egency Cthulhus

Dark Designs in Jane Austen's England

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## Brief Introduction to the Regency Era

The exact length of the Regency era in Britain is a topic of some debate. But if we're being historically scrupulous, it begins when the British Parliament passes the Regency Act in 1811, making George, Prince of Wales, the Prince Regent. As regent, the prince was able to stand in for his father, King George III—the king being unable to perform his royal duties due to repeated bouts of "madness." For our purposes, the period ends with King George III's death in 1820, marking the end of Prince George's regency and his coronation as King George IV.

The Regency is a time of great political and social upheaval in Britain and the continent. Britain has been at war with France on and off since 1792, and is currently embroiled in the Napoleonic Wars, as well as fighting battles all around the globe as part of their colonial consolidation and expansion. The Industrial Revolution is making huge strides in changing the way industry is run, as well as providing the raw and manufactured goods that Britain's fortunes rely on. Even so, most of Britain's steadily increasing population still live and work in the countryside, although the new industrial cities are beginning to make their mark.

As a result of the Industrial Revolution, a new and wealthy merchant class is emerging. Still, society is very much split between the lower classes (the poor and those working in trades) and the upper classes (the gentry and the aristocracy). Hovering uncomfortably in between are the so-called "pseudo-gentry"—those who earn a living through a respectable profession, such as medicine, the church, or the law. Not everyone in the upper classes is considered rich by their standards, and money does not automatically guarantee status. Social mores are strictly observed and enforced, meaning movement between classes is difficult, and men and women are expected to fulfill certain roles. Deviation from the norm invites scandal and censure.

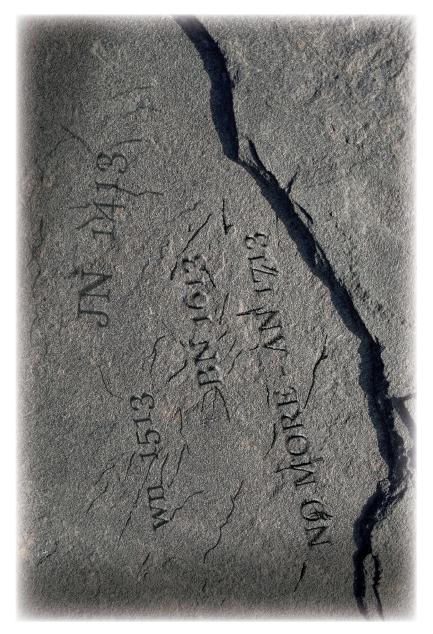
Perhaps the most famous of the era's chroniclers—albeit with a satirical eye—is Miss Jane Austen, whose well-known works include *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility*, and *Emma*. Her novels deal with the trials and tribulations of gentry life and a woman's place in society. However, her identity as the author of these works was unknown until after her death in 1817, as writing professionally was not seen as a suitable occupation for a woman of genteel birth...





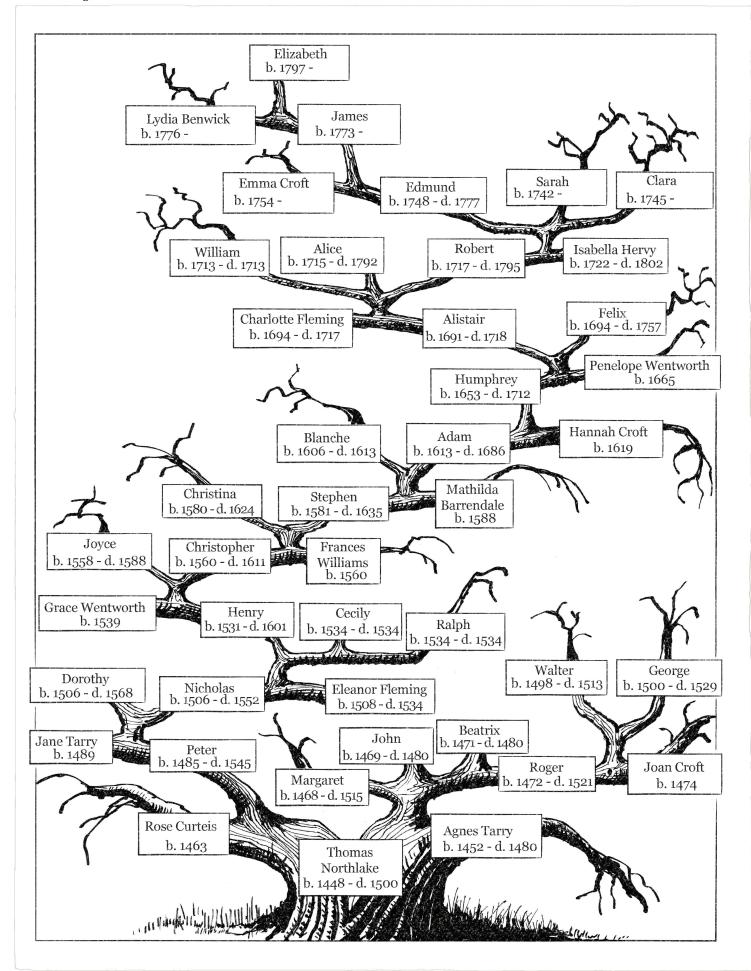
2Handout: Long 2 1. Mr. Richard Asher (42) of Charlton Lord and Lady Abbey, along with his wife, Mrs. Chandra Asher (35), and their two eldest children, NORTHLAKE Miss Eleanor Asher (19) and Miss Julia Asher (16) have the pleasure of welcoming the following families to the ball Pious old prig and his snobby wife and eldest daughter. The young one's alright, but very crusading. No sign of the heir, I see. X 2 Mr. George Potterton (22), representing his father, Mr. Henry Potterton of - Al Tollingate. Accompanying him are his eldest sister, Miss Marianne Potterton (24), Miss Clara Potterton (20), and Miss Susan Potterton (17). GP quite the catch as both an heir and a banker. Miss M on the hunt for beaus for Miss 3. Mr. Nathaniel Havering (54) of C and the pretty but spoiled Miss S, although Stornley House, and his wife, Miss C would rather be with her books. Thank Miss C would rather be with her books. Thank heavens the two brats are at home this evening! Mrs. Susannah Havering (49). Old NH definitely improving—not bad manners at all for a fortune-wielding and the second s 5 Dr. Winston Parsons (43), and his wife,... tradesman. Definitely Mrs. H's genteel upbringing working wonders, Mrs. Abigail Parsons (38). - THE there, I think. 00 200 Let's hope no one falls ill this evening as it may give Mrs. P quite the turn—unclean, unclean! The Reverend Byron Choke (48) of St. Bridget's Church, Tarryford. Hope no one ends up as the subject of one of his C The fiery sermons tomorrow—insufferable old bore. 6 The Reverend Samuel Jennings (39) of Upper Tarryford Church. 12.00 I do hope the vicar has a dance or two free for the young ladies this evening. Perhaps the ball will cheer him up a little. 12 Jo

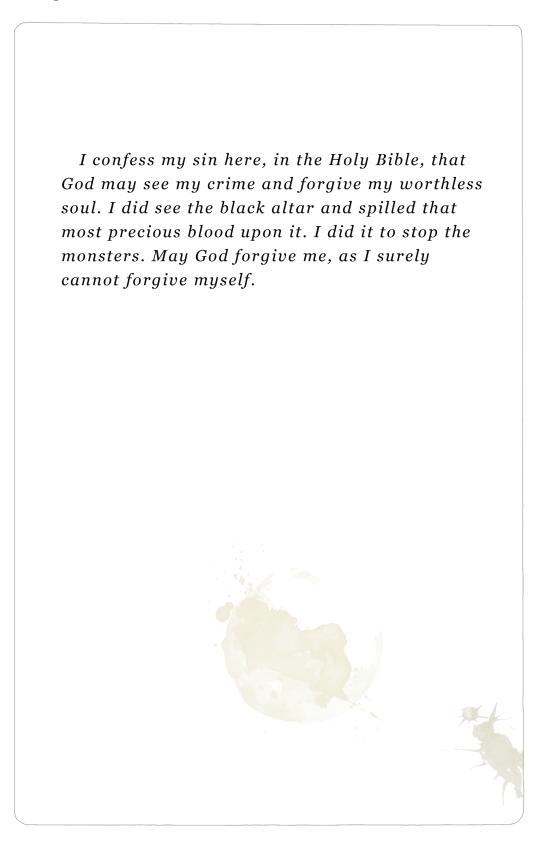




1468: Thomas Northlake (age 20), head of the Northlake family, marries Agnes Tarry (age 16). Margaret, their first child, is born. 1480: Agnes, Beatrix, and John Northlake all die within a few days of each other, aged 28, 8, and 10, respectively. 1481: Thomas Northlake remarries; his bride is Rose Curteis (age 18). 1485: Thomas and Rose have a son, Peter. 1491: Roger Northlake (19), heir to the Northlake estate, marries Joan Croft (age 17). 1498: Joan gives birth to Walter Northlake. 1500: Thomas dies, aged 52; Roger inherits the estate. 1505: Peter Northlake (age 20) marries Jane Tarry (age 16). 1506: Dorothy Northlake is born to Peter and Jane. 1513: Walter Northlake dies, aged 14. 1526: Nicholas Northlake (19) marries Eleanor Fleming (age 18). 1529: George Northlake dies without an heir; his uncle, Peter, inherits the estate. 1531: Henry Northlake is born to Nicholas and Eleanor. 1534: Nicholas and Eleanor have twins, Cecily and Ralph; Eleanor and the twins all die within days. 1545: Peter Northlake dies, aged 60; Nicholas inherits the estate. 1552: Nicholas Northlake dies, aged 45; Henry inherits the estate. 1556: Henry Northlake (age 22) marries Grace Wentworth (age 17). 1558: Henry and Grace have a daughter, Joyce. 1578: Christopher Northlake (age 17) marries Frances Williams (age 18). 1580: Christina Northlake is born to Christopher and Frances. 1601: Henry Northlake dies, aged 69; Christopher inherits the estate. 1606: Stephen Northlake (age 25) marries Mathilda Barrendale (age 18). Their first child, Blanche, is born. 1611: Christopher Northlake is made a Baronet by King James I; he dies shortly after, aged 51, and Stephen inherits the estate. 1613: Blanche Northlake dies, aged 6. Shortly afterwards, Adam Northlake is born. 1635: Stephen Northlake dies, aged 54; Adam inherits the estate. 1643: Adam Northlake (age 30) marries Hannah Croft (age 24). 1653: Humphrey Northlake is born to Adam and Hannah, their only child. 1686: Adam Northlake dies, aged 72; Humphrey inherits the estate and marries Penelope Wentworth (age 21). 1691: Alistair Northlake is born to Humphrey and Penelope. 1712: Alistair Northlake (age 21) marries Charlotte Fleming (age 18). Humphrey Northlake dies, aged 59; Alistair inherits the estate. 1713: William Northlake dies, aged 6 months. 1717: Robert Northlake is born, but Charlotte dies in childbirth. 1718: Alistair Northlake dies, aged 27. 1738: Robert Northlake comes of age and takes over the Northlake estate from his Uncle Felix. 1740: Robert Northlake (age 23) marries Isabella Hervy (age 18). 1742: Sarah Northlake is born to Robert and Isabella. 1771: Edmund (age 23) marries Emma Croft (age 17). 1773: Edmund and Emma have a son, James-the current Lord Northlake. 1777: Edmund is tragically killed in a carriage accident, aged 29. 1795: Robert Northlake dies aged 78; James inherits the estate. 1796: James Northlake (age 23) marries Lydia Benwick (age 20) 1797: Elizabeth Northlake born.

Handout: Long 4b





### Handout: Emptiness 1



Our orders were to observe the Talliri, called "the Dark Ones" by their neighbors, to ascertain the strength of their forces and defenses. It had become apparent to our Commander that to make allies of the other tribes, Rome would have to destroy this one, who the others hated as much as they feared. To do so would prove Rome's power and superiority, over both the tribe and their strange deity.

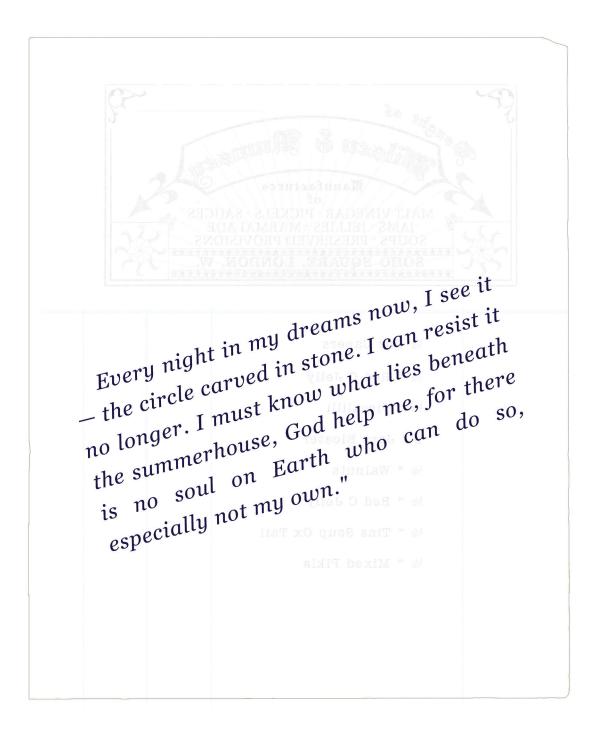
We came upon them in some sort of ritual, which was not unexpected as we had heard of their dark rites. It was said they could look into the emptiness within and take power from it. The whole tribe had gathered outside the central mound in their village, which we were told was some form of primitive temple. We did not witness what then happened with our own eyes, as we could not have gained entry without detection. Instead, we found out later from a captured tribesman what took place.

According to our informant, the rite began with the tribe's elders drawing a particular symbol on a marker stone with the blood of a sacrifice; four symbols, four stones—one for each of the principle Venti. Four of the elders then stood back-to-back around some font or pool that lies at the temple's heart, their faces turned to the four winds.

Once in position, each of these elders drew the symbol they faced onto their forehead with yet more blood. As they stared sightlessly at the marker stones, they simultaneously took a draught of some black liquid drawn from the font before quickly linking arms. A moment later, the four gained a look of exultation and then fell into a deep slumber. Our captive assured us that, had they so wished, the elders could have taken an unbeliever with them as an offering had they, too, imbibed the liquid and joined arms with them.

Outside the mound, our only inkling that something had happened was the sight of four robed figures being carried reverently from the mound and back into their own dwellings. Even now, we cannot be sure if the elders' souls went to commune directly with their god, or if they had performed some final act of oblation.

It matters not. The Talliri are no more.



#### Handout: Emptiness 4a

#### Handout: Emptiness 4b



Handout: Emptiness 4c





Handout: Emptiness 4d



**Image 1:** a night sky, covered with stars, suns, and planets.

Image 2: a dark spot appears in this sky.

**Images 3–5:** the dark spot engulfs whole planets and suns over a sequence of three paintings, growing larger as it does so.

**Image 6:** alien figures appear and do battle with the darkness. The figures are humanoid—angelic, even, in some respects—but with multiple warped limbs, angular heads, and six twisted wings.

**Image** 7: the black shape consumes almost all of the angel-like creatures.

**Image 8:** the angel-like creatures change tactics and wrap the dark spot in a multitude of silver strands. As one, the angel-like creatures pull on the strands and heave the darkness down into a forest.

**Image 9:** the silver strands transform into chains that anchor the black shape to the forest; these chains emanate from a glistening silver pool.

**Images 10–12:** the darkness grows smaller over the final three friezes, and as it does, it seems to grow angrier and angrier.

#### My dearest friends,

My sister and I apologize for imprisoning you, although your unpredictability at this critical time makes your incarceration a sad necessity.

Since discovering the secret library and the chamber beneath the summerhouse, we have known there was a great power we could contact and use for our own ends. We knew it was something to do with The Four Feathers, but never quite had the opportunity to investigate properly without showing our hand.

Still, we have not been idle. Our studies have made quick sorcerers of my dear sister and I, and with the knowledge and materials we have acquired since our arrival—most notably in the last few days—we believe we are now more than capable of harnessing the power of this new realm.

I would be saddened if you feel I am writing this letter simply to brag. Not in the least, let me assure you—my sister and I appreciate your efforts and recognize kindred spirits when we see them. As such, we would like to offer you a part share of the power we are about to unleash. Many things are about to change and it is our dearest wish that you should join us. We realize this must all be a great deal to take in, so please use your time here to consider your options. When we return, the world will be much changed. Together, we can make it anew.

If not, well... I'm sure you understand.

Yours

**Robert Williams**