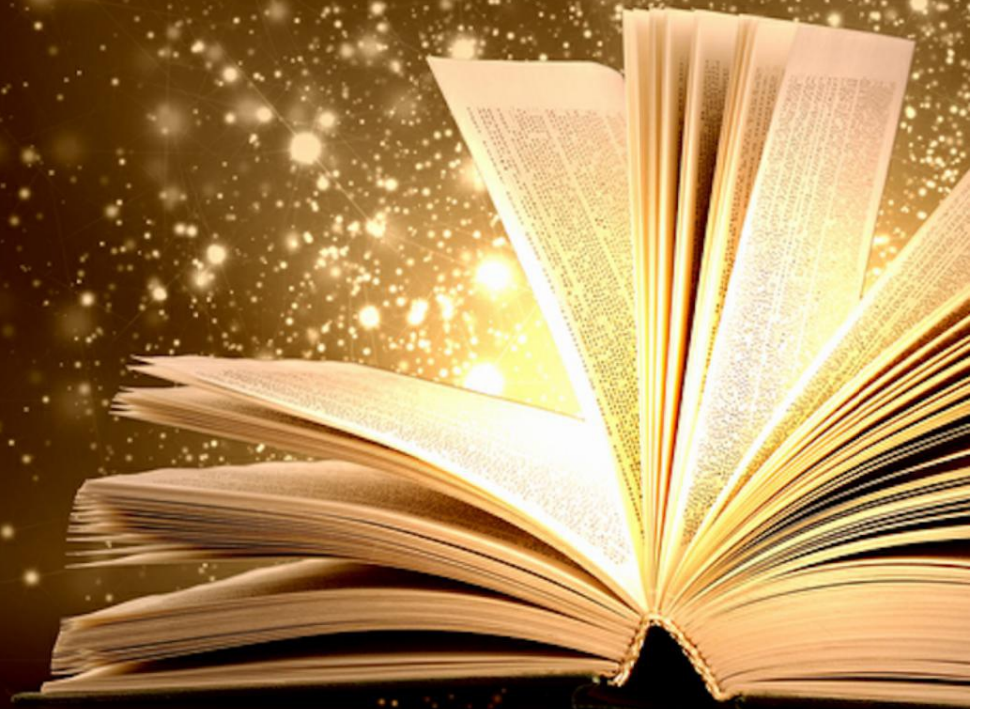


JANE AUSTEN



COMPLETE JUVENILIA

simpathizing tenderness advanced towards her & accosted her in these terms.

"You seem, fair Nymph, to be labouring under some misfortune which we shall be happy to releive, if you will inform us what it is. Will you favour us with your Life & adventures?"

"Willingly, Ladies, if you will be so kind as to be seated." They took their places & she thus began.

# Chapter 5

"I am a native of North Wales & my Father is one of the most capital Taylors in it. Having a numerous family, he was easily prevailed on by a sister of my Mother's, who is a widow in good circumstances & keeps an alehouse in the next Village to ours, to let her take me & breed me up at her own expence. Accordingly, I have lived with her for the last 8 years of my Life, during which time she provided me with some of the first rate Masters, who taught me all the accomplishments requisite for one of my sex and rank. Under their instructions I learned Dancing, Music, Drawing & various Languages, by which means I became more accomplished than any other Taylor's Daughter in Wales. Never was there a happier creature than I was, till within the last half year—but I should have told you before that the principal Estate in our Neighbourhood belongs to Charles Adams, the owner of the brick House, you see yonder."

"Charles Adams!" exclaimed the astonished Alice; "are you acquainted with Charles Adams?"

"To my sorrow, madam, I am. He came about half a year ago to receive the rents of the Estate I have just mentioned. At that time I first saw him; as you seem, ma'am, acquainted with him, I need not describe to you how charming he is. I could not resist his attractions —"

"Ah! who can," said Alice with a deep sigh.

"My aunt, being in terms of the greatest intimacy with his cook, determined, at my request, to try whether she could discover, by means of her freind, if there were any chance of his returning my affection. For this purpose she went one evening to drink tea with Mrs. Susan, who in the course of Conversation mentioned the goodness of her Place & the Goodness of her Master; upon which my Aunt began pumping her with so much dexterity that in a short time Susan owned, that she did not think her Master would ever marry, "for" (said she) "he has often & often declared to me that his wife, whoever she might be, must possess Youth, Beauty, Birth, Wit, Merit, & Money. I have many a time" (she continued) "endeavoured to reason him out of his resolution & to convince him of the improbability of his ever meeting with such a Lady; but my arguments have had no effect, & he continues as firm in his determination as ever." You may imagine, Ladies, my distress on hearing this; for I was fearfull that tho' possessed of Youth, Beauty, Wit & Merit, & tho' the probable Heiress of my Aunt's House & business, he might think me deficient in Rank, & in being so, unworthy of his hand."

"However I was determined to make a bold push & therefore wrote him a very kind letter, offering him with great tenderness my hand & heart. To this I received an angry & peremptory refusal, but thinking it might be rather the effect of his modesty than any thing

else, I pressed him again on the subject. But he never answered any more of my Letters & very soon afterwards left the Country. As soon as I heard of his departure, I wrote to him here, informing him that I should shortly do myself the honour of waiting on him at Pammydiddle, to which I received no answer; therefore, choosing to take Silence for Consent, I left Wales, unknown to my Aunt, & arrived here after a tedious Journey this Morning. On enquiring for his House, I was directed thro' this Wood, to the one you there see. With a heart elated by the expected happiness of beholding him, I entered it, & had proceeded thus far in my progress thro' it, when I found myself suddenly seized by the leg & on examining the cause of it, found that I was caught in one of the steel traps so common in gentlemen's grounds."

"Ah! cried Lady Williams, how fortunate we are to meet with you; since we might otherwise perhaps have shared the like misfortune."

"It is indeed happy for you, Ladies, that I should have been a short time before you. I screamed, as you may easily imagine, till the woods resounded again & till one of the inhuman Wretch's servants came to my assistance & released me from my dreadful prison, but not before one of my legs was entirely broken."

# Chapter 6

At this melancholy recital, the fair eyes of Lady Williams were suffused in tears & Alice could not help exclaiming,

"Oh! cruel Charles, to wound the hearts & legs of all the fair."

Lady Williams now interposed, & observed that the young Lady's leg ought to be set without farther delay. After examining the fracture, therefore, she immediately began & performed the operation with great skill, which was the more wonderfull on account of her having never performed such a one before. Lucy then arose from the ground, & finding that she could walk with the greatest ease, accompanied them to Lady Williams's House at her Ladyship's particular request.

The perfect form, the beautifull face, & elegant manners of Lucy so won on the affections of Alice, that when they parted, which was not till after Supper, she assured her that except her Father, Brother, Uncles, Aunts, Cousins & other relations, Lady Williams, Charles Adams, & a few dozen more of particular freinds, she loved her better than almost any other person in the world.

Such a flattering assurance of her regard would justly have given much pleasure to the object of it, had she not plainly perceived that the amiable Alice had partaken too freely of Lady Williams's claret.

Her Ladyship (whose discernment was great) read in the intelligent countenance of Lucy her thoughts on the subject, & as soon as Miss Johnson had taken her leave, thus addressed her.

"When you are more intimately acquainted with my Alice, you will not be surprised, Lucy, to see the dear Creature drink a little too much; for such things happen every day. She has many rare & charming qualities, but Sobriety is not one of them. The whole Family are indeed a sad drunken set. I am sorry to say too that I never knew three such thorough Gamesters as they are, more particularly Alice. But she is a charming girl. I fancy not one of the sweetest tempers in the world; to be sure I have seen her in such passions! However, she is a sweet young Woman. I am sure you'll like her. I scarcely know any one so amiable. — Oh! that you could but have seen her the other Evening! How she raved! & on such a trifle too! She is indeed a most pleasing Girl! I shall always love her!"

"She appears, by your ladyship's account, to have many good qualities", replied Lucy. "Oh! a thousand," answered Lady Williams; "tho' I am very partial to her, and perhaps am blinded, by my affection, to her real defects."

The next morning brought the three Miss Simpsons to wait on Lady Williams, who received them with the utmost politeness & introduced to their acquaintance Lucy, with whom the eldest was so much pleased that at parting she declared her sole *ambition* was to have her accompany them the next morning to Bath, whither they were going for some weeks.

"Lucy," said Lady Williams, "is quite at her own disposal & if she chooses to accept so kind an invitation, I hope she will not hesitate from any motives of delicacy on my account. I know not indeed how I shall ever be able to part with her. She never was at Bath & I should think that it would be a most agreeable Jaunt to her. Speak, my Love," continued she, turning to Lucy, "what say you to accompanying these Ladies? I shall be miserable without you—t'will be a most pleasant tour to you—I hope you'll go; if you do I am sure t'will be the Death of me—pray be persuaded."

Lucy begged leave to decline the honour of accompanying them, with many expressions of gratitude for the extream politeness of Miss Simpson in inviting her. Miss Simpson appeared much disappointed by her refusal. Lady Williams insisted on her going—declared that she would never forgive her if she did not, and that she should never survive it if she did, & in short, used such persuasive arguments that it was at length resolved she was to go. The Miss Simpsons called for her at ten o'clock the next morning & Lady Williams had soon the satisfaction of receiving from her young friend the pleasing intelligence of their safe arrival in Bath.

It may now be proper to return to the Hero of this Novel, the brother of Alice, of whom I believe I have scarcely ever had occasion to speak; which may perhaps be partly owing to his unfortunate propensity to Liquor, which so compleatly deprived him of the use of those faculties Nature had endowed him with, that he never did anything worth mentioning. His Death happened a short time after Lucy's departure & was the natural Consequence of this pernicious practice. By his decease, his sister became the sole inheritress of a very large fortune, which as it gave her fresh Hopes of rendering herself acceptable as a wife to Charles Adams, could not fail of being most pleasing to her—and as the effect was Joyfull, the Cause could scarcely be lamented.

Finding the violence of her attachment to him daily augment, she at length disclosed it to her Father & desired him to propose a union between them to Charles. Her father consented & set out one morning to open the affair to the young Man. Mr. Johnson being a man of few words, his part was soon performed & the answer he received was as follows.

"Sir, I may perhaps be expected to appear pleased at & gratefull for the offer you have made me: but let me tell you that I consider it as an affront. I look upon myself to be, Sir, a