

June 26 (18) 43

To: Miss Grocock,

Ashley, near Mkt. Harborough.

Northamptonshire.

Dear S.

I have at last written you a few lines since I hope you will not think it was negligence or indifference on my part that prevented me from writing on Friday, the reason was I expected coming to Ashley either Saturday or Sunday and you well know I am no advocate for writing but I am sure I can trust to your good sense for maintaining an inviolable secrecy. I have been very much disappointed since I saw you last but shall write you know particular.

I consider myself responsible to God alone for my actions but must not expect any favours from ..... I wish you would write me a few lines to just say when you think you shall be .....scribble it over anyhow the worse the more I shall like it for I must confess myself .... the enemy to a fine letter between friends. If I do not hear from you I think I shall come to Ashley the Sunday after next but do not expect me while you see me.

I shall say no more on paper but conclude with my best wishes for you and yours and shall look forward with pleasure to the time when I shall meet you again

Oct 18th 43.

Dear S.

I have acceded to your request by scribbling a few lines to say I intend coming to Ashley on Tuesday evening next Octr. 24 if agreeable to you. If not convenient just send word by post when you think you shall be at home.

I have been at Ashley 2 or 3 times but have not called at your house. I will tell you the reason when I see you.

I hope this will find you well and happy. I remain yrs.

*East Norton, Feb 4th 44.*

*Dear Susana,*

*I have taken the earliest opportunity to mention the circumstances spoken of. F. says he should wish me to please myself but will not inconvenience himself or injure the rest of the family for me.*

*He has no objection whatever to you but thinks under the circumstances I mentioned matters are not likely to be settled satisfactorily to all parties and if they cannot be he will be made no party in the concern but rather throw what obstacles he can in the way.*

*I must now leave you to think what steps we are to take.*

*I can say for myself I am glad things are come to a sort of determination it is what I have dreaded for a great length of time and what I could not conceal from myself however I might from others and suspense is the trouble I hate. I was always determined to look on the bright side of the concern. Indeed when I seriously look back I see no cause for censure on our actions. What a satisfaction must conscious innocence be to the possessor and render the heart proof against all the pawns of fortune. I shall endeavour to meet you if possible where we mentioned*

*Feb 17th.*

*I shall say no more but wish you from the heart all the good this life can afford.*

*I remain dear S. Yrs. Respectfully*

*John Gray Junr.*

*Feb 18th 44*

*Dr. S.*

*I received yours of the 16th on Saturday evening after I came from market.*

*I am rather sorry you was not at Lester, the only cause for it is I cannot possibly be on the 24th. I shall be at Lester on Saturday March 2nd but as it will be there fair day it is impossible for me to make an appointment with any certainty of keeping it.*

*I will endeavour to meet you at the Exchange exactly at 12 o'clock if possible but do not wait one minute for me nor be disappointed if I am not there.*

*If I do not see you at Lester I think I shall come to Ashley the following Monday evening (4th) if agreeable to you.*

*I remain dear S. Yours*

*John Gray.*

March 6 44

Dear S.

*I cannot possibly meet you at Leicester this week, I certainly regret not seeing you on Saturday as I could then have said more than I can write. I was engaged in the ring and when I got in the market I found the Exchange clock just 1/4 past 12 . I wished you not to wait as it was impossible for me to say exactly what time I could meet you.*

*You wished me to write you candidly my opinion - Your Mother can do as she pleases about mentioning the subject you spoken of but she certainly must know what she can conveniently spare. If she thinks she cannot spare two or three hundred it will be no use acquainting your Uncle as she shall not inconvenience herself or injure the family with my consent and I am sure from what you have said you would never wish it yourself.*

*I shall expect to hear from you next week and will come to Ashley any time when convenient for you but shall certainly expect to hear from you first and write me all particulars,*

*by so doing you will much oblige,*

*Your ever well wisher.*

*Friday Evening*

Mar 22 44

Dr. S.

*I have been to Leicester today and found Mr. Ashby at home. He appears a very pleasant straightforward man.*

*He gave me no decisive answer and said Mr. Barrys must be acquainted. He intends to write to Ashley tomorrow and should come in a few weeks. From what transpired I must say I have a very poor opinion of the affair. I shall be anxious for him to come and hope to hear from you the result as soon as you possibly can give it to me.*

Norton, March 31

Dr. S.

*I received yours on Wednesday, I was glad to see you have so much spirit but what you was disappointed at I am at a loss to conjecture. I must allow that my affections are not settled and shall never think of matrimony while I am quite sure that the object of my choice was the only woman in the world that could make me happy.*

*You may call my disposition fickle and wavering if you please but I shall claim the privilege of seeing and judging for myself.*

*I very plainly see from your letter that your Uncle has not found a very favourable opinion of me which he has communicated to you. You say I named such an extravagant sum. I did not tell him the sum named was required and the fact was he would say nothing himself and I was not going to be trifled with. I was obliged to say something to know what his intentions were.*

*What my Father will do I need not at present ask him, suffice it to say I can make that bargain myself.*

*Your friends can form what opinion of me they think proper.*

*I shall not court applause neither do I fear censure.*

*My own reflections are that I have acted in an open straightforward way. Of course you will tell your Uncle his services are not required for under existing circumstances money will be no consequence.*

*I have dear S. endeavoured to give you a few hasty remarks from the heart and must conclude I shall be glad to hear from you when most convenient and remain your friend and well-wisher.*

*April 14th*

*Dr. S. I do not know how to answer your letter.*

*The more I think of it the less able am I to write.*

*An unfortunate occurrence has happened in our family which I think will prevent me from altering my state of life at present, in fact it has put an effective bar to that consent I so much wished for and on which conditions you seem to imply you could only consent to my proposals. I am glad you acquainted your Parent with the circumstances but am glad as things are at present I said nothing to her myself.*

*My heart still retains those feelings which were once so dear to it, you are still all I can wish for but those feelings must slumber in my breast at present. To raise hopes I can see no prospect of realising at present I think would be cruel towards one whose friendship and best wishes you have avowed to be mine, your kindness almost breaks my heart to think I am so undeserving of it. Let me beg of you to think of me as not deserving of you, my conduct from the first towards you sprang from the most honourable feelings which I cannot relinquish but I do not wish to vindicate my character. Suffice it to say I shall always bear the most honourable testimony to yours.*

*May the Lord in his infinite mercy who knows what is best for us shield you from all temptations and may his Almighty blessing be on you and your family will ever be the fervent desire of the Unfortunate.*

*Be sure to destroy all correspondence, it may lead to unpleasant consequences. You may always rely on the strictest secrecy on my part, I would sooner lose my head than betray a bosom friend. Do not mention to ... anything.*

*She knows nothing at present but will know soon.*