

## *Northanger Abbey* – Fiction and Fact I

“I do not pretend to say that I was not very much pleased with [Henry Tilney]; but while I have Udolpho to read, I feel as if nobody could make me miserable. Oh! the dreadful black veil. My dear Isabella, I am sure there must be Laurentina’s skeleton behind it.” (40)

“I had heard strange stories of that chamber before,” said Annette: “but as it was so near yours, ma’amselle, I would not tell them to you, because they would frighten you. The servants had told me, often and often, that it was haunted, and that was the reason why it was shut up: nay, for that matter, why the whole string of these rooms, here, are shut up. I quaked whenever I went by, and I must say, I did sometimes think I heard odd noises within it. But, as I said, as I was passing along the corridor, and not thinking a word about the matter, or even of the strange voice that the Signors heard the other night, all of a sudden comes a great light, and, looking behind me, there was a tall figure, (I saw it as plainly, ma’amselle, as I see you at this moment), a tall figure gliding along (Oh! I cannot describe how!) into the room, that is always shut up, and nobody has the key of it but the Signor, and the door shut directly.”

[...]

“Was it the chamber where the black veil hangs?” said Emily. “O! no, ma’amselle, it was one nearer to this. What shall I do, to get to my room? I would not go out into the corridor again, for the whole world!” Emily, whose spirits had been severely shocked, and who, therefore, did not like the thought of passing the night alone, told her she might sleep where she was. “O, no, ma’amselle,” replied Annette, “I would not sleep in the room, now, for a thousand sequins!” (Vol. 2, Chapter IX)

Radcliffe, Ann. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 300-1.

Catherine was then left to the luxury of a raised, restless, and frightened imagination over the pages of Udolpho, lost from all worldly concerns of dressing and dinner, incapable of soothing Mrs. Allen’s fears on the delay of an expected dress-maker, and having only one minute in sixty to bestow even on the reflection of her own felicity, in being already engaged for the evening. (50)

“Oh! that we had such weather here as they had at Udolpho, or at least in Tuscany and the South of France—the night that poor St. Aubin<sup>1</sup> died!—such beautiful weather!” (80)

“Blaise Castle!” cried Catherine; “what is that?”

“The finest place in England—worth going fifty miles at any time to see.”

“What is it really a castle, an old castle?”

“The oldest in the kingdom.”

“But is it like what one reads of?”

“Exactly—the very same.”

“But now really—are there towers and long galleries?”

“By dozens.”

“Then I should like to see it; but I cannot go—I cannot go.” (81-2)

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<sup>1</sup> St Aubert, father of Emily, the heroine of Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho*.

She felt almost persuaded that Miss Tilney *was* at home, and too much offended to admit her; and as she retired down the street, could not withhold one glance at the drawing-room windows, in expectation of seeing her there, but no one appeared at them. (87-8)

At the bottom of the street, however, she looked back again, and then, not at a window, but issuing from the door, she saw Miss Tilney herself. She was followed by a gentleman, whom Catherine believed to be her father, and they turned up towards Edgar's-buildings. (88)

he did look towards her, and he bowed—but such a bow! no smile, no continued observance attended it; his eyes were immediately returned to their former direction. Catherine was restlessly miserable; [...] feelings rather natural than heroic possessed her; (88-9)

“But, Mr Tilney, why were *you* less generous than your sister? If she felt such confidence in my good intentions, and could suppose it to be only a mistake, why should *you* be so ready to take offence?”

“Me! —I take offence!”

“Nay, I am sure by your look, when you came into the box, you were angry.”

“I angry! I could have no right!” (90)

John Thorpe [...] was engaged in conversation with General Tilney; [...] she could perceive herself the object of their attention and discourse. What could they have to say of her? She feared General Tilney did not like her appearance: she found it was implied in his preventing her admittance to his daughter, rather than postpone his own walk a few minutes. (91)

That General Tilney, instead of disliking, should admire her, was very delightful; and she joyfully thought, that there was not one of the family whom she need now fear to meet. —The evening had done more, much more, for her, than could have been expected. (92)