

## COMPETITION WINNER

# Changes of Fortune

CHARLOTTE SAMELSTEIN

Syracuse, New York

Two years had passed since Catherine last enjoyed Bath, but now she and her beloved Henry had taken a house in the Royal Crescent for three months. As Catherine sat in her drawing-room, one showery day in January, the servant announced a visitor.

“Dear Mrs. Allen,” cried Catherine, jumping up. “Mr. Tilney and I were sure we would not have the pleasure of meeting you before February. How glad I am to see you! And how did your journey to Bath?”

“My dear, you tumble my gown,” replied Mrs. Allen, most placidly. “Yes, here I am, before my time. An opportunity arose of coming hither, with Mrs. Thorpe and her family. We have been in rooms together at the White Hart, these two days.”

“With Mrs. Thorpe! But how came you to Mrs. Thorpe and her family?”

“Why, my dear, when Mr. and Miss Thorpe visited me at Fullerton, soon after Mr. Allen’s death, they kindly offered to attend me to Bath. And so we met Mrs. Thorpe and her daughters at Devizes, and came on here. I think we will all take lodgings together in the Circus, or Laura-Place. But, Catherine, how well you look, and your gown is very pretty. Does Mr. Tilney still buy your gowns? I was always struck with his knowledge of muslins.”

After this long speech, Mrs. Allen was quite exhausted, and thankfully seated herself. Catherine immediately rang the bell, and ordered refreshments.

“I am sure you will like a dish of tea, Mrs. Allen,” said she, “But I did not quite realize that you were still so very friendly with Thorpes. I am sure I can never forgive Isabella for her treatment of my brother James, two years past.”

“No more can I,” said Mrs. Allen, with perfect serenity. “However, Mr. Allen always thought her the prettiest girl in Bath, and Mrs. Thorpe is my old school-fellow, you know. I have been quite distracted since Mr. Allen died. I have had not one new gown this half-year, and I am glad to see *you* wearing black ribbons, still.”

“Indeed, I dearly loved Mr. Allen, and I shall miss his kindness. But, here is Mr. Tilney, returned from the Pump-room.”

Henry, coming up to Mrs. Allen, greeted her with respectful warmth. The story of Mrs. Allen’s journey and arrival in Bath, was told again. Mr. Tilney’s surprise even surpassed that of his wife.

“But, dear Mrs. Allen,” cried he, “why must you lodge together with the Thorpes? Mrs. Thorpe cannot have the means for her share of the rooms in the Circus!”

“Oh, I shall pay the whole charge. Then I shall not be entirely alone.”

Mr. Tilney exchanged a quick glance with his wife. His resolution was taken, and he immediately said, “Mrs. Tilney and I would be most happy if you would do us the honour of residing with *us*, during your stay in Bath. I am sure Mrs. Tilney will be extremely glad of your company, and it would give me great pleasure, too.”

Mrs. Allen hesitated not at all. "I am sure, sir, you are very kind, and I accept your generous offer. Now, I must return to the White Hart to tell Mrs. Thorpe of my great good fortune, and prepare my gowns. I am very glad I shall not lodge with the Thorpes, after all."

Mr. Tilney promised to call for Mrs. Allen and her gowns on the morrow, and after affectionate good-byes were exchanged, "Well, my dear Catherine, we have rescued a friend from a fate worse than boredom, at the expense only of some boredom to ourselves," said Henry.

"Oh, no, my love," cried his wife, "I can never be bored in Bath, and Mrs. Allen is extremely fond of going into company. I know she dotes on us both."

"Yes, very true, and many will now pay her attentions, since her being Mr. Allen's only heir. It is pleasant to impose on the grasping Thorpes, and through *we* care not where she will leave her fortune, my father will have great anxiety on the subject. I daresay he will soon be here to overwhelm her with attentions and compliments."

"And I shall be happy for it," said Catherine, "for a scheme has just darted into my head. Could not the General marry Mrs. Allen? Her placid good humour would not mind his unhappy temper."

Henry laughed heartily at this picture of the General and Mrs. Allen.

"Indeed, you are delightful, my dear Catherine, and stranger matches have taken place. Let us prepare for our guest, or perhaps *both* guests. I foresee a pleasant and interesting winter; witnessing the frustration of the Thorpes, and the courtship of Mrs. Allen."

## REPORT ON COMPETITION 1985

Readers were asked to write a scene to take place two years after the close of one of the novels. A character from the same novel comes to call on the recently married couple.

Again the number of entries was disappointingly small. The judges were, Mary Millard of Toronto, and Marilyn Sachs of San Francisco. Both judges are authors, and both have run a JASNA Conference. The identity of the competitors was not known to the judges or the editor until after the decision was reached. The winner, Charlotte Samelstein, attended her first JASNA conference at Savannah, where she also won the Quiz. Runners-up were: Diana Birchall of Santa Monica, California, who won last year's competition, and Harriett Gray, St. Ann, Missouri.

## COMPETITION 1986

In her novels JA refers to many letters which she does not actually give us: for example, James Morland's account of John Thorpes's effort to reconcile him to Isabella (*NA*, pp. 246-47), and Mr. Elliot's coldly civil refusals of Mrs. Smith's urgent applications (*P*, p. 209).

Write one of the "missing" letters, from *any* of the novels, prefacing your letter with the quotation giving the appropriate reference.

RULES: 1. Open to JASNA members only. 2. 500 words or less, typed, double-spaced. 3. Submit under a pen name only. Attach to your ms. an envelope with the title of your piece and your pen name on the OUTSIDE. Your real name and address INSIDE the envelope. 4. Post by September 1st, 1986, to: JASNA Competition,