



THE
TUTOR'S DAUGHTER



JULIE
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This is a work of historical reconstruction; the appearances of certain historical figures are therefore inevitable. All other characters, however, are products of the author's imagination, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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YOUNG GENTLEMEN

are boarded and instructed in English, Writing, and Arithmetic, at Eighteen Guineas per Annum. They are likewise carefully instructed in the CLASSICS. Drawing, Geography, and the use of the Globes, taught separately on moderate Terms.

—*Hampshire Chronicle* advertisement, 1797



E. England begs leave to acquaint his friends and the public that he receives a limited number of pupils under his care, who are boarded at the rate of fourteen guineas, and carefully instructed in English Grammar, Penmanship and a regular course of Mathematics, together with History, Geography, the use of Globes, and the method of Drawing in Perspective.

—*Stamford Mercury* advertisement, 1808

Prologue



LONGSTAPLE, DEVONSHIRE

1812

Something is amiss, Emma thought, immediately upon entering her tidy bedchamber. *What is it . . . ?*

She scanned the neatly made bed, orderly side table, and dressing chest. . . . *There*. She stepped forward, heart squeezing.

In the special teacup she kept as decoration nestled a clutch of tiny pink roses. The flowers had likely been picked from her aunt's garden next door, but they had been picked for her, and they had been picked by him, and that was all that mattered.

She knew instantly who had left them—Phillip Weston. Her favorite from among her father's many pupils. And likely the only one who knew it was her birthday—her sixteenth. How much kinder Phillip was than his older brother, Henry, who had boarded with them a few years before.

Emma carefully lifted the cup, bringing the flowers to her nose and breathing in the fragrance of apple-sweet roses and fresh greenery. *Mmm . . .* She held the cup away, admiring how the flowers' pink petals and green leaves brought out the colorful painting on its side.

She found herself thinking back to the day her mother had given her this teacup three years before. The very day Henry Weston had nearly broken it. . . .

Emma untied the ribbon, peeled back the tissue paper—careful not to rip it—and opened the box. Looking inside, pleasure filled her. She had been right about its contents. For she had noticed the prized teacup missing from its place in the china cupboard.

“It was your grandmother’s,” her mother said. “She purchased it on her wedding trip. All the way to Italy. Can you imagine?”

“Yes,” Emma breathed, admiring anew the gold-rimmed cup with its detailed painting of a Venetian gondola and bridge. “It’s beautiful. I’ve always admired it.”

A rare dimple appeared in her mother’s pale cheek. “I know you have.”

Emma smiled. “Thank you, Mamma.”

“Happy birthday, my dear.”

Emma returned the cup and saucer gingerly into the box, planning to carry it up to her bedchamber. She stepped out of the sitting room and—*wham*—a wooden ball slammed into the wall opposite, nearly knocking the box from her hands. She looked up, infuriated to see one of her father’s pupils smirking at her.

“Henry Weston!” Emma clutched the box to her young bosom, shielding it with her arms. “Do be careful.”

His green eyes slid from her face to her arms, and he stepped closer. “What is in the box?”

“A gift.”

“Ah, that’s right. It is your birthday. How old are you now—ten?”

She lifted her chin. “I am thirteen, as you very well know.”

He reached over, pulled back the paper, and peered into the box. His eyes glinted, and then he chuckled, the chuckle soon growing into a laugh.

She glared at the smug sixteen-year-old. “I don’t see what is so funny.”

“It is the perfect gift for you, Emma Smallwood. A single teacup. A single solitary teacup. Have I not often said you will end a spinster?”

“I will not,” she insisted.

“Sitting about and reading all day as you do, your head will continue to grow but your limbs will shrivel, and who would want to marry *that*?”

“Someone far better than you.”

He snorted. “If someone marries you, Emma Smallwood, I shall . . . I shall perform the dance of the swords at your wedding breakfast.” He grinned. “Naked.”

She scoffed in disgust. “Who would want to see *that*? Besides, who says I would invite you to my wedding?”

He tweaked her chin in a patronizing fashion. “Bluestocking.”

She scowled. “Jackanapes!”

“Emma Smallwood . . .” Her mother appeared in the doorway, eyes flashing. “What word did I hear coming from your mouth? I give you a beautiful gift and you repay me with an ugly word?”

“Sorry, Mamma.”

“Hello, Mr. Weston.” Her mother slanted Henry a dismissive look. “Do excuse us.”

“Mrs. Smallwood.” He bowed and then turned toward the stairs.

“Emma,” her mother hissed. “Young ladies do not speak to gentlemen in such a manner.”

“He’s no gentleman,” Emma said, hoping Henry would hear. “He certainly does not act like one.”

Her mother’s lips tightened. “Be that as it may, it isn’t proper. I want you to go to your room and read the chapter on polite manners in the book I gave you.”

Emma protested, “Mamma . . .”

Her mother held up her hand. “Not another word. I know I say you read too many books, but I would rather you read one on the feminine graces than those horrid scholarly tomes of your father’s.”

“Yes, Mamma.” Emma sighed and carried her cup upstairs.

Unhappy memory fading, Emma smiled at the sweet bouquet left for her by Henry’s younger brother, Phillip. She wondered what

Henry Weston would say if he could see her now and knew who had given her flowers.

When Henry Weston left the Smallwood Academy, Emma had been relieved, but she would be sad to see Phillip depart. It was difficult to believe two brothers could be so very different.

*Before, however, Lucy had been an hour
in the house she had contrived a place for
everything and put everything in its place.*

—*The Naughty Girl Won*, circa 1800

Chapter 1



FIVE YEARS LATER

APRIL 1817

Twenty-one-year-old Emma Smallwood carefully dusted the collection of favorite books atop her dressing chest. It was the one bit of housekeeping she insisted on doing herself, despite Mrs. Malloy's protestations. She then carefully wiped her cherished teacup against any dust particle daring to lodge there. The cup and saucer were a gift from her mother—fine porcelain rimmed with real gold.

Emma set the cup and saucer back atop the leather-bound volume of Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*. She angled the cup to best display the image on its side—a lovely painting of a graceful gondola in Venice.

Emma had never sipped from the gold-rimmed cup. But she did like to look at it. To remember her mother, gone these two years. To remember a young man who had once left roses inside it. And to imagine visiting Italy someday herself.

Morning ritual finished, Emma stowed her cleaning supplies and checked the chatelaine watch hooked to her bodice. She closed the

cover with a satisfying *snap*. Precisely as she'd thought. Time to go down and send off their last remaining pupil.

Reaching the bottom of the stairs, she saw Edward Sims standing in the hall, fidgeting with his valise. He wore a smart frock coat and top hat, and looked the picture of a young man ready to take on the world.

"All set, Mr. Sims?"

He turned. "Yes, Miss Smallwood."

Though she was only four years his senior, Emma felt a fondness bordering on the maternal when she looked at the young man who had lived with them for most of the last three years. She glanced around the empty hall. "Has my father bid you farewell?"

Mr. Sims shifted and shook his head. "I have not seen him this morning."

Emma forced a smile. "What a pity. He shall be so sorry to have missed you. I know he wanted to be here to see you off."

Her father ought to have been there. But no doubt he had gone to the churchyard to visit her grave. Again.

Mr. Sims gave an awkward smile. "Tell him good-bye for me, and thank him for everything."

"I shall."

"And I thank you especially, Miss Smallwood. I learned a great deal from you."

"You are very welcome, Mr. Sims. I wish you every success at university."

From the front window, she watched the young man walk past the *Smallwood Academy* sign, and down the cobbled lane, feeling the wistful letdown she often felt when a pupil left them. This time all the more, since there were no new students to replace him.

The house seemed suddenly quiet and empty. She wished Mr. Sims had a younger brother. *Six* younger brothers. She sighed. Perhaps even amiable Mr. Sims would hesitate to recommend Mr. Smallwood as tutor, considering how little her father had actually been involved in his education. But how would they pay their cook-housekeeper and maid, not to mention the languishing pile of bills, without more pupils?

Emma walked to the desk in the family sitting room, pulled out the bound notebook she kept there, and flipped past previous lists:

Books read this year.

Books to read next.

Improvements needed to boys' chambers.

Economizing measures.

Places to visit someday.

New texts and primers to order for next term: None.

Diversions to improve Papa's moods/Improvement noted: None.

Pupils by year.

Her pupil lists, which had grown shorter with each passing year, included notes on each young man's character and his plans for the future.

She turned to the list from three years before, running her finger over the few names, lingering on one in particular.

Phillip Weston. Kind and amiable. Second son. Plans to follow his brother to Oxford and read the law.

The brief note hardly did him justice. Phillip Weston had been her only true friend among her father's pupils over the years.

Seeing his name caused her to turn to another page. Another list.

Prospective pupils for the future: Rowan and Julian Weston?

Emma thought again of the letter she had sent a fortnight before. She knew perfectly well Henry and Phillip Weston had two younger half brothers. Phillip had mentioned them often enough. Julian and Rowan were at least fifteen by now—older than Phillip when he'd been sent to the academy.

But they had not come.

She had broached the subject with her father several times in the

past, suggesting he write to the boys' father. But he had hemmed, hawed, and sighed, saying he was sure, if Sir Giles meant to send his younger sons to them, he would have done so already. No, more likely, Sir Giles and his second wife had eschewed their humble establishment in favor of prestigious Winchester, Harrow, or Eton.

"Well, it would not hurt to ask," Emma had urged.

But her father had grimaced and said maybe another day.

Therefore Emma, who had been acting with increasing frequency as her father's secretary, had taken up quill and ink and written to Sir Giles in her father's stead, to ask if he might consider sending his younger sons, as he had his older two.

She still could hardly believe she had done so. What had come over her? In hindsight, she knew very well. She had read an account of the daring travels of the Russian princess Catherine Dashkov. Reading about the princess's exploits had inspired Emma's rare act of bravery—or foolishness—whichever the letter had been. In the end, her letter apparently made no difference. Her assertiveness had been in vain, for there had been no reply. She hoped if Sir Giles had been offended at their presumption that word of it had not reached Phillip, who was, she believed, still away at university.

Turning a page in her notebook, Emma tapped a quill in ink and began a new list.

Measures to acquire new pupils.

Someone knocked on the doorjamb, and Emma looked up. There stood Aunt Jane, who had let herself in through the side door as usual.

"Mr. Sims departed on schedule?" Jane asked with one of her frequent smiles, punctuated by slightly crooked eyeteeth.

"Yes. You only just missed him." Emma set her quill back in its holder.

Her aunt laid her bonnet on the sideboard and smoothed back her hair. Amidst the brown, Emma glimpsed a few silver hairs that had escaped her ruthless plucking.

Jane, her father's sister, younger by six years, had never married. She lived in the house next door, which had been their parents' home. There she ran a sister school to the Smallwood Academy—a boarding school for young ladies.

Jane peeled off her gloves. "Dare I ask where your father is?"

Emma shook her head. "He's been gone since breakfast."

Aunt Jane pulled in her lips in a regretful expression, her shaking head mirroring Emma's.

Mrs. Malloy, the Smallwoods' cook-housekeeper, brought in the tea tray and seemed not in the least surprised to see Jane Smallwood there. In fact, three cups already sat upon the tray.

"You will join me, I hope?" Emma asked politely, knowing full well her aunt had planned to do so all along.

"Thank you, my dear."

As if drawn by the warm trail of steam from the kettle or the smell of Mrs. Malloy's shortbread, the front door opened and Emma's father shuffled in, head bowed, thin mouth downturned, looking older than his forty-eight years.

Mrs. Malloy bustled over to take his hat and muffler, scolding, "Mr. Smallwood . . . yer shoes are a right mess! And wet trouser 'ems in the bargain. Did ya swim 'ome?"

"Do forgive me, Mrs. Malloy," he said dryly. Irony glinted in his round, blue eyes. "I did not step in that puddle to spite you." He wiped his shoes and looked across at his daughter and sister. "Am I in time for tea?"

"Yes," Emma replied. "Though you have missed Mr. Sims."

Her father blinked, clearly surprised and chagrined. "Left already? Good heavens. I wanted to be here. I do hope you passed along my gratitude and farewells."

"Of course I did."

Her father sat down, rubbing his hands together. "Chilly day. Damp too."

"You ought not to have stayed outdoors so long, John," Jane said. "You'll catch your death."

"I should be so lucky," he murmured.

Aunt and niece shared a look of concern.

Emma poured tea into their plain everyday cups, and conversation dwindled while they partook of the simple repast of hot tea, bread, cheese, and shortbread. Her father ate a little of everything, she noticed, though his appetite was not what it once was.

Emma nibbled bread and cheese but resisted the shortbread, though it was her favorite. Her slim figure was one of the few things her mother had praised. Emma allowed herself sweets only at Christmas and her birthday.

She sipped her tea, then set down her cup. "Well, Papa," she began, "I have started a list."

"Another? What is it this time?"

She felt a flicker of annoyance at his condescending tone but replied evenly, "A list of things we might try to acquire new pupils."

"Ah." He waved a dismissive hand as though the topic were trivial.

Her aunt said more encouragingly, "And what have you thought of so far?"

Emma looked at her gratefully. "A new advertisement in the paper. Perhaps expanding to other newspapers as well, though that would be expensive. A larger sign might help. Our old one is showing signs of wear, I fear. And hardly visible unless one is looking for it."

Aunt Jane nodded. "Yes, a smart, well-maintained sign is very important, I feel."

"Ours is fine," John Smallwood muttered into his tea. "It is not as though parents go wandering through the streets in search of a tutor."

Emma weighed her best course, then said, "You are exactly right, Papa. It is not passersby we need to attract, but rather well-to-do families farther afield."

His eyes dulled, and his mouth slackened. "I just don't have the energy for all of that, Emma. I am not a young man anymore."

"Oh come, John," his sister said. "You have many good years ahead of you."

He sighed. "What a depressing thought."

With a glance at her niece, Jane said, "You have Emma to think of, John, if not yourself."

He shrugged, unconvinced. “Emma is more than capable of taking care of herself. As are you.”

At that, Emma and her aunt shared another long look.

If Emma didn’t think of some way to help her father soon, they would be in serious trouble, both financially and otherwise. They might very well lose their home and school—his only livelihood . . . and hers.



Emma spent the next two days combing her memory and the newspapers for names of families with sons who were not already enrolled elsewhere, as far as she knew. She was hunched over the desk when Mrs. Malloy entered the sitting room with the day’s post. “Ere you go, love.”

Needing to stretch, Emma rose and looked idly through the stack, dreading to find more bills or final notices. Her hand hesitated on one of the letters addressed to her father. The return direction: *Ebbington Manor, Ebford, Cornwall.*

Ebbington Manor was the primary estate of Sir Giles Weston and his family. Excitement and fear twisted through her stomach and along her spine. She had all but given up hope of a reply.

Because her father left it to her to open his correspondence—especially the increasingly depressing bills—she felt only minor qualms about lifting the seal and unfolding this letter as she had so many others.

She glanced toward the door with a twinge of self-consciousness, then read the lines written in what appeared to be a somewhat hurried hand:

My dear Mr. Smallwood,

Thank you for your letter and your kind interest in my younger sons. You are correct that they have reached—nay, surpassed—the age when my two older boys left us to spend a few years with you there in Longstaple. However, Lady Weston feels that our youngest are too delicate to live apart from their mamma. While

I personally think the experience would be as good for them as it was for Henry and Phillip, and would no doubt strengthen their developing characters in the bargain, I feel I must defer to my wife's wishes in this matter.

I don't suppose you would consider coming to Ebbington Manor and teaching the boys here at, say, twice the boarding rate? If you could but spend one year here preparing them for university, how ideal that would be for us. Of course I realize that is a great deal to ask, especially considering the loss of your wife, which I was very sorry to hear of. But if you ever desire a change of scenery, do not hesitate to let me know. You would be most welcome. Your daughter as well.

*Yours most sincerely,
Sir Giles Weston, Bart*

Good heavens, what a thought. That her father would give up his established academy to tutor two pupils. What personal service that would be! Many young gentlemen, fresh from university but without fortune, served as tutors in grand houses. But to presume that Mr. John Smallwood would leave his home and academy to do the same . . . ? Emma felt offended on her father's behalf. Had word gotten around that the Smallwoods were in dire straits? Emma huffed and tossed the letter back onto the pile.

She stood there, stewing. But after vexation passed, she read the letter again. In reality, Sir Giles's tone was perfectly polite, nearly apologetic to even suggest such an idea. He merely wanted to see his sons well educated—all while kowtowing to his wife's irrational coddling.

The first Lady Weston, Phillip and Henry's mother, had died when the boys were quite young. And Emma knew from comments Phillip had made that his stepmother, the second Lady Weston, was somewhat difficult—and that she favored her sons by birth far above her sons by marriage. Emma recalled feeling sorry for Phillip when he'd described his tenuous relationship with the woman.

Emma did not recall Henry speaking of his stepmother one way or the other, though she and Henry had not been friends and therefore had not spoken of such personal matters.

Emma thought of Ebbington Manor, a place she had never seen but had often imagined, high on a cliff on the windswept Cornwall coast. Of course she would enjoy seeing Phillip Weston again. But she reminded herself that he was away at Oxford, likely in his third year at Balliol. Not sitting at home waiting for her to visit.

Should she show the letter to her father? She doubted he would even consider the notion, not when he spent hours each day visiting his wife's grave. And if he did agree, what would she do—pack up her father and send him off to Cornwall for a year while she remained behind with Aunt Jane?

On one hand, that scenario appealed to her. How many times had her aunt suggested Emma teach with her someday, eventually becoming Jane's partner in the girls' school, if and when she felt comfortable leaving her father on his own?

But her father still needed her. Emma had been helping him for years—first during her mother's long illness and then even more so after she'd passed on and her father's depression of spirits began. Emma wasn't certain he was capable of managing on his own. Although, at Ebbington Manor, he would be responsible for only the boys' education, and not the administration of an entire academy—juggling day scholars, tuition notices, as well as special sessions with the dancing master, drawing instructor, and French tutor. Yes, it might help her father if his focus were narrowed. Yet Emma couldn't be certain, and she couldn't abide the thought of sending him away on his own. What if he should fail? Embarrass himself and suffer the mortification of being dismissed? That would be too much for him to bear in his current state.

You're fretting over nothing, Emma, she chided herself. *He won't want to go.*

But when she broached the subject after dinner, her father stunned her by straightening and becoming alert, looking at her with more animation than she'd seen in years.

"Did Sir Giles really invite us to come and live there?" he asked.

"Yes, but . . ."

"Interesting notion . . ." His eyes brightened as he looked toward the ceiling in thought.

"Father, I assure you I did not hint at any such arrangement, only asked if he might consider sending his younger sons to us here."

Her father nodded, but he seemed not at all vexed about the invitation, nor her presumption in writing.

He asked to see the letter, and she produced it.

He read it, lowered his spectacles, and said, "In all honesty, my dear, I long for a change. Being here in this house, day after day, night after night. The place where my dear one suffered so long . . . Constantly surrounded by things that remind me—not of the happy years, as I should like, but of the last years. The painful years. Why do you think I leave so often?"

"I . . . thought it was to visit her in the churchyard," Emma said quietly.

He shrugged. "I go there now and again, to make certain the plot is kept up. To pull weeds or lay a few flowers. But not to visit her. She is not there, Emma. She is somewhere far better than a dreary Longstaple churchyard."

Tears brightened his eyes, and Emma blinked back her own tears. At the moment she was too worried about the future to mourn the past.

"But . . . Ebford is . . . such a long way," she stammered. "In the very north of Cornwall."

"Not so very far. And it would only be for a year." He sat back, musing, "I remember Phillip describing Ebbington Manor. Rambling old house, high on a cliff near the sea. Beautiful paths along the coast. . . ."

"But you would not be there to walk along the coast," Emma reminded him. "You would be there to teach."

"Yes, I know. But certainly we would have some time to enjoy the out-of-doors." He hesitated for the first time. "Though I should not presume you would wish to go with me, my dear. I realize you are not a little girl any longer."

Emma rose and stepped to the window, thoughts whirling. Could she really do it—uproot herself and leave all she knew to live in Cornwall for a year? Emma felt her sense of control slipping away and her panic rising. “I . . . I need to think.”

“Of course you do, my dear. This is all very sudden. Quite a shock, though a pleasant one, at least for me. But you consider what is best. I shall abide by your decision.”

Such responsibility! Should she, could she, accept and thereby place herself under the same roof as Henry and Phillip Weston? At least she assumed Phillip would be there during school vacations. She wasn’t sure where his older brother was nowadays.

In her mind’s eye, she saw Henry Weston, wavy dark hair wild about his sharp-featured face. His eerie green eyes narrowing in menace as he commanded her to stay out of his room or pulled some nasty trick on her.

She shivered.

Fire irons clanged belowstairs, and Emma started. *How foolish*, she thought, despising irrational emotion.

She rose with determination. She knew what to do. She would go and speak with levelheaded Aunt Jane. Aunt Jane who would hate to see them go. Aunt Jane who so often spoke of a fond “someday” when she and Emma might teach together in her school. Cautious Aunt Jane who had avoided the attentions of men all her days. Yes, Aunt Jane would help her decide.



Sitting in her aunt’s snug parlor that evening, Emma handed her the letter and sat back while Jane read it. While she waited, Emma looked from the plain, chipped teacup in her hand to the fine rose-and-white tea set—cups, saucers, small plates—displayed in the corner cabinet. How often she had admired the set. She remembered asking Aunt Jane why she never used it—instead using the same old mismatched cups and saucers for years.

“Those are too good for everyday use,” she’d said. “I’m saving them.”

"Saving them for what?" young Emma had asked. "Your wedding?"

"My wedding? Heavens no." Jane had winked and tweaked Emma's nose. "Maybe yours." Then her eyes had grown thoughtful and distant. "I . . . don't know really. Someday I'll use it. But not today."

Now, again eyeing the lovely tea set sitting on the shelf, Emma's heart twisted. The sight saddened her, though she knew it should not. She thought of her own special teacup from her mother. Emma polished and admired it but never used it either, so who was she to question Aunt Jane?

Emma returned her gaze to Jane Smallwood's angular face with pointed nose and chin. Her eyes were large and soft green, like Emma's. It was a face Emma loved, had always loved. With each passing year, the lines around her aunt's eyes and across her forehead became more pronounced. Even so, Emma thought it a beautiful face, though she imagined not everyone shared her opinion.

Jane's brow furrowed as she neared the end of the letter. She said quietly, "He mentions his sons, Henry and Phillip. . . . I remember them both."

Yes, her aunt had met them both on many occasions—when slipping over for tea as she did, or walking to church together and sharing a meal afterward, as she so often had over the years.

She looked at Emma from beneath her lashes. "I believe you were rather fond of one of them."

Emma felt her cheeks grow warm. "Phillip and I were friends—that is all. But that was years ago."

Aunt Jane pursed her thin lips. "What has your father said?"

"Oddly enough, he seems keen on the idea. Though he says he'll leave the decision to me. But I have no desire to pack up and move. And what would become of our house? And all of our books?"

"A tenant might easily be found," Jane said. "And I can look after the place for you in your absence."

Emma stared in disbelief. This wasn't the reaction she had expected. Hoped for. "But I don't *want* to go." Her voice rose plaintively, very unlike her normally reserved tone.

Jane said, "I know you have read about Cornwall. Here is your opportunity to see it for yourself."

"You want us to leave?"

"Emma . . ." Jane's forehead crinkled once more, her eyes large and expressive. "This isn't about what *I* want."

"But . . ." Emma pulled a face. "You have never felt it necessary to leave here, to go gallivanting off on some ill-conceived venture. To put yourself in the path of gentlemen."

Jane looked off into the distance. "Perhaps I should have."

Emma sat speechless. She wondered if her aunt was thinking of Mr. Farley, an admirer she once turned down to continue teaching. Emma had never met Mr. Farley, but her aunt had described their meeting, and allowed her to read his letter.

Jane Smallwood reached over and laid a hand on hers. "Don't misunderstand me, Emma. I am content with my lot. I derive great satisfaction from teaching. But that does not mean I don't sometimes wonder what I have missed. What my life might have been like, had I said yes to a little adventure of my own."

*Edward Ferrars was privately tutored
in the home of the Reverend Mr. Pratt
at Longstaple, near Plymouth. . . .*

—Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen:
The World of Her Novels*

Chapter 2



On her father's behalf, Emma wrote to Sir Giles, accepting his invitation to tutor his younger sons for a year at Ebbington Manor at the salary he'd offered.

Emma still felt nervous about the prospect, worrying how Phillip and Henry Weston might react to learning they—*she*—would be coming to their home. She fervently hoped neither of them thought it forward of her or suspected any motive beyond what it was—a good opportunity for her father.

At least, she hoped it would be good for him. She almost prayed it would be so. But, in truth, Emma rarely prayed these days. It seemed clear to her that God had ceased to answer her prayers, so she had ceased asking. She had learned over the years, especially since her mother's death, to rely on no one but herself. If something needed doing, it would likely be left to her. Had not her recent act—sending an inquiry to Sir Giles—proved that truth once again?

So, as much as she dreaded it, to restore their finances and hopefully her father's spirits, she would leave her safe, ordered life to help her father teach two pupils in Cornwall. In the home of Phillip and Henry Weston.

Even thinking those words caused Emma's palms to perspire.



As Aunt Jane had predicted, tenants were easily found for the house. Jane had recalled that the vicar was looking for nearby lodgings for his married sister while her husband was away at sea. She might have stayed with him, but the small vicarage had only one spare room, and the clergyman's sister had many children.

Emma's father spoke with the Reverend Mr. Lewis, and arrangements were quickly made. More quickly than Emma had wished. She knew the vicar, yes. But not his sister or her children. What if they did not take care of the furniture and things she and her father were leaving behind? Inwardly, Emma checked herself. The truth was, she cared little how the furnishings fared in their absence. What she did care about were her mother's teacup and their books. She wondered how many volumes they would be able to take along.

On the same day her father agreed to the terms of the lease, they received a brief reply from Sir Giles, saying he was surprised but pleased the Smallwoods were willing to accept his offer, and that they were welcome to come at their convenience.

The next morning, Emma and her father went to see the booking clerk at the local coaching inn and, with his timetables and advice, planned their best route for the journey. Emma wrote back again to apprise Sir Giles of their expected arrival date and time.

Then they began packing in earnest.

Considering the cost to transport luggage, Emma realized that she and her father could reasonably take only one modest-sized trunk apiece. They would not be able to take all their books. Not by far. She would need to select only her very favorites. With a heavy heart, Emma began the difficult process of sorting and choosing.

She packed up one crate of books she would not take with her, but that she could not bear to leave lying about the house for sticky fingers to find. These she delivered to Aunt Jane's and asked if she would store them for her.

Jane fingered through the volumes in the crate. *Robinson Crusoe*,

The History of Peter the Great, Gulliver's Travels, The Juvenile Anecdotes, and more.

"So many children's books, Emma," Jane observed. "I doubt you will ever read these again. Why not give them to the church or the parish poor?"

Emma's stomach twisted. "But I love these old books. I could never give them up. Never."

Jane held up an old volume of *Aesop's Fables*. "You must know these by heart by now."

With an apologetic shake of her head, Emma gently took the book from her aunt and slid it back into the crate. "Just promise me you will keep them safe."

That afternoon, her father paused at the open door of Emma's bedchamber. He looked from her, to the open trunk, to the gowns spread on the bed.

"How goes the packing, my dear?"

"I am finding it very difficult to fit everything I want into one trunk." Biting her lip, she extracted a bandbox and filled the resulting space with another stack of books. One hat and one bonnet would have to suffice. Then she eyed the two evening gowns.

Watching her, her father said, "Remember it shall not be forever, my dear. Your books will be here waiting for you when we return."

Emma set aside one evening gown. How many would she really need? It was unlikely they would be asked to join in any formal dinners or parties. They would likely be viewed, after all, as little higher than servants.

Yes, her books would be far more comfort on a cold Cornwall eve than a gown of cool, crisp silk or gauzy muslin.

Other necessities? Her teacup, of course. A small chess set, to help her and her father pass the long evenings. One pair of indoor shoes and a pair of half boots for the coastal walks her father seemed determined to pursue. A warm pelisse, cape, shawl, and gloves, of course. Emma stood there, trying to decide between the Ann Radcliffe novel she held in one hand and the jewelry box she held

in the other. Really it might be safer to leave most of her jewelry, modest collection though it was, with Aunt Jane as well.

Finally, she wavered over a small bottle of *eau de cologne*. Phillip Weston had given it to her the day he left the Smallwood Academy. He had given it to her without fanfare, with only a self-conscious shrug and a mumbled, “Thought you might like to have it.”

It seemed almost ungrateful not to take it with her now. Making up her mind, Emma crammed it into her already-stuffed reticule and pulled the drawstrings tight.



On the first Monday in May, Emma and her father visited Rachel Smallwood’s grave in the churchyard, stopped to say good-bye to the vicar, and then went next door to bid Aunt Jane farewell. Standing there on the path between their houses, Emma received her aunt’s kiss and bestowed a brave smile in return. While her father embraced his sister, Emma turned with a determined sniff and followed the boy and cart transporting their trunks to the coaching inn.

They traveled by stage from Longstaple, Devonshire, to Ebford, Cornwall, stopping every ten to fifteen miles to pay tolls or change horses at one inn or another. Other passengers came and went at various stops along the way—some squeezing beside them inside the coach, others sitting on its roof. At least Emma and her father had inside seats for the daylong journey.

From time to time, she felt her father studying her. When their eyes finally met, he raised his brows in unspoken query, *Are you all right?* Emma forced a reassuring smile. She did not share his enthusiasm, but she reminded herself—even remonstrated herself—that this had all been her doing. It was too late for second-guessing now.

As the coach jostled onward, Emma tried to keep images and memories of Henry Weston at bay, but they returned to worry her. She tried to read, but doing so in the rocking carriage made her queasy. She clutched her volume of *The Female Travellers* to her chest and told herself to think of Phillip Weston instead. She and Phillip practicing the minuet in the schoolroom or looking up at

the stars together at night. Gentle Phillip comforting her when her mother had fallen ill. . . . But thoughts of his foul-tempered brother prevailed and pestered her throughout the bone-jarring journey.

When Henry Weston had first come to Longstaple, he had been sullen and resentful, keeping to his room, snapping at her whenever she dared speak to him, and forbidding her to touch his belongings. She had quickly learned to avoid him.

The next term, Henry had arrived early, before the other pupils. He seemed less angry and more resigned to being there. When he had quickly become bored with no other boys about, he had even asked *her* to join him in one game then another—football, cricket, shooting, fencing. . . . But, not being athletically inclined, Emma had refused each boisterous activity in its turn.

“Cards?” he’d asked rather desperately.

“I detest cards,” Emma had said.

“Riding?”

“I haven’t a horse, as you very well know by now.”

Frustrated, he’d scoffed, “Is there nothing you are good for?”

How she had wanted to return the insult with one of her own, but she bit back the angry retort burning on her lips. Very calmly, she’d said they might play a game of chess, if he liked.

Henry had reluctantly agreed. She quickly realized they were rather evenly matched and wisely allowed him to win. After that, chess was the only game he’d asked her to play.

When the other boys arrived, however, Henry began acting surly again, and critical in the bargain. When he came upon her reading—a frequent occurrence—he would pronounce some ominous prediction like, “Boys don’t like bookish bluestockings, you know. You shall end an old maid. See if you don’t.”

And then the pranks had started. . . .

No, Emma did not look forward to seeing Henry Weston again. If only Phillip might be there instead. She sighed, consoling herself with the fact that it was very unlikely self-important Henry Weston would seek out the company of a humble tutor’s daughter he’d once despised.



They arrived in the village of Ebford that evening, and there was no one to meet them. The guard and groom set down their trunks outside the inn, while the hostlers led the weary horses to the back of the establishment to be stabled. Apparently Ebford was the end of the line, at least for the night.

Emma and her father stepped tentatively inside the inn. The dim, low-beamed room was filled with roughly dressed men, pipe and peat smoke, and the odors of ale and fish.

“Wait here,” he whispered, and Emma stood beside the door while her father approached the publican.

Around the room, men cast suspicious looks at him. Emma looked nervously about but saw no sign of Sir Giles or anyone dressed well enough to work for him.

Her father asked the publican if anyone from Ebbington Manor had been in that evening.

The gap-toothed man shook his bald head and said, “No. Now, do ’ee want a pint or don’t ’ee?”

“No, my good man, I am simply inquiring.”

The man stared at John Smallwood a moment longer, then went back to wiping the tankard in his hand.

Giving up, her father turned and led her back outside.

Emma looked up one side of the cobbled lane and down the other. The small village curved in a crescent around the harbor. On either side of the inlet, cliffs rose.

Her father asked, “You wrote and told Sir Giles when to expect us, did you not?”

“Yes. Perhaps he forgot. Or something more important came up.”

He shook his head in frustration. “Sir Giles is too considerate to knowingly neglect us. More likely the letter was misdirected, or the coachman he sent for us has been delayed.”

Emma hoped her father was right.

After waiting another quarter hour, they gave up and hired a

youth with a donkey cart to transport them and their trunks to Ebbington Manor.

"Goin' to the big 'ouse are thee?" the young man asked, his accent deliciously different.

"Yes," Emma replied. "Do you know where it is?"

"Course I do. Ever'soul in the parish knaws Ebb-ton." He pointed to the cliff top on the other side of the harbor. There, a red-gold manor house loomed in the twilight.

The brawny youth helped her into the cart. Her father clambered up beside her, and the young man urged his donkey into motion. They left the village, crossed a river bridge, and began slogging up a steep road, ascending the cliff. The wind increased as they climbed, and the temperature dropped. Emma pulled her pelisse more tightly around herself. The path turned at a sharp switchback and continued to climb.

Below, the village and moored boats in the harbor appeared smaller and smaller. The donkey strained and the young man urged until finally they crested the rise and the path leveled out onto a grassy headland.

Again the sprawling stone manor came into view, its rooflines of varying heights, crowned by fortress-like chimney stacks built, no doubt, to withstand the ravages of the westerly gales.

The path before the manor widened into a drive that forked into two.

"The front er the back of the 'ouse?" their driver asked.

"Oh . . ." Emma hesitated, recalling her earlier supposition that their status at Ebbington Manor would be little higher than servants. But how much higher?

"The front, of course," her father replied, chin lifted high. "I am an old friend of Sir Giles and the Weston family."

The young man shrugged, unimpressed, but directed the donkey toward the front of the house.

Emma winced at the picture they must have made. Presuming to come to the front door, not in a fine carriage but in a donkey cart. She wondered what snide comment Henry Weston might have to say about that.

“Perhaps we ought to have gone to the back, Papa,” she whispered. “With our trunks and all.”

“Nonsense.”

Closer now, Emma could see more detail of the house. The stone exterior shone a mellow, pinkish gray by twilight, with newer Georgian sash windows in one section, and older mullioned windows in another. The front door was massive and medieval—dark oak with black iron scrollwork and fittings.

No servant hurried out to meet them, so while the young man helped her down, her father alighted, strode up to the door, and gave three raps with his walking stick.

A minute later, the door was opened a few inches by a manservant in his late fifties.

“Yes?” he asked, squinting from her father to the donkey cart and trunks behind him.

“I am Mr. Smallwood, and this is my daughter, Miss Smallwood.” The servant blinked. “Are you expected?”

“Yes. I am here to tutor the younger Weston sons.”

Face puckered, the man regarded her father, chewing his lip in worry.

“Who is it, Davies?” a woman asked from behind the door, her voice polished and genteel.

The servant turned his head to reply. “Says his name is Smallwood, my lady. Says he’s the new tutor.”

“Tutor? What tutor?”

At the incredulity in the woman’s tone, Emma’s stomach churned. She opened her reticule to extract Sir Giles’s letter as proof of their invitation. She had not thought she would need it.

The manservant backed from the door, and his face was soon replaced by that of a handsome gentlewoman in evening dress, though Emma noticed her hair was somewhat disheveled and she held the door partially closed.

She said, “Mr. Smallwood, is it?”

Her father removed his hat and bowed. “John Smallwood. And you are Lady Weston, I presume. We have not met in person, but

I have had the pleasure of hosting your sons Henry and Phillip at my academy in Longstaple.”

“My stepsons. Yes. I recall hearing your name.” Her countenance rippled with several emotions, there and gone too quickly for Emma to catalog. Then the woman forced an apologetic smile. “I am sorry. We were not expecting you.”

Emma felt her cheeks heat. She could not distinguish her father’s countenance in the dim light but did hear his tone grow mildly defensive. “Were you not? But Sir Giles requested that my daughter and I tutor your younger sons here in the comfort of your own home.”

One arched brow rose. “Did he indeed?”

“Yes. We wrote back to accept more than a fortnight ago.”

Emma added, “And sent word of our travel plans.”

Lady Weston flicked a look at her but addressed her father. “He must have forgotten to mention it.” She glanced over her shoulder, then said, “Unfortunately, you have come upon us at an inopportune time.” She glanced to the waiting trunks. “But I cannot in good conscience, I suppose, ask you to return another time, considering the hour. . . .”

Her father stiffened. “We are very sorry to inconvenience you, my lady. Perhaps this young man will not mind taking us back down to the village. . . .”

Another voice rose from behind the door. A low male voice. “What? Who? . . . Good heavens. I quite forgot that was tonight. . . . I know, but it cannot be helped.”

The door opened farther, and there stood fifty-something Sir Giles in evening attire, though his cravat was missing, exposing the loose skin of his aging neck as it draped into his shirt collar.

“Mr. Smallwood. Please forgive the rude reception. My fault entirely. I am afraid communication is not one of my strong points, as dear Lady Weston is forever reminding me, and with good cause, I fear.” He ducked his head apologetically and looked up from beneath bushy eyebrows. “Please do come in.”

Her father turned to her. “You remember my daughter, Emma?”

The baronet’s eyes widened. “This is little Emma? Why, last I

saw her she was no bigger than this.” He stretched forth a hand, chest high.

“Yes, well, children do grow up. As no doubt Henry and Phillip have as well.”

Behind them their driver cleared his throat, and her father turned, digging into his purse. But Sir Giles pulled a crown from his pocket and said, “Allow me.” He tossed the silver coin to the driver. “Thank you, Tommy. Good night.”

The youth caught it handily. “Thank ’ee, sir.”

Her father bent to pick up his smaller valise, but Sir Giles stayed him.

“No, no. Leave them. Our steward shall have them delivered up to your . . . uh, rooms . . . directly. Well, not directly, but do come in.” He held the door open.

Her father gestured for Emma to precede him.

Emma entered the vast two-story hall, trying not to gape. The hall was clearly quite ancient, unlike the modern windows of the side wings she had seen from outside. The hall’s darkly paneled walls were hung with crossed swords and shields.

Sir Giles led the way over the flagstone floor to an open door across the hall. “Do come into the drawing room here.” He turned to his wife. “My dear, would you mind terribly calling for tea and something to eat? I am certain Mr. and Miss Smallwood must be hungry after their long journey.”

Lady Weston’s smile was brittle. “Very well, my dear.” She turned back. “Any preference as to which rooms I have made up?”

Sir Giles appeared embarrassed, no doubt wishing he might have spared his guests the realization that no rooms had yet been prepared for them. He escorted the Smallwoods into the drawing room, gave them another apologetic look, and asked them to excuse him for just a moment.

Even though Sir Giles closed the doors behind him, Emma heard a few words of the tense conversation beyond.

“ . . . north wing.”

“No way to foresee . . .”

“ . . . nothing about a young woman . . .”

“For now.”

A moment later, Sir Giles stepped back into the room. Emma pretended to study a framed map of Cornwall on the wall.

Sir Giles smiled and rubbed his hands together. “Tea and refreshments shall be arriving soon. Might I offer either of you a glass of something while we wait?”

“I wouldn't say no to a cheerful glass,” her father said.

Emma added, “I shall wait for tea, thank you.”

Sir Giles unstopped a crystal decanter and poured two glasses of brandy. “I imagine it has been quite a taxing day for you. First the journey, then a slapdash reception. I do hope to make it up to you.”

John Smallwood said, “Think nothing of it. We only hope we did not presume in coming.”

“Not at all. Not at all. I am only surprised and delighted you would come.”

“But . . . did you not receive our letters in reply?”

“Oh . . . uh . . . yes. But, well, they reached me at a busy time, and I'm afraid I was not able to give them my full attention. But all shall be taken care of now that you're here.”

Sir Giles carried a glass to her father, then said, “You will be glad to know we have not neglected the boys' education entirely. The local vicar has been tutoring them in Latin and Greek, so they are not *complete* savages.” He chuckled awkwardly.

Her father smiled. “I am glad to hear it.”

Sir Giles carried his own glass to an armchair, where he settled himself comfortably against the cushions. “You mentioned Henry and Phillip.”

“How are they?” her father asked. “Will we be seeing them while we are here?”

“Yes. Phillip is away in Oxford, but he will return home at term end. Henry has just left for a few days on . . . em, family business, but he shall be returning soon.”

Her father beamed. “Excellent.”

Emma forced a smile, even as her stomach knotted at the thought.