where she had no partner, Catherine had looked at John Thorpe's early invitation to dance as a security against being looked at by those around her as a girl who cannot attract a partner. But the ill-mannered John Thorpe has kept Catherine waiting so long that his early invitation to dance has become a burden.

Mrs. Hughes approaches Catherine and asks if Miss Tilney can stand near her during the dance and Catherine eagerly agrees. Miss Tilney is pretty and agreeable. She is not attention-seeking or boldly **fashionable**, but has a quality of real elegance. Catherine is very eager to get to know her, but she can only think to make small talk.

Here we see that Mrs. Hughes is serving as a much better guardian to Miss Tilney than Miss Allen serves for Catherine. Mrs. Hughes was likely hired by Miss Tilney's father to accompany her to Bath, while Catherine has herself been brought to serve as a companion.

Isabella approaches and grabs Catherine's arm, complaining that James kept her from coming to find Catherine and saying that she has been scolding him for his laziness. Catherine points Miss Tilney out to Isabella, who exclaims at her beauty and asks where Mr. Tilney is. When James tries to join the conversation, Isabella scolds, saying that they are not speaking of him, and even if they were, he should not listen. Catherine feels a bit suspicious at how easily Isabella forgot her curiosity to see Mr. Tilney. As a new dance starts, Isabella tells Catherine that James insists on dancing again, which she says she thinks scandalous. Isabella asks Catherine if she would be shocked if she danced with James again, and Catherine says she would not be, but they should not dance if it will make Isabella uncomfortable. Isabella soon walks off to dance again with James.

Here once again, Isabella wishes to portray herself as a loyal friend to Catherine while also showing no interest in Catherine's interests. She turns the topic of Mr. Tilney into a topic to flirt with James about. Instead of trying scrupulously to obey the rules for appropriate behavior between young men and women as Catherine does, Isabella wishes to create the impression that she is bending those rules for James's sake. In this way, she presents herself as both more modest than most women, while also dropping clear hints that she is in love with James, which she hopes will make him love her.

John has walked away and Catherine hopes Mr. Tilney will ask her to dance again, so she returns to the older women, hoping to see him. Mrs. Allen says that Mr. Tilney had said he wanted to dance and she thought that if he ran into Catherine he would have asked her. Then they see Mr. Tilney leading another woman to the dance floor. Mrs. Allen says that Mr. Tilney is a very agreeable young man, and Mrs. Thorpe says she thinks him the most agreeable man in the world, although she is his mother. Mrs. Allen remarks to Catherine that Mrs. Thorpe must have thought that they were talking about John Thorpe.

This is one of the few instances when Mrs. Allen has an original thought—and it is about her competitiveness with Mrs. Thorpe, who only talks of her children, while Mrs. Allen only talks of clothing. Mrs. Allen has done nothing, meanwhile, to help facilitate Catherine and Mr. Tilney dancing, but merely repeats her praise of him in a fixed phrase, saying that he is a very agreeable man.

John Thorpe approaches Catherine and says he supposes they ought to dance again. Catherine says she does not want to dance, nor does she take him up on his offer to walk about and tease people. The rest of the night, she hardly sees Mr. Tilney or Miss Tilney, and Isabella gives her very little attention.

Here we see the first major instance of John Thorpe's incredibly rude presumption and sense of entitlement. He does not pay attention to the social niceties that make a man a gentleman, but seeks to show that he is one by treating other people highhandedly.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 9

The next day, Catherine wants to become better acquainted with Miss Tilney and plans to seek her out in the Pump-room. She spends the morning reading her book and responding to Mrs. Allen's idle remarks about **clothing**. Suddenly, John Thorpe arrives and tells Catherine to hurry and get ready to go on a drive with him, Isabella, and James. Catherine is surprised, because they had not planned to go on a drive. She gives Mrs. Allen a questioning look, but Mrs. Allen does not understand that her feedback is being sought, so Catherine asks Mrs. Allen whether she ought to go. Mrs. Allen says she should do as she likes. Catherine decides to delay her attempt to get to know Miss Tilney better and to go on the drive with the others.

Catherine had a sense that it might not be appropriate to go on a drive alone in a carriage with John Thorpe, but hoped to rely on the guidance of others. Perhaps the unscrupulous John noticed this and decided to spring the drive on her without getting her agreement to go. Mrs. Allen does not give Catherine any guidance, merely agreeing with the proposition in front of her, as is her usual practice. But since Catherine is inexperienced in judging the weaknesses of others, she takes this indifferent answer to mean that the ride will be appropriate.

Catherine goes out and greets Isabella, who complains that Catherine kept them waiting, praises the ball, and says she has so much to talk to Catherine about, but for now Catherine must hurry into John's carriage so that they can be off. Catherine overhears Isabella tell James how much she adores her.

Isabella continues to play up how much she cares about Catherine as a friend without actually spending any time with Catherine. Her supposed love for Catherine has become little more than a way of flattering and attracting James.

In the carriage, John says his horse is very wild, which frightens Catherine, who is then happily surprised to see that the horse moves quietly. John says the horse's calmness is due to his skill as a coachman. Catherine wonders why he alarmed her if he can control his horse, and decides to stop worrying about danger and enjoy the ride.

As we have already seen from his exaggerated description of how fast it goes, John's horse is much more sedate and tame than John Thorpe thinks fits his dashing personality. Catherine does not understand lying about this kind of thing out of vanity.

John then asks Catherine if "old Allen is as rich as a Jew" and if he is her godfather. She says she believes him to be very rich, but that he is not her godfather. She affirms that she spends a great deal of time with the Allens. John then asks if Mr. Allen drinks a great deal. Catherine denies this vehemently. John says that people do not drink nearly enough, and brags about how much he drinks at Oxford, saying that people there drink so little that they are impressed when people at his party drink five pints each. Catherine does not understand much of what John says. She concludes that students at Oxford drink a great deal, but thinks that James surely does not.

John Thorpe talks in an informal and sometimes offensive way that he thinks makes him seem tough and experienced, but which Catherine can hardly understand. Catherine does not guess from his asking whether she has a rich godfather that he may be investigating how much money she will bring to an eventual marriage. She is so far from considering him as a possible spouse that she only concerns herself with what he says insofar as it impacts her brother.

Thorpe talks on and on about his carriage. Catherine lacks knowledge of the subject, but she agrees with whatever he says. Catherine, referring to something John said during his endless discussion of horses and carriages, asks if he really thinks that James's carriage will break down, and he says it is very rickety and will definitely crash. Catherine is very alarmed and says they must stop James, but John responds that James will certainly be safe. Catherine is astonished by the way John can say two opposing things, but she decides that he would not let his sister and friend be exposed to danger, and that she is unlikely to get a clear answer from him. John continues talking in hyperbole about his amazing feats as a coachman and a hunter. Although he is James's friend and Isabella's brother, Catherine "boldly" surmises that based on how tiresome she finds his company, he may not be entirely agreeable.

Catherine is apparently having her first extended encounter with a braggart who says things he does not mean. John says that James's carriage is rickety only to make his own carriage seem fancier in comparison. But Catherine does not care at all whether John's or James's carriage is impressive, so long as riding in them is not dangerous to the people she cares about. This is the second time on this ride that John has scared her for seemingly no reason, and although she does not understand his motives, she begins to be fed up with his boring conversation and inaccurate statements.

When they arrive back at the Allens, Isabella expresses regret that it is too late for her to accompany Catherine in. She laments that it has been such a long time since she spent time with her "dearest Catherine." She asks if Catherine agrees that the time passed amazingly quickly, but does not wait to listen to her friend's answer.

Again, Isabella is using Catherine as a prop in her conversation with James. She wishes to tell him how wonderful a time she had with him, but does so indirectly through Catherine, who she otherwise ignores.

Back at the Allens', Catherine learns that Mrs. Allen ran into Mrs. Hughes in the Pump-room and then walked on the Crescent with Mr. Tilney and Miss Tilney. Mrs. Allen talked to Mrs. Hughes a great deal, but can remember little. She is not sure whether Mr. Tilney is the only son, or if the Tilneys are orphans, but she is sure their mother was rich and is now dead, because Mrs. Hughes told her that a set of pearls Mrs. Tilney received as a gift on her wedding-day have now been passed on to Miss Tilney. Disappointed to have missed this encounter, Catherine decides the drive was no substitute for failing to see the Tilneys, and that John Thorpe is "quite disagreeable."

Mrs. Allen can only recall facts that relate to clothing and jewelry, the topics that concern her. Although she should have observed Catherine's interest in Mr. Tilney by this point, she fails to even help Catherine by remembering information about the Tilneys that she is told. Regret at having missed an opportunity to spend time with the Tilneys makes Catherine more sure of her own judgment about John Thorpe's character than she would have otherwise been.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 10

That night at the theater, Isabella sits between Catherine and James. She tells the latter that she will not talk to him all night because she must catch up with Catherine. She compliments Catherine on her hair and says that she will attract all the men. Her brother is already in love with Catherine, she says, and Mr. Tilney has proved he loves her by having come back to Bath. She asks if Mr. Tilney is in the theater, but he is not, which Isabella bemoans. She says that she and James had talked that morning about how sick they are becoming of Bath and that they discovered that their taste in all things is identical. Had Catherine been there, Isabella says, she is sure she would have made some pointed remark about their being meant to be together. Catherine says she would never make such an improper remark, and Isabella spends the rest of the evening talking to James.

Isabella has been playing up her friendship with Catherine to attract James, saying that she has a million things to say to Catherine. Really, Isabella wants Catherine to help her to develop her relationship with James by making coy remarks about their flirtation. Catherine, of course, has noticed nothing out of the ordinary in her friend's relationship with her brother, because she has seemingly never watched a romance develop in person before. When Isabella says that Catherine would have made a pointed remark, Catherine denies that she would have acted so inappropriately, not realizing that Isabella wants her to behave this way.

The next morning, Catherine is determined to meet Miss Tilney in the Pump-room. She walks apart from the others with Isabella and James, but begins to feel that this is not very much fun, since they do not include her in their whispered conversation. Although they occasionally appeal to her to support them in their disputes, she does not know the topic and cannot weigh in.

Despite feeling slightly excluded, Catherine still fails to recognize that Isabella and James are courting one another. Meanwhile, James begins to use the same flirtatious technique as Isabella, appealing to Catherine for her opinion, essentially to use her as a prop.

Catherine finally sees Miss Tilney and goes to speak with her. Although their conversation is very common, they both speak with uncommon sincerity. Catherine talks about how well Mr. Tilney dances, explains why she could not dance with him at the ball, and asks about the lady with whom he danced. They part, saying they hope to see each other at the ball the next night. From this conversation, Miss Tilney has a sense of Catherine's feelings, but Catherine has no sense of having given it.

The other side of Catherine's inability to sense romance developing right in front of her is an inability to be discreet with her own romantic feelings. She does not realize how much she is giving away by expressing her interest in Mr. Tilney so sincerely. However, while Miss Tilney is more savvy, she also speaks sincerely to Catherine, showing that this is a quality of Catherine's she shares.

Catherine goes home very happy and begins to plan what she will wear the next night. The Narrator states that this consideration is very frivolous, as Catherine had once been told by a great aunt—it would have been a message better delivered by one of the opposite sex. When women dress well, the Narrator explains, it only gives themselves pleasure, but it is not uncommon for women to imagine that men will be attracted to them because of their **clothing**.

Part of being a gentlewoman, Austen suggests, is to dress elegantly. This involves wearing clean, up-to-date styles, without slavishly following all the current fads or wearing flashy clothing that is obviously meant to draw attention to one's wealth or beauty.

At the ball, Catherine tries to avoid John Thorpe, whom she fears will ask her to dance again, making it impossible for her to accept Mr. Tilney's offer if he asks her. Isabella says that, despite how improper it may seem, she is going to dance with James again and that Catherine and John should come to find them on the dance floor. Catherine is giving up hope of dancing with Mr. Tilney, but at that very moment, he asks her to dance. As they walk to the dance floor, Catherine is stopped by John Thorpe, who objects to her dancing with Tilney, saying that she had agreed to dance with him. Catherine responds that she wonders why he thinks so, because he never asked her. He insists that he had asked her, then, asking about her companion, rambles on about horses that he could arrange for Mr. Tilney to buy, until the jostle of the ball separates John from Catherine.

Catherine has gained enough experience to realize that John Thorpe may be an obstacle to her spending the ball getting to know the Tilneys better. Although she has avoided him, John acts as though Catherine committed to dance with him. As part of his rudeness and entitled behavior, John often forgets (whether on purpose or by accident hardly matters) to go through the polite ritual of inviting and being accepted. His lack of real romantic interest in Catherine is revealed when he does not see Mr. Tilney as a true rival, but immediately reverts to his favorite topic: the buying and selling of horses.

Once John is gone, Mr. Tilney says he nearly got quite angry at John for interrupting them on the way to the dance floor. He says that a dance is like a marriage—the partners are committed to only look after each other's happiness. Catherine says that marriage is very different, because you must go and live together. Mr. Tilney asks if he can have no assurance that Catherine will not be distracted again. Catherine replies that she knows no one at the ball, though if John speaks to her, she must talk to him, as he is a friend of her brothers. Mr. Tilney asks if that is the only security he can expect. She says that it is very good security, because if she knows no one, no one can speak to her, and then adds that she does not want to talk to anyone else. This, he says, is security worth having.

Catherine's innocence and sincerity are on full display here. She does not realize that Mr. Tilney is flirting with her or drawing her attention to the importance of loyalty in courtship and love. She only recognizes the facts of the matter: that she does not know anyone else in the ballroom besides John Thorpe. Unlike the coy Isabella Thorpe, who acts as if James is distracting her from other people, Catherine sincerely and unambiguously says that she does not want to talk to anyone else. But she says this almost as an afterthought, without realizing how boldly she is thereby revealing her feelings.

Mr. Tilney asks Catherine if she is enjoying Bath as much as she was when he first met her. She says she does not think she shall get sick of it, to which he replies that everyone commonly says that they are bored by Bath after they have run out of money to stay there. Catherine notes that Bath is very entertaining compared to life in the countryside. When Mr. Tilney asks if she does not like the countryside, she says she has always lived in the country and been very happy, but also that if all her family were in Bath she would be perfectly content. Mr. Tilney says that no one would ever tire of Bath if they brought such a fresh perspective to it.

Mr. Tilney's worldliness is in stark contrast to Catherine's innocence, but we begin to see that he finds the sincere enjoyment she expresses about life in Bath to be refreshing. He has heard many hypocritical people say they are tired of Bath, when really they have just run out of money to stay longer. Catherine, on the other hand, finds pleasure in meeting new people, while also staying deeply loyal to the closest people to her: her family back in Fullerton.

As they dance, Catherine sees a handsome older man looking at her, and who then whispers to Mr. Tilney. She worries that there is something odd in her appearance drawing his attention. Mr. Tilney, however, explains that this man is his father. Catherine gasps, and then watches General Tilney admiringly.

Ever sensitive to the possibility that she is unwittingly breaking some rule of propriety that she does not know about, Catherine assumes that the General is looking at her disapprovingly.

Before leaving that night, Catherine chats with Miss Tilney and they agree to take a country walk together with Mr. Tilney the next day, if it does not rain. The Tilneys are to call for Catherine at noon. And although Catherine saw little of Isabella for the rest of the evening, her joy at that evening's events is not diminished by having been unable to share them with Isabella.

The Tilneys are becoming more important to Catherine than the Thorpes. Although Catherine has yet to consciously admit this, she has begun to see through Isabella's hypocritical declarations of caring for her and to instinctively rely less on Isabella.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 11

The next morning it looks like it will rain, and Catherine anxiously monitors the weather, appealing to Mr. Allen and Mrs. Allen for their opinion on whether it will rain, if it will stop raining, and if the Tilneys are likely to keep their date to go on a walk despite the rain. It stops raining and Catherine is wondering whether the Tilneys will still come for their walk, when Isabella, John, and James arrive in two carriages. Catherine declares that she cannot go on a ride with them, but must wait to see if the Tilneys will come. John, however, rushes in telling her to get ready quickly, but she says she cannot go, because she is expecting the Tilneys.

Catherine is unsure whether the Tilneys will keep their date despite the rain, and anxious to see whether their commitment to spend time with her will hold despite the day being less than ideal for a country walk. For her part, she feels sure that she must wait at home to see if they come because she has made a prior commitment to them. Furthermore, her last ride with John Thorpe was unenjoyable and got in her way of spending time with the Tilneys.

John objects that she should come anyway, and then Isabella comes in to encourage her. Isabella says that she and James had the idea at the exact same moment that morning and would have gone earlier if it had not been for the rain, but that they will be able to go to Clifton and on to Kingsweston. James says he doubts they will have time for that much, but John says they will be able to do even more, going also to Blaize Castle. Catherine asks if Blaize Castle is an **old building** and like the castles one reads about in books, and John assures her it is. Catherine says she would like to go, but repeats that she cannot because she expects the Tilneys.

Isabella is continuing to draw attention to how perfectly matched she and James are. Despite being under the Thorpes' influence, James never falls for John's exaggerated views of how far they can travel in their carriages and realizes that Blaize Castle is too far away for them to reach that day. Catherine, however, is swayed by the inducement of seeing an old building like those in a gothic novel.

John then says that he saw the Tilneys driving in a carriage out of town, so they could not be coming to see Catherine. Catherine says the Tilneys must have decided it was too muddy from the rain, but perhaps they will come back once it becomes drier. John says he heard Tilney telling a man that they were going out of town. Catherine appeals to Mrs. Allen, who says she may go riding with the Thorpes and her brother.

If John Thorpe really had seen the Tilneys leaving town, he would have said so earlier in the conversation. But despite having seen how John Thorpe can lie in order to get what he wants or produce an effect, Catherine is still too inexperienced with dishonesty to question him here.

In the carriage, Catherine looks forward to seeing an **old building** like the one in *Udolpho*, but feels hurt that the Tilneys gave up so easily on taking a walk with her. John sees a girl look at Catherine as they ride by and asks Catherine who it is; Catherine turns and sees Eleanor and Henry Tilney walking down the street. Catherine shouts for John to stop the carriage so that she can go back to the Tilneys, but John only makes his horse run faster, despite her protestations and anger that he had lied to her about having seen them leave town. John says the man he saw looked just like Tilney and does not stop. Eventually, Catherine is forced to accept that she cannot escape the moving carriage.

Catherine feels that the Tilneys must not care very much for her, if they let this small amount of rain get in the way of seeing her. When she sees the Tilneys in the street, she realizes that they will probably think that she does not care much for them, since she did not even wait to see if they would come. John's behavior continues to grow increasingly rude and even frightening, as here he essentially forces Catherine to accompany him against her will. Now all she can do is hope that Blaize Castle provides a consolation.

Catherine is still angry, however, and does not to talk with John during their drive. She feels she would much rather not have disappointed the Tilneys no matter how thrilling the castle is. Still she looks forward to seeing this **old building**. After about an hour, James pulls up and says that they must go back: they have only driven seven miles and it is too late to continue. John is angry, but they turn back. He says that James ought to keep a better horse and gig, because his slow horse held them up. Catherine responds that certainly James should not keep a horse and gig, because he cannot afford it. John replies that it is James's fault if, despite having so much money, he cannot afford a gig. Catherine does not try to understand what John means, and instead stops talking to him.

Blaize Castle was built only a few years before Northanger Abbey *was written, so it is yet another manipulation of John's to tell Catherine it is an old building. John has also once again exaggerated his horse's capacities and is angry at having this made clear by James. He blames the delay on James in such a way that he reveals his belief that James is rich. Catherine is so indifferent to John Thorpe's opinions that she does not stop to wonder why he thinks James is rich or what this suggests about her own relationship to the Thorpes.*

When Catherine returns to the Allens', she learns from the footman that the Tilneys called for her, and when they were told she had left with the Thorpes, asked if she had left a note. Catherine is filled with regret. That evening Isabella seems undisturbed by the fact that they did not make it to their destination. Catherine feels that Isabella is not very concerned with Catherine's unhappiness. Isabella, however, blames the Tilneys for having let the bad weather make them late and says she and John would never have kept Catherine waiting in that way.

Isabella compares herself and her brother to the Tilneys, saying they would be more loyal to Catherine, despite showing no sensitivity to Catherine's unhappiness about the course the day took or to the fact that John ruined Catherine's plans. This is another instance in which Isabella lets Catherine down, although Catherine has yet to admit to herself that Isabella is not as good a friend as she once believed.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 12

The next morning Catherine asks Mrs. Allen if it would be alright for her to go to the Tilneys' lodgings to explain what had happened the day before. Mrs. Allen says to go, but to wear white, the color Miss Tilney always wears. Catherine gives her card at the door, and the servant goes upstairs to check whether the Tilneys are home. The servant returns and says they are not home, although his face tells Catherine that he may be lying. As Catherine leaves, she turns back and sees the Tilneys leaving their house. Catherine is mortified that they decided to refuse her visit, and is unsure if what she did in missing their walk was so bad as to deserve this stonewalling.

Having spent the previous morning worrying that the Tilneys would not keep their date with her to take a country walk, Catherine feels particularly unsettled at the idea that they think that she did not care enough about their date to wait to see if they would keep it. She does not know how etiquette dictates she proceed, gets no real guidance from Mrs. Allen, and then cannot be sure whether the Tilneys are in the right to slight her when she comes to see them.

Hurt by this rejection, Catherine considers not attending the theater that night, but has no excuse to stay home and she wants very much to see the play. She is distracted by the play, which is entertaining, and because she does not see the Tilneys in the theater. Isabella has told her that anyone who has been to the theater in London will find the Bath theater inferior, and she thinks that perhaps that is why the Tilneys do not attend.

Catherine is aware of her own lack of experience and assumes that those around her have more sophisticated taste. In fact, those like Isabella who declare that their taste is too refined for Bath are often merely trying to seem more sophisticated than they are.

During the fifth act, however, Catherine sees Henry Tilney. He bows at her without smiling. Very distressed, Catherine feels no angry pride, only a sense of shame at his believing her to have acted badly. At the end of the play, Henry comes to see them. Catherine anxiously and vehemently tells him what happened and how much she wished to get out of the carriage and run to them when she saw them from the carriage. Henry Tilney softens. He explains that Eleanor did not refuse to see her in anger; General Tilney had planned on taking a walk then and had told the servant to put Catherine off because he did not want it delayed. Eleanor, Henry says, had hoped to see Catherine and explain this. Catherine asks why Henry himself had been angry with her, if Eleanor had forgiven her. Henry denies having been offended, but Catherine says that anyone would have thought him offended who saw his face. He does not answer this. They decide to take their delayed walk sometime soon, and he leaves.

Catherine's sincere desire to do the right thing and to be understood earns her nearly instant forgiveness from Henry. In her innocence, she does not realize that by saying he looked angry at her for missing their date, she is also implying that he cares about her in a way that might not be appropriate for a young woman to suggest to a man. As Henry explained during the ball, he takes plans – whether to dance, or to go on a country walk – as a small, ceremonial, but important contract that should be as loyally kept as marriage vows. Catherine does not fully grasp this as a philosophy of romance, but intuitively knows that she should follow through with plans as if they were promises.

During their talk, Catherine notices John Thorpe and General Tilney speaking. Afterwards, when John Thorpe approaches her, she asks him how they know each other. John says that he knows everyone and that the General is a fine man and very rich. He also says the General thinks her "the finest girl in Bath," which makes Catherine very happy. She had worried that the General disliked her, and is overjoyed to think he admires her. John Thorpe accompanies her to her carriage, despite her telling him she does not need his help.

John Thorpe uses the fact that he talked to the General to highlight his own importance—and anyone who had more clearly assessed John Thorpe's character would have wondered if her beauty was really all they talked about. But, innocent of the true materialism of Bath society, Catherine is reassured to hear that the General thinks her pretty and does not wonder what else passed between the two men. (We later learn that it is here that John tells the General that Catherine's family is very rich.)

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 13

Walking on the Crescent, Isabella and James decide that, tomorrow, they should continue their carriage ride that they had cut short. They go to tell Catherine, who has been speaking with Miss Tilney, that this is the plan, but Catherine objects, saying she is very sorry but she has just planned with Miss Tilney to take their delayed walk tomorrow. Isabella urges her to put off her walk with Miss Tilney and go with them. Catherine refuses repeatedly. Isabella says that the Tilneys now swallow up all of Catherine's attention, and Catherine thinks it is very unkind of Isabella to draw everyone's attention to her feelings for Mr. Tilney.

Unlike Henry Tilney, the Thorpes do not see commitments as unbreakable promises, but hope to opportunistically shape events for their convenience. Isabella suggests that Catherine is disloyally placing newer friends above older ones, hinting that Catherine does this because she has feelings for Mr. Tilney. Revealing Catherine's secret is, of course, an act of disloyalty.

James also begs Catherine to reconsider, saying she can hardly hold out so stubbornly when "such a friend" asks her to go. Catherine proposes a compromise, saying that they can all go in two days, but they say that John may want to go to town that day. Isabella says that she cannot go if Catherine will not; she cannot be the only woman. Catherine suggests that one of Isabella's sisters accompany her, but John Thorpe's rejoinder is that "he did not come to Bath to drive my sisters about, and look like a fool." Catherine says she must do what she thinks is right, and Isabella says that she suspects it is not very hard for Catherine to choose the Tilneys over them. Catherine's arm had been linked with Isabella's, but now she draws her arm away, and they continue to walk in uncomfortable silence.

The fact that James is under the Thorpes' sway and demands that Catherine change her plans to suit them makes the situation even more difficult for her, as Catherine believes she should be loyal to her brother. Catherine sincerely wishes to do what is right and will not change her plans because she thinks it is wrong, but Isabella tries to frame Catherine's refusal to meet her own selfish demand as an act of selfishness. For someone as conscientious about trying to do what is right as Catherine, this is a weighty accusation.

John, who had walked off for a few minutes, returns. He reports that he just spoke to Miss Tilney and told her that Catherine had sent him to ask if they could postpone their walk until Tuesday, and that Miss Tilney agreed. James and Isabella are glad to hear this, but Catherine says she will go after the Tilneys and change their walk back to Monday and that she refuses to be tricked into doing something she thinks is wrong. Isabella and John grab her arms to keep her from running away, but she breaks free. John wants to follow her, but James says to let her go.

This is a turning point for Catherine. Earlier, she had been unsure in her own judgment of these situations, but now she trusts her own judgment and resolutely sticks to her decision to take her walk with the Tilneys as planned. The instance also reveals how easily John Thorpe lies. The fact that the Thorpes physically grab Catherine further proves how little they care about how they behave so long as they get their way.

Catherine runs to the Tilneys' lodgings and bursts in without waiting to be shown into the parlor by the servant. She gives a jumbled explanation of what had happened. Miss Tilney says that she had been surprised by Mr. Thorpe canceling the walk they had only just agreed to take. General Tilney is angry at the servant for not having shown her in properly, but Catherine assures him that it was her own fault. He asks her to stay and spend the rest of the day with his daughter. Catherine says that she must go home to the Allens, but promises to come a different day. The General walks her out, giving her many compliments, and bowing to her gracefully.

In her eagerness to tell the Tilneys that she did not mean to break their date a second time, Catherine breaks with the normal etiquette by running in without being announced by a servant. While Catherine cares about following etiquette, doing the right thing and showing her good intentions is more important to her. The General's anger with his servant shows that he is very concerned with the rules of conduct that guide behavior among people of his class.

Now that she has escaped being forced to take the drive, Catherine feels a bit guilty towards her brother and friends. She tells Mr. Allen about the Thorpes' plan, to see what he thinks of it, and he says that he is glad that she does not plan on going, as it is improper for young men and women to take drives and visit inns together. He asks Mrs. Allen if she agrees with him that it is improper, and she says she does. In agitation, Catherine asks Mrs. Allen why she did not stop her from going on the first carriage ride then. Mr. Allen says no harm has been done, but that Catherine should not drive with John Thorpe any more. Catherine begins to worry about Isabella. She asks Mr. Allen whether she ought to warn Isabella that she is doing something improper, but Mr. Allen says that Isabella is old enough to decide for herself and has a mother to advise her. If Catherine interferes, he says, she may cause ill-will. Catherine is very satisfied to have learned that these drives were a bad idea: she reflects that, had she gone, she would have been breaking her promise to the Tilneys in order to do something improper.

This is another important moment for Catherine in learning that she cannot always trust others to advise her. When John Thorpe asked her to ride in his carriage, her first instinct was that it might not be proper behavior for a well-mannered gentlewoman. She allowed herself to be persuaded by the Thorpes and was convinced that she would not be doing anything inappropriate because Mrs. Allen gave her permission. But Mrs. Allen, despite her greater age and experience, is incapable of making such judgments and always agrees with the person she is speaking to at that moment. Catherine still does not realize that everyone must make their own judgments in such situations, however, because she still believes it impossible that Isabella is knowingly acting in an improper or immodest way.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 14

The next morning, Henry (Mr. Tilney), Eleanor (Miss Tilney), and Catherine take their country walk. Catherine comments that a cliff they see reminds her of the south of France. A bit surprised, Henry asks if she has been to France. Catherine explains that it reminds her of the cliffs described in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, but says she presumes that he is above reading novels. Henry says that, quite to the contrary, he could not stop reading *Udolpho* and in fact read it all himself when he had promised to read it aloud to his sister. Henry gently mocks Catherine for saying *Udolpho* is the "nicest" book in the world, and Eleanor explains that he thinks "nice" to be an insufficiently precise adjective, but that he is very impertinent to correct Catherine just as he does her, his sister.

Once again, there is a sharp contrast between the sincere Henry Tilney and other characters who say hypocritical things to seem better than they are—like John Thorpe dismissing novels, despite obviously having enjoyed books by Ann Radcliffe. This scene also provides a sharp contrast to those in other novels in which the characters never admit to reading novels themselves. Here, Henry and Catherine both turn out to be avid readers of the same book. Their relationship has some basis in shared taste, which differs from the sudden experience of love (often between two people of very different backgrounds) usually portrayed in sentimental novels of the time.

Eleanor asks Catherine if she is fond of novels in general, and Catherine confesses that while she likes novels, poetry and plays, she finds histories very boring. Eleanor reveals that she likes histories, and Catherine says that she will no longer pity the writers of histories for writing books used to torture little children. Henry says that she is using the words "torment" as a synonym for "instruction," and she says that if he had seen so many brothers and sisters struggling to learn to read, he might agree with her. He reminds her that she herself would not be able to read *Udolpho* if she had never learned to read, and she assents.

This conversation about books also contrasts with the ones Catherine has had with the Thorpes. While Isabella saw books as a token of her fashionableness and John saw them as a waste of time, Henry and Eleanor think of them as ways of learning more about the world and themselves. This approach is more sincere and unpretentious, whereas the Thorpes' attitudes to books seem to be copied from someone they seek to emulate.

Henry and Eleanor begin to discuss the landscape from the point of view of those who draw, and Catherine is ashamed not to be able to follow their conversation. She should not be ashamed, the Narrator adds, because there is nothing so charming in a young, good-looking woman to a clever young man as her knowing nothing and being ready to listen to him explain it. Henry explains the landscape to Catherine from an artist's perspective, and she pays such rapt attention that he concludes she has "great natural taste."

Catherine does not realize that her sincere desire to learn makes her ignorance endearing (as the Narrator assumes that men enjoy explaining things to "ignorant" women). Although Catherine is unlike the well-educated and sophisticated Eleanor, by her readiness to learn from Henry, she shows a capacity to learn and grow to become a good judge of the world around her.

The topic turns to politics, about which Catherine has little to say. Changing the subject, she says she has heard from a friend that "something very shocking" will come out of London. Eleanor is alarmed, thinking that Catherine is still talking about current events, but Henry understands that Catherine is not predicting that there will be a riot, but instead anticipating the release of a new gothic novel. He explains them to one another and then Eleanor chides him for behaving as if he did not respect women's intelligence. Catherine is unperturbed; she admires Henry just as much when he says things she does not understand as when he is comprehensible to her, and believes him to always be perfectly right.

Henry has a clear impression at this point of how limited Catherine's awareness of the world is, but, contrary to what Eleanor suggests, he does not look down on Catherine for this. Instead, he is beginning to see himself as someone who can teach Catherine about topics, like current events, with which she has little familiarity. Although Catherine's exposure to the world is mainly through novels, she clearly is curious to learn about whatever interests Henry, including drawing and politics.

After their walk, the Tilneys accompany Catherine to her lodgings and ask Mrs. Allen's permission to have Catherine to dinner the day after next. Catherine can barely hide how happy she is. Later in the day, Catherine runs into Isabella's sister Anne. Anne tells Catherine that John drove her sister Maria and Isabella and James drove together. Anne says she would hate to have gone herself, but Catherine thinks Anne may be jealous of her sister for being chosen to go on the drive. Catherine hopes that the pleasure of the drive will mean that Isabella and James no longer resent her refusal to come with them.

Despite their insistence that Catherine come on the drive or else ruin it for everyone, Isabella and John found a way to still take the drive. Catherine, who has failed to see hypocrisy in many of Isabella's actions, is beginning to pick up on some of the mean-spirited dynamics in the Thorpe family, and now suspects that Anne is not being forthright when she says she was glad not to have been invited.

VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 15

The next day Catherine receives a note from Isabella, who asks Catherine to come to her lodgings as quickly as possible. When Catherine arrives, Maria Thorpe tells her about the enjoyable day she had with John, Isabella, and James, rushing around and being rained on. Catherine is relieved to learn that they didn't visit **Blaize Castle** without her.

Although the day that she describes does not sound fun, Maria, much like her brother John, seeks to describe the day as enviably entertaining, simply because she was involved in it and others were not.

Isabella comes into the room and says she knows Catherine guessed the meaning of her letter. Catherine has no idea what Isabella is hinting at. Isabella continues, saying James is the most charming of men, but she worries about what Mr. and Mrs. Morland will say. Catherine begins to understand and, with a blush, asks Isabella if she is really in love with James. This is only half of it: Isabella and James are engaged. Catherine is bowled over by the unexpected and wonderful news that her friend will become her sister-in-law.

Catherine failed to interpret the many signs that Isabella and James were courting and is now bowled over by the news of their marriage. Whether this experience will teach her to be a better judge of other people's feelings in the future remains to be seen. Catherine still does not suspect that Isabella may have been using Catherine to become closer to James.

Isabella gushes about her love of Catherine and James, saying she will love Catherine much more than she ever loved her own sisters, and that she fell in love with James at first sight. Catherine thinks to herself that this demonstrates the strength of love, since James is not handsome. Isabella continues to describe how anxious she has been that she would betray her love for James to Catherine, but says she knew Catherine could keep her secret. Catherine is embarrassed not to have guessed the secret earlier.

Catherine is still unable to detect when Isabella is exaggerating her feelings. The fact that James is not handsome does not make Catherine suspect Isabella of hypocrisy (that she may be pursuing James for his money), but merely believe that Isabella's love is so sincere that it overcame her powers of objective observation.

Isabella says that James will go to Fullerton to get his parents' consent and that she is terribly nervous that they will refuse to approve the match, since James "might marry anybody!" Catherine says that the difference in fortune should not be much to signify, and Isabella says that she would still marry James even if she had millions. This reminds Catherine of the heroines in novels, and she says she is sure her parents will be delighted by Isabella. Isabella says that she has the most modest desires, and wants only to live in a cottage in a village. She says that James promises that they will receive an answer the next day, but that she will be terrified to open the letter.

Isabella believes that James is wealthy and that the Morlands may hope for him to marry a woman with a larger fortune. Because she hopes that they will accept her, she pretends that she also places no importance upon how much money she will have. Catherine knows little about how important money is to matchmaking, but has read similar speeches from idealistic heroines, so she believes Isabella to have the sincere, disinterested feelings of a romantic heroine.

James comes to say goodbye before he sets off to see his parents, but is frequently detained as Isabella calls him back to her, all the while urging him to make haste and leave. The rest of the evening is spent with Isabella scheming about her and James' future happiness. John and Mrs. Thorpe are aware of Isabella's engagement, but, in what seems to Catherine like an unkind and unnecessary concealment, Maria and Anne have yet to be told. They know that something is being kept from them, and the evening passes as a "war of wits."

Isabella shows her affection for James by doing the opposite of what she says, in an imitation of being irresistibly drawn to him. Here, she urges him to leave, while forcing him to stay. Catherine's perceptions of the Thorpe family's behavior are beginning to sharpen as she sees John and Isabella exclude their sisters from their secret merely to feel that they are better than them.

The next day Catherine returns to the Thorpes' place. Isabella is very agitated as she awaits the letter. When it comes, it is just a quick note to say that the Morlands have happily given their consent. They say that all details about their income and property, and the timeframe within which they could expect to be married would follow in a future note, but Isabella looks at this with disinterest. She imagines that they will be married speedily and that she will be the envy of all, with a carriage and beautiful rings on her fingers.

A rare look into what Isabella is thinking shows that she is most interested in status and wealth, not in marrying James. James clearly does not suspect that Isabella is marrying him for his money, because he leaves out these important details for another letter, which leads Isabella to imagine that marriage will make her as rich as she assumed it would.

John gets ready to set off for London, but first finds Catherine alone in the parlor. Fidgeting, he says it's "a famous good thing this marrying scheme!" Catherine agrees and wishes him a good journey, saying she must go home to prepare for her dinner with Miss Tilney. John stops her and says they may not see one another for a long time and that she has more good nature than anyone else. Catherine replies that many people are like her, and says goodbye once again. John asks if he can come to visit Fullerton. She says he may, and her parents will be glad to see him. John asks if Catherine will be glad, and she says there are few people she would not like to see.

John Thorpe seems to have waited to see if the Morlands would approve of Isabella as a daughter-in-law before testing whether Catherine might be interested in marrying him. He is too self-aggrandizing to even humble himself so much as to ask Catherine to dance with him sometimes, and now he goes about trying to understand if she would marry him in the most indirect way imaginable.

John then comments that he and Catherine think about most things similarly, and she responds that she does not know her own mind about many things. He agrees, saying he does not care about having opinions, only that he should be with the girl he likes. He says, also, that he cares nothing for fortune. Catherine agrees, saying "to marry for money I think the wickedest thing in existence." Then she leaves, rushing off to tell the Allens that James and Isabella have gotten her parents' consent. John feels quite satisfied that Catherine is interested in him as a prospective husband.

John hopes that by showing they agree in their outlook on life, he will demonstrate to Catherine that they should marry. To do this, he hypocritically parrots everything that she says, no matter how absurdly inconsistent this makes his own statements appear. Not knowing that he believes her to be wealthier than he is, Catherine does not realize that John might interpret her saying that she is not interested in money as a hint that she is interested in him.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 1

Catherine expected to have a lovely time at dinner with the Tilneys, but afterwards she is surprised to admit to herself that she did not have a nice time. She feels less well-acquainted with Henry and Eleanor at the end of her visit than she did before. She feels that it is impossible that General Tilney's behavior was the reason for this discomfort, as he must be "perfectly agreeable, and altogether a very charming man," since he is "tall and handsome, and Henry's father."

Once again Catherine runs up against her own limitations as a judge of character. Although she has begun to trust some of her own judgments when it comes to the Thorpes, she is far from being self-confident enough to hazard an unfavorable impression of General Tilney.

When Catherine tells Isabella about her time at the Tilneys', Isabella chalks their behavior up to pride, saying that Miss Tilney was insolent to Catherine and Mr. Tilney had ignored her. Catherine denies these characterizations of the visit, but Isabella says that Henry Tilney is unworthy of Catherine, and adds that she and her brother would never treat Catherine so badly. Catherine says General Tilney was civil to her and tried very hard to make her happy. Isabella says that John respects General Tilney and that she trusts John's judgment. Isabella says she does not want to go to the ball that evening, because she can only think of James, and will not dance no matter how insistently she is asked.

Isabella is now trying to turn Catherine against the Tilneys so that Catherine will be more likely to consider John as a match, but Catherine does not notice Isabella's agenda, even though Isabella has never said anything negative about the Tilneys before. In fact, Isabella's judgment of the Tilneys will turn out to be false: while the General has a great deal of pride, both Henry and Eleanor are truly a gentleman and gentlewoman, who believe in the importance of good manners over money.

Catherine does not let Isabella's assessment influence her, and she is happy to be asked to dance by Henry and warmly greeted by Eleanor that night at a ball. Also at the ball is Henry Tilney's older brother Captain Tilney, who has just arrived in Bath. Catherine thinks that some might find him more handsome than Henry, but she finds him less well-mannered, especially when she hears him mocking Henry for wanting to dance. From this it can be predicted, the Narrator interjects, that Henry Tilney will not have a rival for Catherine's affections in his brother, which would have led to a dramatic split between the brothers. Catherine dances with Henry Tilney and finds him irresistible, which makes her irresistible to him.

Unlike in sentimental novels in which two brothers might be likely to fight for the heroine, Catherine finds the handsomer, but less gentlemanly older brother less attractive. This may be because she has already formed an attachment to Henry and will remain loyal, but it is also because she prizes good manners and genuine kindness. Catherine's lack of interest also shows how unconcerned she is with money, as the older brother would be likely to be much more wealthy than the younger.

Captain Tilney asks Henry to ask Catherine if she thinks Isabella would object to dancing with him. Catherine says she is sure Isabella does not want to dance, but Captain Tilney is sure not to mind this as she overheard him saying he hates dancing. She assumes that he was trying to be kind to Isabella, who is sitting without a partner. Henry says that Catherine does not try hard to understand other people's motives—she does not consider how a person of a certain age, feelings, or habits is likely to behave in a particular situation, but only considers how she herself would act in that situation. Catherine does not understand what he means, and he says that the fact that she believed that his brother wanted to dance with Isabella out of good-naturedness alone shows him that she herself has more good-nature than anyone else. Catherine is confused and blushes, but recognizes he has said something meaningful. She forgets to speak or listen as she puzzles over what Henry has said.

Catherine, who has worried in the past about looking like she could not find anyone to dance with, imagines that Captain Tilney sees Isabella sitting down and feels empathy for a girl without a partner. This assumption fails to take into consideration that Captain Tilney is a dashing young man and Isabella is a beautiful, flirtatious young woman. In addressing Catherine's misunderstanding, Henry says something that for the first time shows he may be growing to love Catherine. Instead of seeing her failure of the imagination as a failure to perceive things as they are, he sees her as inexperienced, but also fundamentally good and loving.

Catherine is very shocked to see Isabella dance with Captain Tilney. Henry Tilney observes her surprise but says that he is not surprised at all. Afterwards, Isabella says that she denied Captain Tilney's requests to dance for as long as she could, but eventually gave in. She says the whole room must have looked at them dancing, because he is so "smart," or good-looking and well-dressed. When Catherine agrees that he is very handsome, Isabella says that he is not her type at all, but is very conceited, and so she cut him down to size as she always does.

Throughout their friendship, Catherine has failed to notice that Isabella is extremely interested in men. Even though Isabella has been pursuing James, she has never ceased to talk about other men and how to attract their attention, although she often hypocritically says that she does not crave this attention. Now that Isabella and James are engaged, Catherine may begin to finally notice her friend's wandering eye.

When Catherine and Isabella next meet, they discuss the letter from James explaining what he and Isabella will receive from his family upon their marriage. They will receive a living of four hundred pounds a year, and an estate of equal value as his inheritance, which is a generous provision considering that he has nine brothers and sisters. They will also need to wait two or three years before marrying. Catherine can tell from James's letter that he is satisfied and pleased with this news, and, understanding little about such matters herself, is pleased and satisfied herself.

Mr. Morland's provision would allow James and Isabella to live in the country with servants and perhaps an inexpensive carriage. They would have a lifestyle similar to the comfortable but unostentatious one that Catherine grew up with, but would not be able to afford trips to fashionable cities like Bath and London. Isabella brings no fortune to the marriage at all, so James and Catherine do not expect her to be disappointed by this provision.

Catherine congratulates Isabella warmly. Isabella and Mrs. Thorpe praise Mr. Morland's generosity, saying that although four hundred pounds a year is hardly enough to live on, he may give them more money later. Isabella says she only worries that she is hurting James, because she needs nothing herself. Mrs. Thorpe says that perhaps if Isabella had more money, Mr. Morland would have given them more. Isabella says she is sure Mr. Morland is very generous, but after all everyone has a right to choose what they do with their money. Catherine is hurt by these insinuations and says that she is sure her father gave as much as he could afford to. Isabella and Mrs. Thorpe say Isabella cares nothing for money—the only thing that bothers her is the long wait to be married. Catherine tries to be reassured that the long engagement is the source of Isabella's unhappiness.

Mrs. Thorpe may have assumed the Morlands were wealthy based on what she knew about the Allens, and has not yet realized that the provision Mr. Morland promises to make the newlyweds is quite generous as a proportion of the Morlands' fortune. The Thorpes then hope to learn something about Mr. Morland's true wealth from Catherine—but when Catherine becomes offended, they instantly pretend that it is the long engagement preventing Isabella from being with the man she loves which bothers her.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 2

Catherine is happy to learn that the Allens intend to stay at least another three weeks in Bath. The fact of her brother's engagement has shown her how quickly an engagement can come about, but she hardly thinks of more than the pleasure of seeing Henry Tilney sometimes and speculates very little about the future. She joyfully tells Eleanor Tilney that they will be staying, only to receive the news that General Tilney wishes to leave Bath in one week. Catherine is disappointed, but at that very moment the General enters and asks if Eleanor has yet made her request. Eleanor says she has not, and the General asks if he could be so bold as to ask Catherine to come and spend some time with Eleanor at their home, **Northanger Abbey**. He makes a long speech saying how honored he would be to host her, despite their simple mode of life.

After her quiet life in the country, Catherine has been soaking in the new experiences available to her in Bath. Unlike Isabella, who seems to be spending time in Bath in the hopes of finding a husband, each new experience and acquaintance is sufficient in and of itself for Catherine. She only wants more time to get to know the people she has met. For Catherine, the invitation to Northanger opens up an exciting new frontier. Unaware of how such invitations are usually made and of the Tilney's wealth and social standing relative to her own, she finds nothing strange in the General's extremely flattering speech.

Catherine is thrilled, and quickly writes to her parents to get explicit permission to make the trip to **Northanger Abbey** a certainty. She feels that she is the luckiest person in the world: she has been introduced to new people whom she likes and has succeeded in making them like her too. Isabella will become her sister-in-law, while the Tilneys have gone above and beyond by inviting her to be a guest in their home.

Catherine feels lucky because she does not have the experience to wonder what motivates the Thorpes and Tilneys to treat her so kindly. She assumes that everyone likes her for her personal qualities (or because they are just kind to everyone) and not out of any ulterior motive.

Catherine is thrilled that she will be visiting an abbey, an **old building** and similar to the setting of the gothic novels she loves. She is almost as excited about the prospect of staying in an abbey as she is about spending more time with Henry Tilney. She hopes that she will learn that the building was the scene of some story fit for a gothic novel, and marvels at how little the Tilneys think about what a marvelous place they call home. Although she asks Miss Tilney many questions about the abbey, Catherine is too excited to process what she hears.

Catherine is fascinated by the idea of an old building that may have been the scene for historical intrigues and spooky occurrences. She has high hopes for new and exciting experiences, but does not recognize that this excitement sets her apart from the Tilneys, who are used to living in an abbey. Nor does she think about the difference in her family's fortune and the Tilneys' fortune signified by their living in such a building.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 3

Catherine realizes that she has not seen her friend Isabella in several days, nor has she missed her very much, because she has been so preoccupied with her trip to the **abbey**. When she does run into Isabella in the Pump-room, Isabella pulls her aside. Isabella seems to be watching the doors to see who will come in. Catherine, trying to tease Isabella in the way that Isabella has accused her of doing in the past, says that Isabella should not be impatient for James, who will soon arrive back in Bath. Isabella says that she is not looking for James—she would never want to cling to James. Catherine is sure that Isabella is looking at the door as if she expects someone, but Isabella says she is just looking about absent-mindedly.

When Isabella was attempting to use Catherine as a support to move her courtship with James forward, she said that she knew that Catherine would have said that Isabella and James were meant for one another if she had heard them talking. Catherine was unpracticed in this kind of teasing banter then, but is now hoping to master it. Isabella's motivations have changed, however. Catherine's ability to understand the motives of others will be tested again as she tries to understand Isabella's changed behavior.

Catherine asks what Isabella wanted to speak to her about. Isabella reveals that she has had a letter from her brother and says that Catherine must be able to guess what it is about. Catherine cannot guess. Isabella says that Catherine need not pretend she does not know that John is in love with her. Catherine is astonished, and Isabella chastises her for this pretended ignorance. John's letter asked Isabella to convince Catherine to marry him, and said that he spoke to her about marriage and she encouraged him. Catherine vehemently denies that she knew John thought of her as a potential wife. She does not even recall having the conversation during which he thought that she encouraged him, and begs Isabella to believe her to be sincere and to tell her brother in whatever way is proper that she does not see him that way.

This marks the second time that Catherine has been unaware of a courtship underway, but this time she is the one being courted. Catherine dislikes John Thorpe and has put up with him politely because he is her brother's friend. The reason she has had to put up with so much of him, though, is because he considered himself to be courting her, but he is too rude to show anyone the kind of consideration that would have signaled to Catherine that he was actually interested in her.

Catherine says that Isabella knows that John is not the man whom she has feelings for, but says that they will still be sisters. Blushing, Isabella says "there are more ways than one of our being sisters." She then says that she thought it a bad idea on John's part, for they would not have enough money if they were to marry. She says John must not have received her last letter. Catherine asks Isabella if she believes her that she never meant to lead John on. Isabella says that she cannot judge that, as sometimes people get carried away by a flirtation and give more encouragement than they really mean to give. "What one means one day, you know, one may not mean the next," Isabella says. Catherine says this was never the case between her and John, but Isabella is hardly listening. Isabella says she would not want Catherine to hurry into an engagement, as this is a great mistake, and young men are very inconstant and might be just as happy without the woman they had set their mind on marrying. She says she does not place her brother's happiness above her friends', and that Captain Tilney says that "there is nothing people are so often deceived in, as the state of their own affections."

Catherine indicates that she prefers Henry Tilney to John, and Isabella, thinking of Captain Tilney, hints that they may become sisters-in-law if they marry the two Tilney brothers. Isabella has clearly also realized that the Morlands do not have enough money to make her or John's fortunes and has written to John about this, but John has not received this letter. Catherine does not understand any of this, nor does she understand that Isabella, in saying that Catherine may have accidentally led John on, is really describing her own situation with James. Her declarations of love for James have been replaced by quoting Captain Tilney on the fickleness of affection. As usual, Isabella displaces the blame for her own behavior onto men in general. She is beginning to be inconstant towards James, so she says that men in general are inconstant towards women.

At this moment, Captain Tilney enters the room. Isabella says he will not see them, but she fixes her eyes on him and he approaches them. Captain Tilney sits on Isabella's other side and begins to flirt with her, saying they are always being watched "in person or by proxy," that he wished her heart were independent, and that her blooming cheek torments him. Catherine is jealous for her brother and proposes that she and Isabella take a walk, but Isabella says she is very tired, and that she must wait for her sisters.

Catherine knows that an engaged woman should not listen to another man say these things, and that a man should not flirt with an engaged woman in this way. It is a breach of good manners, modesty, and taste, as well as a breach of loyalty to her brother. To make matters worse, Captain Tilney refers to other occasions when he has tried to convince Isabella to spend time alone with him.

Catherine will not sit and listen to this flirtation, though, and with great uneasiness she leaves Captain Tilney and Isabella sitting alone together. She feels sure that Captain Tilney is falling in love with Isabella and that Isabella is unconsciously giving him encouragement. She thinks it impossible that Isabella could knowingly encourage him, as her love for James is certain, but she wishes that Isabella had not talked so much about money and seemed so happy to see Captain Tilney.

Even Catherine can see that the way Captain Tilney and Isabella are flirting is inappropriate, but she does not trust herself to judge them as doing something immoral. Instead, Catherine believes that they both must be behaving this way out of ignorance – Captain Tilney must not know that Isabella is engaged and Isabella must not know what signals her behavior is sending.

For her own part, Catherine does not feel flattered, but rather feels amazed that John would have thought "it worth his while to fancy himself in love with her." She hopes that many of the things Isabella said in their conversation will never be said again.

Although Catherine has thought little about others' motivations up to this point, she now thinks that John Thorpe was not really in love with her and must have thought that he had something to gain from pretending to be. Catherine is beginning to grow less innocent and naïve.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 4

Catherine watches Isabella's behavior over the next few days. Isabella gives just as much attention to Captain Tilney as to James when they are all in public together. Catherine resents this behavior, although she thinks Isabella is unaware of the suffering she is causing James. Catherine also pities Captain Tilney, whom she believes must be unaware of Isabella's engagement and bound to be disappointed when he learns of it. She hints to Isabella that her behavior is causing pain, but Isabella does not react to her hints. Catherine is dismayed to learn that Captain Tilney will not accompany his family when they leave Bath.

The tables have turned. Catherine, who was unable to understand Isabella's hints about her feelings for James, now tries to hint to Isabella that she is hurting James and leading Captain Tilney on. Catherine is too innocent and sincere to recognize Isabella for a hypocrite and a manipulator, who is ignoring her hints on purpose because she hopes to marry Captain Tilney instead of James.

Catherine speaks to Henry Tilney and asks him to tell Captain Tilney that Isabella is engaged to James. Henry says that his brother knows of the engagement, and then tries to change the subject. Catherine persists, saying he should advise his brother to leave Bath, because he is only making the inevitable sorrow of losing Isabella to James more painful for himself by staying. Henry says that his brother knows what he is doing, but Catherine counters that he could not know that he is hurting James. Henry says that "no man is offended by another man's admiration of the woman he loves; it is the woman only who can make it a torment." Catherine is embarrassed for Isabella.

Catherine is still thought of and treated like a child by her parents, and she has not yet ceased to expect that people ought to be told what is right and what is wrong. Catherine cannot conceive of Frederick's behavior as anything but a sign of love, not realizing that he may be hypocritically leading Isabella on and just pretending to love her. Henry tries to gently suggest to Catherine that Isabella, James, and Frederick are all adults, and must be responsible for their own behavior.

Catherine agrees that Isabella's behavior has been bad, but insists that Isabella loves James very much. Henry will not explain explicitly what he thinks his brother's aims are, only saying that he "is a lively, and perhaps sometime a thoughtless young man." Catherine persists, asking if perhaps General Tilney should intercede to force Captain Tilney to leave. Henry comments that she is perhaps pressing too far, noting that James could not possibly want Isabella's love if it is only his when no one else is nearby. Henry says that perhaps Isabella's flirtation with Frederick is well-understood by James and fits into their relationship's dynamic. His final comfort to Catherine is to say that his brother will likely leave Bath only a few days after him, and Isabella and James may laugh over the episode together after that. Catherine finally allows herself to be comforted.

Henry hints but doesn't state explicitly that Frederick is merely flirting with Isabella and does not mean anything by it. This kind of relationship is utterly unfamiliar to Catherine. Henry explains that a healthy relationship can tolerate flirtation, if the man and woman understand one another's intentions and actions. Isabella and James's loyalty to one another should supersede the casual flirtation Isabella is having with Frederick, or their love is not real. Catherine cannot imagine that Isabella and James have a dysfunctional relationship, and assumes that the flirtation must be acceptable within the context of their relationship as Henry suggests.

Catherine is also comforted by her last meeting with Isabella before she leaves. Isabella seems to express more affection towards Catherine than she does towards James, but Catherine thinks of what Henry Tilney said, and decides that perhaps this is just how James and Isabella's relationship operates.

Catherine does not realize that Isabella wishes to maintain their relationship because she hopes that she too, as well as Catherine, will marry into the Tilney family. Instead, Catherine lets herself be comforted by what Henry Tilney said about how a relationship should work.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 5

As she heads to **Northanger Abbey**, Catherine at first feels very uncomfortable among the Tilneys. Although Henry and Eleanor are kind to her, Catherine feels that the General's constant concern for her comfort is, perversely, making her uncomfortable. But once she is in a carriage with only Miss Tilney, she relaxes. When they change horses, the time spent with General Tilney at the inn reinforces Catherine's sense that he is a damper on his children's moods.

Catherine was not able to understand why her dinner with the Tilneys was less pleasant than she had expected, because she has not yet come to trust her own judgment of people's characters. But as she realizes that the family acts in a constrained way around the General, she shows that her ability to draw conclusions for herself is maturing.

General Tilney suggests that Catherine should ride the rest of the way to **Northanger Abbey** with Henry in his open carriage. She thinks of what Mr. Allen said about young people riding alone in open carriages and is about to refuse, but decides that General Tilney would not have suggested something improper for her to do. Catherine feels that being driven by Henry is the "greatest happiness in the world" and is impressed by how much more pleasant it is to be a passenger in his carriage than in John Thorpe's.

Catherine's ability to judge character is still not perfect. Although she finds the General unpleasant, she still assumes that he must be a true gentleman interested in acting as a good guardian to a young woman he has invited to his home. Although she enjoys the ride with Henry, who acts like a gentleman while driving her, she would be better off relying on the advice of Mr. Allen than on the General.

Henry tells Catherine that he is very glad she is coming to spend time with his sister, who has no female companion, and is sometimes left completely alone when General Tilney travels. Catherine wonders at Henry not being Eleanor's companion, and he explains that he has his own house at Woodston, twenty miles away. Catherine says he must be very sorry to live in an ordinary parsonage, after growing up in an **old building** like the abbey.

Henry shares Catherine's taste in fiction, so she assumes that he will also find it thrilling to spend time in an old building that could be the setting for a Gothic novel. Catherine does little to conceal her childlike excitement about going to an abbey, nor does she notice the more serious matter of Eleanor's usual isolation that Henry has touched on.

Smiling, Henry asks if Catherine has a very high opinion of the abbey. She says she does, and asks if it is really "a fine old place, just like one reads about?" Henry Tilney asks if she is really prepared for the horrors that occur in such **old buildings**, to have her bedroom far away from all the others, and to be brought to it by an ancient servant named "Dorothy" who stares fixedly at her and suggests that she is in the haunted wing of the abbey. Is she prepared for a loud storm, during which she discovers a secret division in an enormous tapestry? Is she prepared to walk through this division into a vaulted room and through a passage, passing a dagger, and blood, and an instrument of torture, to a chapel—and is she prepared to find an old-fashioned black and gold cabinet she had never noticed, and in its drawers to find a manuscript, but to decipher only that it is the "memoirs of the wretched Matilda" before her candle is extinguished? Catherine is spellbound, but Henry is too amused by how worked up she has become to continue. Catherine says she knows Eleanor wouldn't let any of this happen to her and that she is not afraid.

Henry is amused by Catherine's childlike excitement and her assumption that the experience of staying at the abbey will be straight out of a novel. He sees that she hopes something dramatic or even frightening will happen, and so teases her by weaving a story out of components from several Gothic novels, along with some details drawn from the real layout of Northanger Abbey thrown in for good measure. These details are drawn from The Mysteries of Udolpho, *which both characters loved and discussed reading on their walk, and another Ann Radcliffe novel,* Romance of the Forest, *as well Horace Walpole's* Castle of Otranto. *Catherine knows she is being teased, but this cannot ruin her innocent enjoyment in the scary possibility that what Henry says may happen.*

As they come close to their destination, Catherine keeps her eyes peeled for a sign of the grand **old building**. She passes through its gates without seeing anything antique looking, but instead sees modern lodges nearby. As they arrive, it begins to rain, and Catherine hurries into the house without experiencing a single presentiment of horror. She is distressed, moreover, to see modern furniture and large, clear, light windows, instead of the cobwebbed, dirty, stained glass she had hoped for.

Catherine's expectations for the abbey have been drawn from fiction full of uncanny incidents, and she expects the abbey to look and make her feel a certain way. She is then disappointed on both these counts, although she might have predicted that the orderly, modern Tilneys did not live in a rundown house that had not been updated for hundreds of years.

The General sees how Catherine is looking around and explains that the room is very simple and plain, but that there are other, better rooms at **Northanger**. He exclaims that it is almost five, and Miss Tilney rushes Catherine to her room to get ready. From this Catherine understands that everything at Northanger happens punctually.

The General misunderstands Catherine's disappointment as a sign that she thinks the room is not fancy enough. Catherine then doesn't understand that the General has misinterpreted her in this way, but she is more and more sensitive to the nervous way the Tilney children treat their father.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 6

Catherine looks around her room and sees that it is modern and comfortable, not at all resembling the one that Henry described. She hurries to get ready, so as not to displease the General by being late, but her eye is caught by a large chest. She decides she must look at it immediately, because at night her candle may blow out. She sees that the lock appears to have been broken (perhaps violently) and that it is marked with a monogram that does not begin with a "T" (which she thinks would not make sense for the Tilneys to own). She is straining to heave open the heavy lid when a knock at the door surprises her. The lid slams, and Eleanor's maid enters to ask if Catherine needs help. Catherine sends her away and resumes getting dressed, but curiosity draws her back to the chest. She gets it open, only to find it full of sheets and linens. At that moment, Eleanor comes in and remarks on the chest as an odd old thing that she put in the corner to keep out of the way. Catherine feels embarrassed to have been caught snooping, and does not respond.

Catherine equates modern furnishings with normal, routine life and associates older décor with the possibility for intrigue and drama. According to this naïve point of view, interesting, exciting, and frightening events cannot occur in average everyday rooms. Despite the room's unexceptional appearance, Catherine is still hoping to find something old and mysterious at Northanger. In many Gothic novels, traces of the past may be found hidden, so Catherine, who is so primed to discover the traces of a mystery, is instantly drawn to examine a chest. The novel pokes fun at Gothic novels in which heavy chests are filled with odd and tantalizing contents at an improbably high rate.

Catherine and Eleanor rush downstairs where the General is pacing about, and he orders dinner served immediately. Noticing Catherine's breathlessness, however, the General begins to scold Eleanor for having rushed her "fair friend" when there had been no need to hurry. Catherine remarks that the dining room is quite large, but is too inexperienced to realize that it is very elegantly decorated. The General asks if Mr. Allen's rooms are much larger than his, and Catherine says they are not half so big. This makes the General happy. He says that he is sure a smaller room than his is even more comfortable. The rest of the evening passes pleasantly, especially when General Tilney is briefly absent. Catherine does not miss being in Bath.

The General, who clearly was impatiently waiting for Catherine and Eleanor to come downstairs, now denies that there had been any need to rush. When he blames Eleanor for rushing Catherine, we see that he may be prone to hypocritically saying what he does not mean. The General also clearly wants Catherine to be impressed by Northanger, but Catherine is unaware of the connotations of all the General's possessions and how rich they show him to be.

A storm begins outside and reminds Catherine of the stories set in similar **old buildings**, but she reassures herself that she has nothing to fear as she goes up to her room for the night. She now feels relieved to be in a comfortable, renovated home, rather than in a haunted-seeming abbey from a book. Convinced that there is nothing to fear in her room, she decides to bravely sleep without the light of a fire. As she is about to get in bed, however, she notices a cabinet. Although the cabinet is black and yellow, not black and gold, Henry's description rushes back to her and she hurries to examine the cabinet. She struggles to get the key to turn in the lock, but with growing excitement finally unlocks it. Inside she is thrilled and terrified to find a roll of papers, once again reminding her of Henry's tale that afternoon. Wanting to make sure her candle will not go out, Catherine trims the charred part of the wick, but accidentally extinguishes the candle entirely. Without light, she has no choice but to go to sleep, but tosses and turns, terrified by sounds coming from the house.

A characteristic scene in a novel like The Mysteries of Udolpho *describes a young heroine who conquers her fears in order to hunt for clues to a mystery—and the scene takes place in an old building at night, by candlelight, while a storm rages outside. Catherine wants both to be scared out of her wits and to keep her wits about her, in imitation of this heroine. She knows it is unlikely that she will uncover the plot of a Gothic novel at Northanger, but she wants to find this plot, so she tries to imagine it into being. When she "accidentally" extinguishes her own candle, forcing herself to toss and turn in terror all night, she gives herself a little of the thrilling fright she craves.*

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 7

When she wakes the next morning, Catherine rushes to look at the manuscript she had found. To her disappointment, it is a laundry bill. She feels that her fantasies about the chest and cabinet were absurd, especially given how modern the furnishings are in the room. She thinks that she would be very embarrassed if Henry Tilney were to find out how carried away she has been. Catherine goes into the breakfast room and finds Henry Tilney alone. He hints that perhaps the storm terrified her. Not wanting to lie, she confesses that it kept her awake a little bit, but that she is happy that the morning is bright.

Once again, the modern furnishings of Northanger make Catherine feel that nothing out-of-the-ordinary or sinister could happen here. Catherine knows that she is letting herself get carried away, and thinks Henry will find it ridiculous if he knows how swept up in these fantasies she allowed herself to get. For his part, Henry finds Catherine's deep fascination with Gothic novels and her desire to uncover one in his childhood home amusing.

Catherine changes the subject, noting the hyacinths in the garden and saying that Eleanor taught her to admire them. She says she never cared about flowers before. Henry says a taste for flowers is good for women because it tempts them to spend time outdoors, and Catherine replies that she already loves to be outdoors. Henry replies that he appreciates that she has "a habit of learning to love" and "a teachableness of disposition."

Although the topic they are discussing is a trivial one, Henry articulates two of the things he truly values in Catherine: her ability to show sincere affection and loyal love, and her ability to learn and grow. He has already taught her about how to draw a landscape, and now he's glad to hear that she's learning from his sister as well.

The General arrives to breakfast. When Catherine compliments the beauty of the breakfast plates, the General says he does what he can to support English manufacturing, and that he was tempted recently to buy an even newer set, but did not because he has no vanity about his possessions. He says he hopes to soon have an opportunity of selecting a new set of china, but not for himself. Everyone but Catherine understands this hint.

The General hints that he wants to pick out plates for Henry and Catherine once they are engaged. In saying that he has no vanity about his possessions, the General once again shows his hypocrisy—he is clearly very proud of his possessions and wants Catherine to admire them at every opportunity.

Henry prepares to leave for Woodston and they all gather to see him off. Catherine asks if Woodston is pretty, and the General says that Eleanor should say, since ladies are better judges, but then does not let Eleanor speak. The General then tells Catherine that Henry's income does not depend solely on his living, although that income is rather large. Although none of his children need to work for money, the General says he thinks that it's good for them to have employment. He is trying to impress Catherine, and he does: she says nothing in reply.

The General's speeches about money, employment, and properties, like John Thorpe's talk about his horse and carriage, are meant to impress Catherine with how rich he is. Catherine knows very little about the cost of things, but she must know that her own father does not only work to have something to do, but to have an income.

The General offers to give a tour of **Northanger**, and Catherine gladly accepts. The General says that he can see she may prefer looking at the grounds first, and goes to get ready for a walk with Catherine and Eleanor. Catherine is disappointed. She thinks that without Henry there to explain the landscape, she will not know what is picturesque. She tells Eleanor that the General does not need to take them on a walk now just because he believes her to want to go on a walk, when in fact she wants to tour the property. Eleanor, slightly embarrassed at having to explain her father's true motives, tells Catherine that her father always walks at this time of day. Catherine thinks it odd that the General takes walks so early, and wonders if he is reluctant to show her around the Abbey.

The General, much like Isabella Thorpe, has a hypocritical way of attributing his own desires to other people so that he can then act as if he is graciously complying with their wishes, instead of selfishly doing exactly what he wants. Here, he offered Catherine a tour, then realized it was time for his daily walk, and pretended that she seemed as if she wanted to walk. Catherine continues to expect sincerity from those around her, and puts Eleanor in the uncomfortable position of having to explain the General's slippery behavior.

Seeing the **Abbey** from the lawn, Catherine praises it enthusiastically, to the General's pleasure. Catherine is shocked by the size of the garden, and the General proudly says gardening is his hobby. He adds that although he does not care much about the quality of food, he loves good fruit. The General asks Catherine how his own possessions compare to Mr. Allen's, and is satisfied to hear that his outstrip the latter's.

Once again, when the General denies caring about something, it can be predicted that he cares a great deal. He sees both the landscaping of his grounds and the quality of food on his table as reflections of his own wealth and good taste.

Eleanor starts down a path, but the General says it is too cold and damp. Catherine goes with Eleanor, but the General decides to take a sunnier route and meet them at the tea-house. Catherine feels relieved in his absence and talks gaily to Eleanor about the "delightful melancholy" of the path. Eleanor tells her it was her mother's favorite walk, and says that she misses her mother terribly, especially because she has no sister. Although Henry visits often, she is often alone. Catherine remarks that Eleanor must miss Henry very much, and Eleanor says that she does, but a mother would have always been there.

Eleanor seeks to confide to Catherine that she is lonely, just as Henry had to told Catherine on the drive from Bath to Northanger. But Catherine, despite her good-nature, is still not always capable of understanding another person's feelings. Eleanor misses her mother and female companionship in general, but Catherine, who has many brothers and sisters, can only imagine missing Henry, not true loneliness.

Catherine begins to question Eleanor about her mother, asking if she was charming and beautiful, and if she liked this grove because she was depressed. Eleanor chooses not to answer Catherine's more prying questions, but Catherine forms a theory that the late Mrs. Tilney had been unhappy in marriage. She sees proof for this conjecture in the fact that the General does not love his late wife's favorite path. Catherine asks if Mrs. Tilney's picture hangs in the General's room, and Eleanor says that her father was dissatisfied with the painting, which she has hung in her own room. Catherine then feels an aversion towards the General: he was clearly cruel to his charming wife. When they meet the General again, Catherine finds it hard to be pleasant. The General worries that Catherine may have overexerted herself and sends her back to rest, but instructs Eleanor to wait for him to tour the **Abbey**.

Catherine was unable to trust her own perceptions and form a negative judgment of the General when she first met him. She now swings to the other extreme, assuming he is a tyrant who made his wonderful wife's life miserable. This idea does not come out of nowhere: in The Mysteries of Udolpho, *the villain Signor Montoni brings about his wife's death by mistreating her. Catherine can seemingly only conceive of the world as split into two camps: the humdrum and morally perfect people she knows, and the dramatic, potentially evil characters to be found in Gothic novels. She now decides that the General may fall into the latter camp.*

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 8

While the General finishes his walk, Catherine speculates about his character. She finds it unusual that he should take such long, solitary walks. To her surprise, upon his return he immediately offers her a tour of the house. As they go through the rooms he describes the fashionableness and costliness of their contents. Catherine is disappointed to see so many modern things and that an entire part of the **old building** has been destroyed and a modern structure put up in its place. She is glad, however, to see that some of the rooms from what was once a cloister remain intact.

Catherine is beginning to spin a theory of the General as a Gothic villain, even though he has been responsible for removing many of the Gothic trappings from the abbey and replacing them with modern status symbols. In other instances, Northanger's modern renovations bring Catherine back to her senses, but in this scene not even this can put a check on her fantasy.

To finish the tour, Eleanor starts to walk into a wing of the house, but the General stops her sharply, asking whether she really thinks Catherine wants to see those rooms. The General suggests that they go and have a snack, but Catherine has glimpsed further rooms in that wing and a winding staircase. She feels that the interesting, old part of the **Abbey** is being kept from her. Eleanor tells her that that was her mother's room. Catherine imagines that the General must avoid this room because it pricks his conscience to be near it.

Catherine believes that Mrs. Tilney's rooms must be unrenovated and full of historical interest and intrigue. She also thinks that these old-fashioned rooms would make a fitting setting for the cruelty of the Gothic villain she is beginning to cast the General as. It does not occur to Catherine that the General may not want to be reminded of his wife because it makes him sad—not because he has a guilty conscience.

Catherine tells Eleanor that she would like to see Mrs. Tilney's room, and Eleanor promises to show it to her when they have a chance. Catherine understands that this means that they must wait until the General leaves **Northanger**. She asks Eleanor how long it has been since her mother's death, and learns it's been nine years. Catherine also asks if Eleanor was home when her mother died, and Eleanor replies that sadly she was not. Catherine begins to suspect that General Tilney killed his wife. She has heard of such cases in books.

Eleanor is eager to have a sympathetic listener and female companion, but Catherine is distracted by her growing certainty that she has uncovered a villain in General Tilney. Eleanor does not realize it, but Catherine wishes to see Mrs. Tilney's room because she hopes to investigate and uncover proof of foul play by the General.

Catherine thinks that General Tilney clearly resembles a "Montoni" as she watches him pace the room that evening. She thinks it additionally strange that he stays up to read after Catherine and Eleanor go to sleep. From this, Catherine assumes that General Tilney must stay up late because his wife is alive, but locked up in the **Abbey** somewhere, and that he must wait until the rest of the house is asleep to bring her food. She thinks that this is better than a murder, as Mrs. Tilney will surely be released eventually. Catherine feels that this theory is supported by the fact that Eleanor, and probably all of Mrs. Tilney's other children too, were absent when she died. As Catherine gets ready for bed, she wonders if she passed close by Mrs. Tilney that day, hidden in rooms that the General had not showed her. Catherine wants to wait up to see if she can glimpse a light when the General goes at midnight to feed his imprisoned wife. At midnight, however, Catherine has been sound asleep for half an hour.

Catherine connects what she observes in the General and what she has heard from Eleanor about Mrs. Tilney's death to the plot of The Mysteries of Udolpho. *In that Gothic novel, the villain Montoni keeps the heroine's aunt locked up in a room until this causes her death. In yet another Gothic novel,* A Sicilian Romance, *children find that their mother has been kept prisoner in their father's castle. Catherine does not know for a fact that Henry and Frederick were also away during Mrs. Tilney's illness, but in her eagerness to piece together a terrifying suspicion worth investigating, she assumes that they were. Gothic heroines usually stay up until midnight to begin their investigations, but Catherine fails to imitate this, as the narrator again undercuts clichés of exciting tales with mundane reality.*

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 9

Catherine spends the next day, a Sunday, at church, where she sees a monument to Mrs. Tilney. Catherine feels it is horribly hypocritical of the General to sit in front of this monument to the wife he tortured, but knows that villains like the General are often callous in this way. She does not let the monument convince her that Mrs. Tilney is not being held prison in **Northanger Abbey**; she has read of burials being staged.

Catherine now suspects the General of hypocritically playing the dignified widower when he is in fact his wife's torturer. Catherine, who never sees through hypocrisy no matter how poorly disguised, now thinks she has uncovered the truth about a hardened criminal.

The next day, while the General takes his morning walk, Catherine asks Eleanor to show her Mrs. Tilney's room. First, they go to look at Mrs. Tilney's portrait, which surprises Catherine because it does not resemble her children. As they move towards Mrs. Tilney's room, the General suddenly returns and shouts for Eleanor. Catherine runs to her room in fear. Visitors arrive, however, and Catherine goes to the drawing room to find a happy scene. Eleanor explains that her father had wanted her to answer a note, and Catherine feels safe from the General's rage.

A mother in a Gothic novel would be likely to look just like her children, so Catherine is surprised by the lack of resemblance. She interprets the General as wanting to prevent Catherine from seeing Mrs. Tilney's room for sinister reasons. More likely, because the room has not been redecorated in almost a decade, it does not meet the General's standards for conspicuously fashionable and expensive interiors.

The next day, Catherine decides to spare Eleanor the danger of being caught by the General again by going to explore Mrs. Tilney's room alone. She thinks it will be easier to search for proof that Mrs. Tilney is being held hostage without Eleanor there to see what she is doing. Wanting to make this exploration before Henry returns the next day, she decides to go immediately. Entering, she sees a cheerful and tidy room that is part of the **abbey**'s newer construction. The surroundings make her doubt her theory that the General harmed his wife, and she feels embarrassed at how far she let her imagination run away with her.

Catherine naively believes that crimes can only occur in an old, derelict space like the abbeys and castles in which Gothic novels are set, and she expects Mrs. Tilney's room to look this part. The tidiness and modernity of the room immediately brings her to her senses, just as seeing the recent laundry bill in the chest had, and she needs to do no further exploration to realize she has invented everything.

Catherine is about to return to her room when she hears footsteps coming and is surprised to see Henry ascend the stairs. They are astonished to find each other there. Catherine, very embarrassed, says she came to see Mrs. Tilney's room. He asks if there is something interesting to see there. Catherine replies that there is not, adding that she did not think he would return until the next day. Henry asks if Eleanor leaves her to explore on her own, and Catherine responds that Eleanor showed her most of the house but that then the General came, so she couldn't go on.

Catherine has broken the rules of proper behavior by wandering through her host's house unattended. She is very embarrassed, but also too truthful to make any false excuse about how she came to be where she is. She tells the truth, but does not give any explanation for why General Tilney's arrival prevented her from seeing Mrs. Tilney's room, which would involve accusing him of a terrible crime.

Catherine begins to say that it is late and she must dress for dinner, but Henry counters that it isn't late. For the first time, Catherine wishes to be away from Henry. He asks if she has had any news from Bath. Catherine replies that she has not, and is very surprised, because Isabella promised "faithfully" to write. Henry quibbles a bit with her use of the word "faithfully," then steers the conversation back to Mrs. Tilney's room. He praises the comfort of the room, then asks if Eleanor sent Catherine to look at it, which Catherine denies. Henry says it is unusual for someone to take such interest in someone she never knew, even if Mrs. Tilney was a wonderful woman. Henry asks if Eleanor talked about his mother much, and Catherine equivocates, first saying yes, then saying no, then saying that it was very interesting that she had died so suddenly, with none of her children at home, and she thought perhaps that the General had not been fond of Mrs. Tilney. Henry asks if she inferred from this that there had been neglect or worse.

Catherine tries to make a passable excuse so that she can escape the awkward situation without explaining herself, but Henry is determined to gently force an explanation from her. He already knows Catherine well enough to be sure that she knows she has done something outside of the norm and that she will not lie to him about it. Cornered, Catherine says as little as possible to still suggest to Henry what drove her to visit Mrs. Tilney's room. He understands how influenced her sensibility is by Gothic novels and makes the connection between her excitement to come to an abbey and her search for evidence that the General is a "Montoni."

Catherine looks more directly into Henry's eyes than she ever has before. Henry explains that his mother's illness was sudden, although she had suffered from the illness before, but that he and Frederick had been by her side and seen that she had gotten the best medical care available. Catherine asks if General Tilney grieved. Henry says he is sure his father loved his mother, and that although his father can have a bad temper, he grieved for her. Catherine says she is very glad to hear this. Henry says that it seems she has surmised something horrible, but that she ought to remember where they live and when, and think for herself based on her own understanding of the values of their society. She should consider whether such terrible crimes could go undiscovered in such an interconnected world. "Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting?" he finally asks. Catherine runs off to her room in tears.

At this climactic moment, Catherine is made painfully aware of how foolish she has been. But instead of getting angry with her, Henry explains the facts of the situation and tells her that she must learn to think for herself. This is what Catherine has been hesitant to do, sometimes because she fears her inexperience will lead her to do the wrong thing and sometimes because she places too much trust in the sincerity and wisdom of others. By admitting that his father has a bad temper, Henry instructs her to see the nuances in people's characters. He also indicates that her upbringing as a respectable young woman can guide her as she interprets the world around her.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 10

As she dresses for dinner that night, Catherine feels completely disillusioned. She knows that she has embarrassed herself in front of Henry. She thinks he must despise her for her absurd curiosity and the terrible crime she suspected his father of committing. She thought he had liked her before, but now he must not. But when Henry comes down to dinner, he is kinder to her than ever before, recognizing that she needs consolation in her embarrassment. She is glad to see that he may forgive her.

Catherine has never had an experience like this before and she does not know if what she has done is unforgiveable. Henry realizes that Catherine is very young and has a great deal to learn, but that she has only the best intentions. He realizes how embarrassed she is and seeks to make her feel better, hoping that she will grow from the experience.

Catherine realizes that she had been looking for something dramatic when she came to **Northanger**. She sees that, although the novels she reads are very entertaining, they do not always reflect human nature, at least not the human nature of those of her class in the central part of England. She thinks terrible plots may happen in Italy and France, but that in England people are neither villains nor angels. Even Henry and Eleanor, she reflects, may have imperfections, and certainly the General, even if he is not a murderer, is not perfect. She resolves to forgive herself for her folly, which she is helped to do by Henry, who never mentions what happened. Catherine is again perfectly happy whenever Henry is around, although she still looks at the chest in her room with a bit of unease.

Happy to be forgiven, Catherine eagerly tries to learn from her experience. She resolves to learn to be sensitive to the norms of her society when coming to conclusions and to judge people's character as she sees it. Reflections like these are completely new for Catherine, but her mind has been opened and she is determined to prove herself to have a "teachable disposition," as Henry has said she does. The chest reminds her of the mistake she made in placing too much trust in novels, while her trust in Henry is strengthened.

Catherine soon begins to be anxious to hear from Isabella about Bath. She finds Isabella's silence extremely strange because Isabella had promised to write, and she always keeps her promises. On the tenth morning, however, she receives a letter from James. James writes that his engagement with Isabella is over, and that she should leave **Northanger** before Captain Tilney arrives and announces *his* engagement to Isabella, as this would put Catherine in an uncomfortable position. James writes that whenever he tried to talk to Isabella, she denied that her feelings towards him had changed. He still does not understand why she toyed with him, because he feels sure that she did not need to lead him on in order to get a proposal from Tilney. James still feels he will never meet another woman like Isabella.

James is another innocent from the Morland family. He still does not seem to realize that Isabella was interested in him for his money, and so was disappointed in the amount of money Mr. Morland had promised them. He assumes, just as Catherine did in Bath, that Frederick Tilney really loves Isabella and will marry her. James seems not yet to have learned from the experience that he never should have trusted in Isabella's love, especially not once she started to flirt with Frederick Tilney in front of him.

Catherine gasps in astonishment while reading, and both Henry and Eleanor are concerned about what kind of news she has received. She cries over breakfast, then runs off. After half an hour, Catherine feels that she can talk to Henry and Eleanor, but she does not plan to tell them what has happened.

Catherine is now realizing that she misjudged another situation: the character of Isabella. But, guided only by her brother's sense of the situation, she still does not know what to make of it.

Catherine joins Henry and Eleanor, then sits in silence, unsure what to say. Eleanor asks if her family at Fullerton is all well, and she says that they are, but that she will never wish for a letter again. Her brother James is so unhappy, she says, to which Henry replies that it must be a comfort to him to have such a loving sister. After a pause, Catherine says that she must ask that they let her know if their brother is coming to **Northanger**, because she must avoid meeting him. Eleanor is very surprised. Henry guesses that this has something to do with Isabella. Catherine pours out the entire truth: Isabella has abandoned her brother and will marry theirs. She cannot believe such fickleness is possible. Henry says he is terribly sorry for her brother, but he is still convinced that his brother is unlikely to marry Isabella.

Catherine is uncertain how to handle this awkward situation. She does not want to deliver the news to Henry and Eleanor that their brother has been the cause of her brother's unhappiness—but Henry once again understands Catherine's meaning when she does not speak explicitly. The truth about Isabella's character is slowly beginning to dawn on Catherine, but at first she believes that Isabella loved James and then stopped loving him. She does not yet realize that Isabella may have never loved James at all, but merely led the Morlands to believe she did.

Catherine lets both brother and sister read James's letter. Henry is very surprised, but says that, if it is true, he will not envy Frederick's situation "either as a lover or a son." Eleanor asks Catherine about Isabella's background and fortune. Catherine says that Isabella has no fortune, but that this will not matter to General Tilney, who has told her he cares for money only to promote his children's happiness. Eleanor finds it inconceivable that Frederick would marry a girl who had broken an engagement voluntarily taken with another man, but Henry thinks Isabella is too smart to have let James go before she had a proposal from Frederick.

Catherine is confused to hear that General Tilney cares deeply for money, because he has always said he did not. She has not yet learned that she cannot always trust others to speak sincerely about their own feelings. Eleanor and Henry are sure that their father would never accept a girl like Isabella, both because of her lack of fortune and because of the circumstances under which she met Frederick, which involved breaking her promise to another man in a display of immodest behavior unbefitting a gentlewoman.

Henry sarcastically says that Eleanor should prepare for a sister-in-law who is "open, candid, artless, guileless, with affections strong but simple, forming no pretensions, and knowing no disguise." Eleanor smiles and says she would welcome such a sister-in-law, but Catherine does not notice this hint.

Henry's sarcastic description of Isabella is actually a description of Catherine, but Catherine is too focused on Isabella and Frederick and too literal-minded to pick up on Eleanor's suggestion that she would like to have Catherine as a sister-in-law.

Catherine says that perhaps Isabella will be loyal to Frederick. Henry says she will certainly be loyal unless she meets a baronet. Catherine concedes that Isabella gave signs of being a social climber. She remembers when Isabella seemed disappointed about how much money Mr. Morland would give her and James.

Catherine is once again learning from Henry to consult her own perceptions. Once he suggests that money might motivate Isabella, Catherine immediately recalls her own impression that Isabella had truly been disappointed not by the long engagement, but by the marriage provision.

Catherine says she has never been so deceived by anyone in her life. She worries about how James will recover from this loss. Henry asks her if she herself feels that she has lost a very dear friend and the only person she can trust. Catherine replies that she does not feel this way. In fact, Catherine's spirits lift after talking to Henry and Eleanor, even though she had never meant to tell them what James's letter contained.

Although Catherine herself hardly realizes it, she now feels like she has placed her loyalty with much better friends. She had noticed Isabella's inconsistency and unkindness, but had not been able to form a judgment about what it meant until now. It is a relief to her to be rid of this false friend.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 11

Catherine, Henry, and Eleanor speak frequently about the possibility that Frederick and Isabella will marry. Henry and Eleanor believe that General Tilney will not accept Isabella as a daughter-in-law because of her lack of fortune, irrespective of the improper way that Frederick and Isabella met. This makes Catherine worry about her own future with Henry, because she has little more than Isabella does. She is comforted, however, by remembering how much the General has always liked her. She suspects that his children do not understand how little importance he places on money. Henry and Eleanor are sure that Frederick will not have the courage to come in person to **Northanger** to ask his father's consent to marry Isabella, and Catherine is reassured that she does not have to leave immediately.

Although she is beginning to realize that Isabella may have hypocritically pretended not to care about money, when really she wanted to marry James for money, it does not occur to Catherine that the General may be a similar sort of hypocrite. Instead of understanding that he may have pretended to like her in order to flatter and attract her, she thinks that his affection for her must be so sincere as to overcome any prejudice he could have against her because of her relative lack of wealth.

Catherine thinks that Henry ought to warn his father about what has occurred between her brother and Isabella so that the General will be able to build a case against Frederick's engagement with a more just cause than merely Isabella's lack of fortune. Henry says that Frederick must plead his own case. Catherine says that he will only tell half of the story, but Henry says that even a quarter would be enough.

Catherine once again asks Henry to speak to the General about Frederick and Isabella, but Henry believes that his brother and Isabella are adults who must be responsible for their own behavior. He also realizes that Isabella's lack of fortune will be much more important to the General than any bad behavior.

The General is concerned that Catherine should enjoy herself and decides that they should bring her to visit Henry at his parsonage in Woodston. He says he is sure Catherine will not mind if Henry has only a light meal ready for them. Catherine is thrilled to visit Woodston, but surprised when Henry says he must leave immediately to prepare for their visit. Catherine reminds him that the General said that "anything would do," and says that the General always has such a good meal at home that it could not matter if he ate a casual meal just this once. Henry says he wishes he thought as she did, and leaves. Catherine reflects that Henry is right: she has seen that the General is very particular about his meals. She cannot understand, however, why the General says one thing if he means the opposite.

The General says one thing about his own eating habits but means another. Although Catherine is beginning to pick up on this hypocrisy, she is far from understanding its motivations, or from being able to extrapolate from it that there are other things the General says and does not mean. Henry once again refuses to explain his father's hypocrisy fully, just as he refused to explain his brother's motivations in courting Isabella. He realizes, as Catherine does not yet, that adults must be responsible for their own actions.

Catherine is disappointed to have Henry leave early and feels out of sorts. She is sure that Captain Tilney's letter will come when Henry is gone and that it will rain on Wednesday and prevent their going to Woodston. She is no longer charmed by the **abbey** and cannot wait to see Woodston. Although it is a regular parsonage, she thinks it will probably be like Fullerton, but much more perfect.

After her embarrassing experience searching for a mystery out of a Gothic novel at Northanger, Catherine has learned that she must look to everyday things for happiness and excitement. Her new, more mature desire is to see a comfortable home where she can imagine herself happily living with Henry.

As they drive up to Woodston, Catherine is charmed, but the General apologizes for every shortcoming of the village. Catherine is overwhelmed as she looks around Woodston, but when the General asks her opinion, she does not want to praise the place too enthusiastically. The General is disappointed in her reaction and makes excuses, but Catherine is too captivated to pay attention to him. Forgetting her restraint, Catherine proclaims a room in Henry's home "the prettiest room she ever saw" and earnestly asks why it is not yet furnished. The General says that it awaits a lady's touch. Catherine does not notice this hint, and goes on to say that a cottage visible from the room is beautiful. The General tells Henry that, in this case, they must not tear this **old cottage** down. Catherine realizes what is being hinted and goes silent, although the General continues to ask how she would decorate the room.

Once again, the General is keen to make sure that Catherine is impressed by the Tilney family's possessions, but fails to interpret Catherine's responses correctly. Instead of recognizing that she lacks experience with the nuances of decorating a luxurious home, he assumes the house is not luxurious enough for her taste. Catherine advocates for the preservation of an older building, because even outside of the context of exciting old buildings that could be in Gothic novels, she has a taste for preserving the past instead of renovating just to show that one has the money to do so.

As they roam through the grounds, Catherine thinks it is the most beautiful house she has ever seen. She notices that the General makes no remark on how fancy a meal Henry has prepared. By the end of their visit, Catherine feels sure that the General wishes her and Henry to be engaged, although she is not quite so sure of Henry's feelings.

Catherine is now sure of the General's hypocrisy when it comes to his taste in meals, but she does not realize that this hypocrisy might extend to his taste in daughters-in-law. He may say he cares nothing for money, but actually wish for his son to marry an heiress.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 12

Catherine receives a letter from Isabella the next morning. Isabella apologizes for failing to write Catherine. She writes that she is uneasy about James, with whom she has had a misunderstanding. She hopes that Catherine will convince James that he is the only man she ever loved. She mentions the new style of **hats**, and then says that she will not speak ill of the Tilneys, but that young men never know their own minds. She says that Captain Tilney, her least favorite young man, has left Bath and she is glad of it. He spent the last two days there with another girl. She fears that James had a cold and was depressed when they parted, and that he may have misinterpreted her conduct. Catherine understands immediately that this letter is an attempt to manipulate her, and she swears that she will never mention Isabella's name to James again.

Catherine is now better equipped to judge and understand Isabella's hypocrisy. She has heard from James that Isabella planned to leave him for Frederick, and from the Tilneys has been helped to see that Isabella wants to marry for money. She sees that Isabella's lack of loyalty to James has been paid back by Frederick with a lack of loyalty to her. Isabella's hypocrisy may also stand out more boldly when written down, so Catherine can see it more clearly. It takes very little reading between the lines to see that Isabella has been dumped by Frederick and wants to make up with James.

Catherine reads the letter aloud to Henry and Eleanor and denounces Isabella, saying she wishes she had never known her. She congratulates them that their brother has escaped Isabella's clutches, but says she still does not understand Captain Tilney's behavior. Why, she asks, did he get between Isabella and James if he never intended to marry her? Henry says he does not wish to defend his brother, who has his vanities, but has managed to protect himself from being hurt by them, as Isabella has failed to do. Catherine asks if Frederick never cared about Isabella, and Henry says he thinks he never did. Catherine says she does not like Frederick for what he did, because he could have made Isabella fall in love with him. Henry says she would have had to be a different person then, and if she were a different person, she would have been treated differently.

Catherine still has trouble imagining that someone could be so casually insensitive to others' feelings as to lead a woman on the way that Frederick did Isabella, especially someone related to the admirable and honorable Henry. Henry suggests that Isabella's insincere professions of love for James and disloyalty to him once she saw the potential to marry someone richer make her the kind of person who deserves this kind of treatment. Although Catherine doesn't notice this comment, it suggests that Henry believes that like should be repaid with like, and that the loyal and sincere Catherine should expect loyalty and sincerity from him. At the same time Henry is being somewhat harsh here, considering the systemic sexism of his society—for Isabella this scandal will mean ruin, but for Frederick it is presumably just a brief dalliance that will be overlooked by society.

Catherine thinks it is right of Henry to stand up for Frederick, and Henry says that if she were to truly stand up for her brother, she would be glad that he found out about Isabella's character before it was too late, but her "mind is warped by an innate principle of general integrity." Catherine is charmed by Henry, decides to attempt to forgive Frederick for his brother's sake, and resolves to forget about Isabella entirely.

Henry is gently trying to help Catherine grow out of her innocent incomprehension of the bad and insincere behavior of others to become a better judge of character. He thinks her loyalty to her brother should make her grateful that James found out in time that he was engaged to an insincere and disloyal woman in Isabella.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 13

The General leaves for a week in London, telling his children to make sure Catherine's time is spent happily. Catherine feels unconstrained in his absence, and has a wonderful time with Henry and Eleanor, but wonders if she might be overstaying her welcome. She wonders if the Tilneys are growing to love her as dearly as she is growing to love them. To learn whether she ought to go, she tells Eleanor that she must leave. Distressed, Eleanor says she hopes she will stay much longer, and Catherine is very happy to oblige. Catherine feels reassured about the Tilneys' feelings for her after this invitation and Henry's happy look at hearing that she will stay longer. She feels secure most of the time that Henry loves her.

For once Catherine speaks insincerely, but only to discover whether it is polite and proper for her to continue to stay at Northanger. She does not try to conceal that she was telling a white lie once Eleanor assures her that she wants her to stay. Catherine is learning to navigate social situations by assessing them for herself, instead of by asking outright what she ought to do. She is also beginning to believe her own impressions, in this case coming to believe that Henry loves her.

Henry is obliged to leave Northanger for a couple of nights, but with the General's absence, Catherine and Eleanor still enjoy each other's company a great deal. Late that evening, they hear a carriage speeding towards the house. Eleanor says it must be Frederick, and goes to welcome him. Catherine prepares herself to meet Captain Tilney and to give him a second chance. She is sure he will not mention Isabella Thorpe.

Earlier in her visit to Northanger, Catherine was preoccupied with Gothic fantasies and seemed unable to put herself in Eleanor's shoes and be a truly attentive friend. Now Catherine is more capable of truly bonding with Eleanor, and is also prepared to try to see the good in Frederick.

Catherine hears a sound in the hallway and goes to the door to find Eleanor standing behind it. Eleanor is pale and agitated and struggles to speak. Catherine tries to comfort her, but Eleanor begs her to stop. Eleanor says she trusts that Catherine is too kind to blame her for having to deliver a terrible message so soon after they had agreed that Catherine should extend her visit at **Northanger**. She tells Catherine that it is the General who has returned. He has remembered a previous engagement for all of them to leave Northanger to pay a visit this coming Monday. Catherine tries to calm Eleanor, saying she does not need to leave until immediately before they do, and will be able to say goodbye to them all. In great distress, Eleanor tells Catherine she will not get to choose when she leaves: she must leave at seven the next morning and will be sent without a servant. Catherine is struck dumb by hearing this. Eleanor laments this terrible treatment of Catherine, but says that she has no control over what is done in the house.

The General has forced Eleanor to deliver the message to Catherine that he is expelling her from Northanger. Although the General is not a murderer, this is a double unkindness, both to Catherine and to the polite and gentle Eleanor, whom he has forced to do his will. Although he is no Gothic villain, expelling Catherine is a significant break with the customs and manners that Henry Tilney told Catherine she ought to consult when drawing her conclusions about people. In a world in which young, unmarried girls are supposed to be looked after by those around them, General Tilney is committing an abrupt breach of conduct that is difficult for Catherine and Eleanor to wrap their minds around.

Catherine asks if she has offended the General, and Eleanor says that she knows he has no reason to be offended, but he was very agitated when he came in. Eleanor does not know what has caused him to be so angry, but she knows that Catherine has given him no cause for offense. Catherine says she is very sorry if she has given him offense, but, of course, an engagement must be kept. She says that the way she is being sent away is of no importance. Eleanor says that it is of a great deal of importance for reasons of "comfort, appearance, propriety," but Catherine insists it is not. Eleanor sees that Catherine would like to be left alone.

In another sign of maturity, Catherine realizes that she must conceal her reaction to spare Eleanor's feelings. She is as outraged as Eleanor is by the General's rude treatment of her, but although Eleanor sincerely bemoans this terrible treatment of Catherine, Catherine herself pretends to take it in stride. Catherine's dignified reaction only underscores to Eleanor what a breach of manners and friendship she has been forced to be a part of.

Once left alone, Catherine bursts into tears. The General's sudden incivility is hard to believe. She will not even be able to say goodbye to Henry. She thinks that, despite what Eleanor said, she must have somehow offended the General. Catherine spends a sleepless night, similar to her first night when she feared that **Northanger** was the scene of some frightening story, but much worse, because her anxieties are now based in reality.

Catherine now compares the dramatic, often unhappy events in a Gothic novel that she associated with Northanger when she first arrived with the actual experience of being painfully mistreated—and finds that true suffering is not as romantic as she imagined it. But Catherine now has the ability to judge the situation for itself and can clearly see that she is being insulted.

Eleanor comes to Catherine's room in the morning, but brings no apology from the General. Eleanor silently tries to help Catherine get ready, but Catherine has already packed. At breakfast, Catherine tries to eat so that Eleanor will not feel so bad, but compares yesterday's breakfast spent with Henry to the sad breakfast today, and can hardly swallow a bite. Eleanor begs Catherine to send her a letter under a false name once she is home safely. Catherine says she will not write to Eleanor, if Eleanor is not allowed to receive letters from her. Eleanor says she knows Catherine will change her mind once they are parted, and Catherine realizes how painful this is for Eleanor, forgets her pride, and promises to write.

Overcome by her own feelings, Catherine forgets what a difficult situation Eleanor has been placed in and how much she is suffering. Her first intuition is, as always, to do the proper thing: not to write to someone who is not permitted to receive her letters. But once she sees how much pain this will cause Eleanor, a loyal friend who feels heartbroken to be hurting her, Catherine realizes that there is something more important than propriety at stake. This is another nuance that the less mature Catherine might not have grasped.

Eleanor, a bit embarrassed, asks if Catherine has enough money for her journey home. Catherine had given no thought to this, but when she looks in her wallet she finds she does not have enough. Eleanor gives Catherine money for the journey, but they are both too upset by the thought of Catherine being sent away without the means to get home to speak anymore. They embrace, and Catherine pauses and asks that Eleanor say goodbye to "her absent friend." She cannot bring herself to speak Henry's name, but runs from the hall and jumps into the carriage, which immediately rides off.

Even if the General had assured himself that Catherine had enough money to get home, it would have been a breach of social rules to let a young, unmarried woman (of an upper or middle class, at least) travel on her own. The prospect of Catherine getting stranded on the road is an unthinkable one for both women. Catherine may not have money, but both she and Eleanor have behaved with kindness and dignity, while the General has shown himself to have no respect for custom or the responsibility he had taken on in inviting Catherine to his home.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 14

Catherine is too upset to pay any attention to the journey at first. She travels the same road she had ten days before on her way to Woodston. She remembers how the General had seemed so much to want her engagement to Henry and wonders what she could have done. She is sure Henry did not tell his father about her suspicions that he was a murderer. She is most concerned, however, about how Henry will take the news of her having been turned out of **Northanger**. She alternately thinks that he will calmly accept his father's will and that he will be upset and angry on her behalf. After passing Woodston, she is too consumed by her thoughts to notice the journey, especially since she is not eager to arrive home under such odd circumstances, which will likely prejudice her family against the entire Tilney family.

Alone and without anyone to offer her guidance, Catherine must rely on her own judgments to try to make sense of what has happened and what will happen. The General has shown that he can like someone and change his mind very quickly and for no reason. Catherine now wonders whether Henry will be the same, or if he will be loyal to her where his father was not. Despite being kicked out of Northanger, Catherine is still loyal to Henry and worries about the impression her abrupt arrival will make on her parents, whom she still hopes will eventually accept Henry as a son-in-law.

Catherine meets with no trouble on her eleven-hour journey. She is looked after by those around her because of her youth, good manners, and ability to pay well. Most heroines return from journeys in grand style, the Narrator says, with many servants and an elegant carriage, which prompt authors to describe them in minute detail. But there is nothing much to say about a heroine in a post-chaise carriage.

Although Catherine acts the part of a respectable gentlewoman, her arrival home contrasts to those of heroines in sentimental novels. These heroines have usually married someone much richer than they are, and ride home to be congratulated by everyone they know.

Catherine's entire large family is thrilled to see her when she arrives at Fullerton, which soothes her more than she thought anything could. Over tea, Catherine explains why she has returned so suddenly, and although the Morlands are not easily insulted, they think General Tilney's treatment of their daughter is ungentlemanly. The family cannot understand his behavior, but Mrs. Morland says that it is not worth understanding. She says Catherine has always been absentminded, so hopefully she learned something from the experience of having to get home by herself.

The Morlands are not wealthy, but they do see abiding by a certain code of conduct as essential. The General may be wealthy, but no true "gentleman" would treat a young woman the way he did. Mrs. Morland treats Catherine like a child who needs to learn lessons, not realizing how much her daughter has grown and changed over the eleven weeks since she left Fullerton.

Mrs. Morland sends Catherine to bed early, but her daughter still looks pale and unhappy in the morning. It never occurs to her parents to wonder about Catherine's heart—and, the Narrator notes, this is quite unusual in the parents of a seventeen-year-old just returning from her first trip away from home.

Catherine is the Morlands' oldest daughter, and they have not realized just how grown up she is. Mrs. Morland does not understand the range of experiences Catherine has been exposed to in Bath and at Northanger.

Catherine sits down to write to Eleanor. She is now fully aware of how hard this situation was for Eleanor and is eager to do as Eleanor asked and write. She puzzles over how to strike the right tone in her letter. She wishes to show kindness to Eleanor, but to be honest, while also writing a letter she would not be embarrassed for Henry to read. In the end, she decides to write a very brief note, expressing gratitude and affection and repaying the money Eleanor lent her.

The discretion Catherine exercises in writing this letter shows how much she has grown as a judge of people and situations. She asks for no advice, but figures out on her own how to conduct herself with politeness, kindness, and dignity, while also leaving out any mention of the terrible experience the General put her and Eleanor through.

After hearing Catherine's story of her time in Bath and with the Tilneys, Mrs. Morland says it has been a strange acquaintance, with such quick intimacy and such a quick end to the relationship. She says Catherine was also mistaken about Isabella's character. She says she hopes that the next friends Catherine makes "will be better worth keeping." Catherine blushes and defends Eleanor. Mrs. Morland calmly predicts that, if what she says is true, they will surely meet again in a few years. This is not comforting to Catherine, who thinks that Henry Tilney will likely forget her in a few years, although she will never forget him.

Mrs. Morland thinks that Catherine was an equally bad judge of the Tilneys' and Thorpes' characters. Catherine still feels strong loyalty to the Tilneys, although she does not mention that she is in love with Henry. Mrs. Morland, again showing herself to be rather clueless, provides cold comfort when she says they will meet in a few years, since this would mean that Henry had acquiesced to his father's wish that he be utterly separated from Catherine.

Mrs. Morland and Catherine call on Mrs. Allen, and Mrs. Morland tells Catherine that she feels sorry for James, but he will likely be a wiser man after this early disappointment. Catherine reflects on the last time, less than three months before, when she walked this path, filled with excitement for her trip to Bath. She feels herself to be a different human being now.

Mrs. Morland expresses the hope that James will learn from his experience with Isabella, but is completely unaware of how much Catherine has learned from her own experiences in Bath and at Northanger.

The Allens are surprised and happy to see her and very appalled by General Tilney's treatment of Catherine. Mrs. Morland says they are happy to have Catherine back and glad to know that she can look after herself on a long journey. Mr. Allen expresses anger with the General, and then Mrs. Allen repeats several times the same phrases her husband has used, before turning the topic back to her **clothing** and the happiness of their having met the Thorpes when they had no acquaintances. Mrs. Allen also talks about how agreeable Mr. Tilney was, to which Catherine cannot reply.

Mr. Allen feels partially responsible for having entrusted Catherine's care to General Tilney, and is very angry at his outrageous treatment of her. Mrs. Allen, on the other hand, has learned nothing from her experiences in Bath. She is still glad to have met the Thorpes, even after Isabella's engagement with James has been broken, and praises Mr. Tilney without any concern for how this may now make Catherine feel.

On the way home, Mrs. Morland tells Catherine how unimportant it is that she has lost the friendship of the Tilneys, when she has the esteem of the Allens. This sensible argument has little effect on Catherine's feelings. Catherine feels her entire happiness rests with the Tilneys. She silently thinks that Henry must by this time have heard about what happened to her.

The argument that Catherine does not need the Tilneys when she has the Allens reflects Mrs. Morland's own innocence. In fact, Catherine needs the loyalty of those she loves and respects, not of those, like Mrs. Allen, who are incapable of real judgment or empathy.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 15

Catherine had never been very good at sitting still or at focusing on a task, but Mrs. Morland now observes her to be more fidgety than ever before, and much sadder than she has ever been. She chides Catherine for thinking only about Bath and failing to be useful, saying she has had a great deal of pleasure and now she must be content, although her home is less grand than **Northanger**. Mrs. Morland says she knows of an essay about young girls who have been spoiled by meeting people who are richer than their own families are. Catherine tries to focus on her needlework, but after a few minute sinks into thought. Mrs. Morland immediately goes to get the book containing the essay.

Mrs. Morland has nothing but the best intentions for her daughter, and sincerely wants her to grow into a productive and grounded young woman who makes the best of every situation. She does not realize, however, the extent to which Catherine has already had these growing experiences while away from home. She believes Catherine is having the reaction of a spoiled child who has returned from a fancy adventure tired and cranky, not a young woman in love.

When Mrs. Morland returns to the room, she is surprised to find a strange young man there. Henry Tilney rises to meet her, saying that he had come to make sure Catherine had gotten home safely. Mrs. Morland welcomes him warmly, without holding his father's behavior against him. Mrs. Morland makes small talk with Mr. Tilney, who is glad to be received without rebuke, but cannot yet say why he has really come. Catherine is silent, but her mother can see that she is happier, and hopes this visit will improve her mood.

Although Henry may only have come, as he says, to make sure Catherine is safe, this shows that he is an honorable gentleman, dedicated to upholding the code of conduct that his father flouted. Mrs. Morland's inability to judge when two people are in love recalls Catherine's obliviousness to James and Isabella's relationship in Bath. Mrs. Morland may be an adult, but she is still innocent to what is going on in other people's hearts and minds.

Eventually Mrs. Morland runs out of small talk and everyone falls silent. Mr. Tilney, for the first time addressing Catherine, asks if the Allens are home and, blushing, if she will show him the way to their house. Catherine's younger sister Sarah says the Allens' home can be seen from the window, but Mrs. Morland understands that Mr. Tilney may want to explain his father's behavior to Catherine in private, and allows Catherine to accompany Mr. Tilney.

Henry produces a pretext for being alone with Catherine, but the inexperienced young Sarah's straightforward statement of fact nearly ruins this chance for Henry to talk to her sister. Although Mrs. Morland still does not suspect that her daughter is in love, she at least has the social sense to understand that Henry wishes to speak to Catherine.

Henry wants to explain his father's conduct, but is more eager to explain his own feelings. He assures Catherine of his affection for her, and asks her if she feels the same way about him and will marry him. They both know the answer to this question very well. The Narrator explains that it was Catherine's partiality for Henry that attracted him to her in the first place, which is a very unusual circumstance for a heroine and very undignified for her.

The heroines of most Sentimental novels are beloved for their beauty and goodness, and they do not fall in love with men before men have fallen in love with them. But Austen subverts this trope somewhat, as it is the trust that Catherine put in Henry and her obvious liking for him that drew him to her. He saw that she would loyally love him and so he reciprocated.

They spend a very brief visit at the Allens. On their walk back to the Morlands' home, Henry explains that his father had told him two days before that she had been sent away and he should not think about her anymore. Catherine is grateful that Henry kindly asked for her hand in marriage before he told her that his father would not approve of it.

If Henry had started by telling Catherine that he did not have his father's permission to marry her, she might have felt she had to refuse him because only a marriage with parental sanction would be appropriate (particularly for someone as concerned with what is "proper" as Catherine is).

Henry explains that the General had mistakenly believed Catherine to be very rich, and had therefore wanted her to marry Henry. When he discovered his error, he turned her out of his house. Weeks before, the General had seen Henry and Catherine speaking at the theater and had asked John Thorpe about Catherine's wealth and connections. At that time, Thorpe thought that his sister would soon marry James, and he hoped to marry Catherine himself, believing her to be wealthier than she really was. Thorpe always inflated the wealth and importance of anyone he was connected to, and, in his vanity, made Catherine out to be even wealthier than he himself believed her to be. He also assured the General that she was likely the heiress to all that the Allens possessed. The General had no reason to doubt what Thorpe said, especially since he could see that Thorpe intended to marry Catherine himself. When the General then saw that Henry was interested in Catherine, he set about trying to encourage the match.

The combination of John Thorpe and General Tilney made for a perfect storm of hypocrisy. Although the General often spoke hypocritically himself, he failed to see why John Thorpe would do so in this situation and took him at his word. Thorpe both believed Catherine to be wealthy and habitually exaggerated everything he said to make himself look more impressive. He talked to the General about Catherine in the same way as he talked to Catherine about his horse. Both men cared for money and status above all else, and saw Catherine as a way to gain a larger fortune or improve their status in the world.

The General later ran into John Thorpe again in London. Thorpe was by that time angry at Catherine's refusal of him and even angrier at having found himself unable to reconcile James and Isabella, so he told the General the exact opposite of what he had said before. John told the General that, after at first offering James and Isabella a liberal amount of money, Mr. Morland turned out to have nothing to give. Thorpe said that he himself had uncovered that Mr. Morland was a social-climber and not respected in his neighborhood, and that the Allens had chosen a different heir. The General then rushed back to Northanger and expelled Catherine.

As always, John Thorpe had no compunction about contradicting himself. He was willing to tell the General the opposite story without wondering how this impacted his own credibility in the General's mind. It seems that Thorpe had first brought James Morland home to meet his family in the hopes that James would fall in love with Isabella. The initial misunderstanding about the Morlands' fortune likely sprang from Mrs. Thorpe, who knew that the Allens were wealthy and that the Morlands were their friends.

Henry did not explain all of this to Catherine at that moment, but he told her enough to make her feel that she had "scarcely sinned against his character" when she had thought the General to have murdered his wife. Henry is embarrassed to explain this to Catherine, and he had been extremely indignant when he heard what the General had done. The General, whose children usually never defied him, had been shocked to find Henry determined to disobey his order to forget about Catherine. Henry had felt himself bound in honor to Catherine. He had been told to win her heart, and he believed he had won it, and his conscience would not allow him to abandon her now. He had refused to go with his family on the trip that his father had hastily planned to have an excuse to send Catherine away. Instead, Henry had gone straight home to Woodston and left the next day for Fullerton.

Catherine has grown to understand how much pain can be caused by run-of-the-mill unkindness and bad behavior like the General's—not just dramatic cruelty like that found in novels. Henry's proposal to her despite his father's prohibition seems to her just as beautiful an action as any that a hero in a Gothic novel might do to rescue a heroine from harm's way. Unlike the General, who cares for money above all else, Henry has a strong sense of honor, which is based on society's code of conduct and morals. As far back as when Henry told Catherine that a dance is like a marriage contract, he has showed his belief in the importance of loyalty to love. Now, her love for him has earned her his loyalty.

VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 16

Mr. Morland and Mrs. Morland are shocked to be asked for Catherine's hand in marriage, since it had never occurred to them that she was in love with Mr. Tilney. They can see that he has pleasing manners and good sense, and they happily give their consent for Catherine's marriage, as soon as the General should give his. They do not demand the General's money. Henry Tilney is sure of a fortune regardless of the General's consent, and it is clear to the Morlands that their daughter will be much wealthier than they could have hoped for her to be after marrying. Henry and Catherine can only accept the Morlands' position and hope for the General to eventually give his consent, although they fear that this will never happen. Henry returns to Woodston to prepare for marriage, and Catherine waits anxiously at Fullerton, where her parents look the other way when she receives letters from Henry.

Like Catherine, the other Morlands are not focused on money. They want their children to marry people who share their values and their code of conduct. They are pleased that Catherine has met a man with such a large fortune, but they will not sacrifice propriety so that Catherine can be wealthy. For this reason, the Morlands will not approve of her marriage without the proper permission from General Tilney. Catherine and Henry have similar respect for the rules that govern marriage in their society, and agree to the Morlands' terms.

Readers of the book can see from the very few remaining pages that it will soon end, the Narrator remarks, and so they cannot share Henry and Catherine's anxiety. But how could the General be brought around? It was Eleanor's marriage to a man with both wealth and rank that changed the General's mind. Eleanor and this man had loved each other for some time, but he only proposed to her after inheriting a large fortune and the title of Viscount. It was his laundry bills that Catherine had found in her room at Northanger.

As the novel closes, the Narrator again draws attention to its status as a novel, pointing out how readers form their expectations based on how many pages remain. Notably, the sensitive and moral Eleanor marries someone who shows the same loyalty to her that Henry shows to Catherine. Although a rich Viscount could likely marry someone richer and with a title, he seemingly remains loyal to Eleanor because he loves her.

Eleanor and her husband, a Viscount, help persuade the General to accept Henry's marriage to Catherine. It also helps that Catherine is not nearly as poor as John Thorpe described her to be in his second encounter with the General. Upon marriage, Catherine receives three thousand pounds. In the end, despite the delay, Catherine and Henry marry at the ages of eighteen and twenty-six. The General's cruelty even perhaps helps to make Catherine and Henry happier, as it helps them to know one another better and to strengthen their attachment.

Catherine turns out to be richer than the General thought, but more important to Henry, she is more committed to the rules of conduct that make a gentlewoman than the General is himself. The novel concludes that facing trials strengthens a couple's bond. Loyalty in the face of adversity is both a testament to love and a way to strengthen it.

HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

MLA

Levine, Yael. "*Northanger Abbey*." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 2 May 2017. Web. 21 Apr 2020.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Levine, Yael. "*Northanger Abbey*." LitCharts LLC, May 2, 2017. Retrieved April 21, 2020. https://www.litcharts.com/lit/northanger-abbey.

To cite any of the quotes from *Northanger Abbey* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

MLA

Austen, Jane. Northanger Abbey. Penguin Classics. 2003.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Austen, Jane. Northanger Abbey. New York: Penguin Classics. 2003.