

Romance And The City by Gary Mitchell

A card-based role-playing game based upon the '*Catherine Meadows*' Regency novels, and referencing the works of Jane Austen and others out of copyright.

'Pride & Sensibility'

SET: 1797-1798

Serena Middleton is a shy, thoughtful, warm-hearted and vivacious sixteen year-old doing 'the season' in Bath. She accepts a proposal of marriage from handsome, young, dashing naval officer, Lt. Henry Monkfish. He is clever, confident, and ambitious, but poor, and has no particular family connections to recommend him. Yet in the Royal Navy – with prize money – becoming a self-made man is not impossible.

Sadly Sir Jasper, Serena's vain, haughty, imperious and socially conscious older brother - and her equally self-involved older sister Philippa - reject her choice, maintaining Monkfish no match for a Middleton of Downhanger Abbey. Anyway the oldest sister has to be married first, does she not? Serena's older 'companion' and mentor, widow Mrs Bracknell – her brother's scheming mistress – also manipulates Serena to break the engagement, for she, too, feels it was an imprudent match for one so young. They are the only ones who know about this short *obligation*, as the whole thing was hushed up so as not to diminish Philippa and Serena's chances of an advantageous marriage.

The Middleton family is also in financial trouble, losing money in their northern cotton mills because of the French occupation of Egypt. Needing to reduce expenses, the family estate, Downhanger Abbey, will be let, and the family will rent in Bath until finances improve. Sir Jasper and Philippa look forward to the move. Serena is less sure she will enjoy Bath, but is forced to go, along with the increasingly sinister Mrs Bracknell.

As the novel ends, Mrs Bracknell dies in a mysterious carriage accident, upsetting Sir Jasper. Philippa 'marries well' to Lord Greystoke, and Sir Jasper becomes a philanderer, intent of marrying his younger sister off to the highest bidder. Serena, meanwhile, holds a dread secret concerning Mrs Bracknell's demise, a knife, and a cut brake reign...

'Endurance & Endeavour'

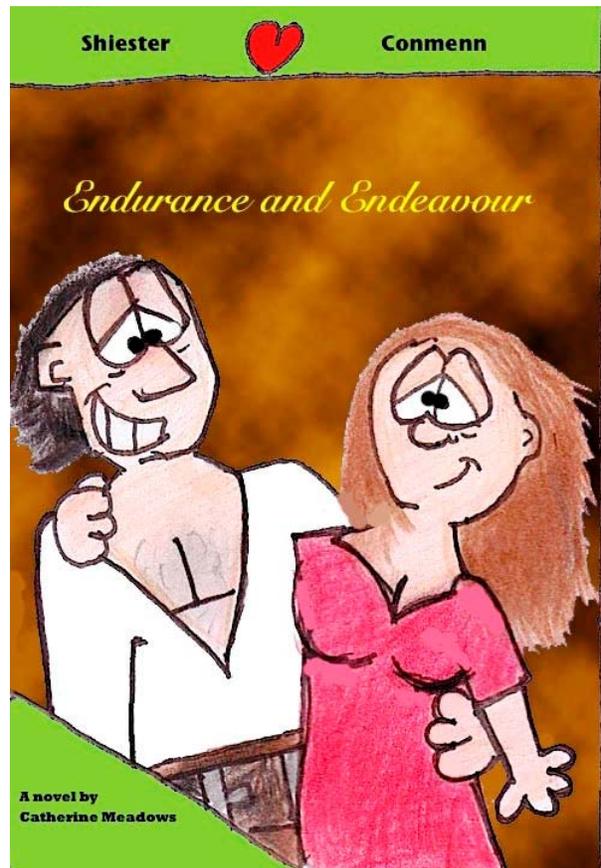
SET: 1804-6.

Escaping the hell of Napoleon's 'European Union', emigre *mademoiselle* and lady's companion Marianne Renault discovers not all English gentlemen in Regency Bath behave as such. Employed by Sir Jasper Middleton as his sister Serena's new *companion*, she fends off the improper advances of her employer, who considers her – being a poor foreigner – a suitable candidate as mistress. At sea, meanwhile, a series of furious naval engagements take place...

Dismissed on a pretext – but really for refusing evil Sir Jasper's attentions – things look bleak for Marianne until Lady Julia Topham, younger half-sister of Admiral Sir Frederick Topham, suspects the truth and befriends her, taking her into her employ as *companion*.

It is through Admiral Topham Marianne meets the now Captain Henry Monkfish of HMS 'Endurance', returned from Trafalgar wealthy with prize money. She must reconcile her forbidden attraction for him with his cruel defeat and capture of her (now paroled) Bonapartist brother, Francois, commander of 'Le Endeavour' – and also her loyalty to her patroness, Lady Julia, a younger maiden sister out to inherit her brother's wealth and wishing to find a suitable suitor. For Lady Julia is also in love with the dashing Captain Monkfish, her half-brother's protégé...

In this Bath-based maelstrom Serena Middleton endeavours to re-kindle her romance with Captain Monkfish, but is publically rebuffed by Lady Julia. Marianne sacrifices her love for Monkfish for her faithful friend, and the novel ends with Monkfish and Lady Julia married, because of her permanently thwarted feelings Marianne accepting a position as *companion* to the newly-arrived Austen sisters, the hapless Serena throwing herself into the weir from Pulteney Bridge, in despair at the love (and prize money) she has lost...



'Romance & The City'

SET: 1806.

BACKGROUND TO THE GAME

It is mid-morning in the Austen household, in Bath's relatively unfashionable Sydney Place. Calamity! The precocious and impulsive Miss Virginia 'Gin' Austen has gone missing a few minutes before. She is abroad in the 'sin city'! The cause of her disappearance has yet to be determined but, being considerably more 'flighty' than elder sisters Jane and Cassandra, it is feared she has *rendezvoused* with an unsuitable suitor. 'Gin by name, Gin my nature'?

Gin has recently been seen in the - barely chaperoned - company of several gentlemen – some far more disreputable than others – those who take a scarlet or naval coat for personal advantage, rather than for duty to king or country; or use their wealth, charm and position in order to seek a young woman for a mere *dalliance*, or for obtaining her fortune; by holding her reputation up to possible ridicule. One is even a French republican!

Chief suspects are the following:-

- a) Mr Fitzwilliam Darcy (Gent.)
- b) Mr Charles Bingley (Gent.)
- c) Lt George Wickham (Militia subaltern)
- d) Mr Thomas Lefoy (Irish lawyer)
- e) Captain Richard Sharpe (95th Rifles)
- f) *Capitaine* Francois Renault (paroled French naval officer)
- g) Mr William Pitt, The Younger (hard-drinking Prime Minister)
- h) Captain Horatio Hornblower, RN

The object of the game is to safely retrieve 'Gin' – *within ten turns* - for with the gathering of night 'her tale' will be all across the city - her reputation – and the marriage prospects of her and her elder sisters – forever ruined.

Gin and her 'suitor' will be at one for the following locations:-

- a) The Pump Room
- b) The Assembly Rooms
- c) Milsom Street
- d) Lansdown Crescent
- e) The Circus

- f) The Royal Crescent
- g) Bath Abbey
- h) Parade Gardens
- i) Pulteney Bridge
- j) Sydney Gardens
- k) Bathwick Hill
- l) Sydney Place
- m) Bath Circus

HOW TO PLAY 'ROMANCE AND THE CITY'...

1. At the beginning of the game the card for Gin Austen is placed together with a card – drawn at random – from the suspected gentleman list. These are placed separately, together with a randomly drawn location card. Who is Gin with and where? The players *have ten turns* to find out. Fail and it will be dusk - and Gin's reputation will be irretrievably sullied by the city's gossips; Mr and Mrs Austen will be forced to retreat back to Chawton with their daughters, and into a life of chick-lit obscurity...

2. The remaining gentleman and place cards are replaced back into the pack.

3. Players choose next a 'lady' card from the below list to represent them. They will be one of the ladies whose business it is – or who *intend to make it their business* - to locate Gin before her downfall at nightfall; and thence gossip thereof (*if more than eight players double-up*):-

- a) Miss Jane Austen, Gin's sister (*must be selected*)
- b) Miss Cassandra Austen, Gin's other sister
- c) Miss Caroline 'Carrie' Bradshaw, a broadsheet columnist
- d) Miss Samantha Jones, a socialite and event organiser
- e) Miss Miranda Hobbes, a lady about town, sister of a lawyer
- f) Miss Charlotte York, another lady about town
- g) *Mademoiselle* Marianne Renault, *companion* to the Austen sisters.
- h) Miss Emma Woodhouse, an interfering young woman

4. Discard any unused 'lady' cards and replace in the pack. Players retain their own lady card as additional to their hand of four.

5. Rigorously shuffle the entire pack. Deal each player four cards. *No player may have more than four cards in their hand at the end of their turn. Any excess must be placed into the 'discard pile'.*

6. To begin solving the mystery, the player representing Miss Jane Austen commences. Play then proceeds to the player on her left. Who will be the first player to deduce who Gin is with, and where? *If this is not ascertained within each player taking ten turns 'society' has failed - and Gin's reputation will be forever lost.*

7. The winner of the game is the player who collects the most points during the game. Points are awarded as follows:-

To the player successfully locating Gin in time = 20 points

Each successful 'match' made = 5 points.

8. At the start of their turn each player takes a card from the pack. They may share the information gleaned, or not. Is not gossip best shared? They may hold it in secret reserve for later play; behave as a 'pretty little gossip girl'. The aim is to build up information by eliminating the places where Gin *isn't*, and gentleman with whom she is *not*, but also *en passant* to secure suitable matches for persons of your acquaintance. Players may keep notes. At the end of her turn a player must discard a fifth or additional card, finishing their turn with four only.

9. When the pack is exhausted shuffle and re-use the discard pile as a new pack of cards.

10. At the end of their turn a player may make a 'deduction' and declare where she believes Gin to be, and with whom. She will then secretly check the separated cards. If she is correct she will 'bag' the points for finding Gin – who is considered returned to her family (i.e. the pack) and the 'misunderstanding' resolved. There is, in all likelihood, an innocent explanation. Is there not often fire without smoke?

11. If the players 'deduction' is incorrect play will continue – and she may never again make a 'deduction' – forfeiting forever any chance of gaining those points. If she has successfully located Gin play will continue until all cards from the pack have reached the discard pile, then it will cease, and points are totted up to determine an overall winner.

12. MAKING MATCHES. If a player finds they hold a 'predestined match' in their hand (e.g. Mr Fitzwilliam Darcy and Miss Elizabeth Bennet) – they may place these cards together and aside and bank the points – it being safely assumed these characters are engaged in happy social discourse for the rest of the game. If a lady should be so fortunate as to find her own match she will make it – collect the points - and will continue in play as well – setting aside next to her own character card that of her new *beau*. N.B. Already matched characters may *also* be matched in this way.

'INCIDENT CARDS'.

These require special actions when drawn.

ELOPE – if drawn play this card upon any other player wished. They are deemed to have 'eloped with a tradesman' - to the general scandal of all. The 'Elope' card and the targeted player's character are placed as a 'match' by the drawer – the 'elopee' losing 10 points from her total for affecting such an unsuitable alliance. *This card is played once per game only.*

HIGHWAYWOMAN – '*They seek her here – they seek her there – they seek her everywhere*'. If drawn play upon any player wished. Take their hand of cards, inspect, and take any and all you wish. The robbed lady will on her next turn take as many replacement cards as needed – for she was well insured. Maybe the robbery was an insurance scam? You know how people in Bath gossip... *This card is played once per game only.*

DUEL – Your honour is besmirched by Richard 'Beau' Nash, *doyen* of Bath society. The first player on your left that is currently holding a gentleman card *must* surrender it to you to defend your honour. You may use the card as you see fit (to make a match?) your honour satisfied as Mr Nash is forced to apologise by the gallant gentleman in question. *This card is played once per game only.*

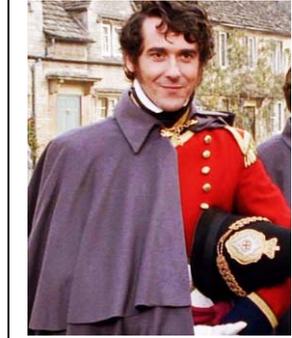
SENSE & SENSIBILITY, PRIDE & PREJUDICE, MANSFIELD PARK, NORTHANGER ABBEY, PERSUASION, LOVE & FRIENDSHIP, PRIDE & SENSIBILITY, ENDURANCE & ENDEAVOUR – It is a truth, universally acknowledged, that everyone in a Regency novel monomyth ends up suitably married. Possession of one of these 'book' cards enables a player to make a 'match' of any two eligible characters of different genders she holds in her hand. *Each of these 'novel' cards can be played once per game only*



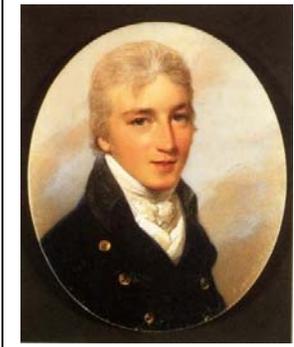
Mr Fitzwilliam Darcy (Gent.)
Match - Miss Elizabeth Bennet



Mr Charles Bingley (Gent.)
Match – Miss Jane Bennet



Lt George Wickham
(Militia subaltern) Match
– Miss Lydia Bennet



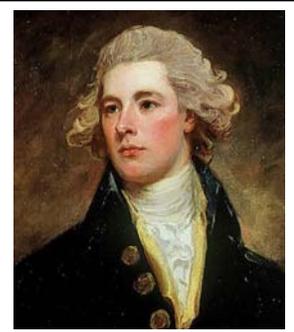
Mr Thomas Lefoy (Irish lawyer)
Match – Miss Jane Austen



Captain Richard Sharpe
(95th Rifles) Eligible



Capitaine Francois Renault
(paroled French naval officer) Eligible enemy



Mr William Pitt, The Younger (hard-drinking Prime Minister) Eligible



Captain Horatio Hornblower, RN Eligible



Miss Virginia 'Gin' Austen
Flightly, but eligible



Miss Jane Austen **Match** –
Mr Thomas Lefoy



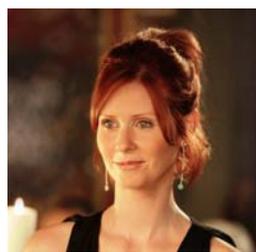
Miss Cassandra Austen
Eligible



Miss Caroline 'Carrie'
Bradshaw **Eligible**



Miss Samantha Jones
Eligible



Miss Miranda Hobbes
Eligible



Miss Charlotte York
Eligible



Mademoiselle Marianne
Renault **Eligible emigree**



Miss Elizabeth Bennet
Match – Mr Fitzwilliam
Darcy



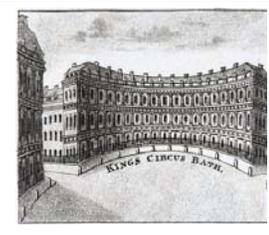
Miss Jane Bennet **Match** –
Mr Charles Bingley



Miss Emma Woodhouse
Match – Mr George
Knightly



THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS



BATH CIRCUS



THE PUMP ROOM



THE ROYAL CRESCENT



SYDNEY PLACE



BATH ABBEY



BATHWICK HILL



LANSDOWN CRESCENT



PULTENEY BRIDGE



MILSOM STREET



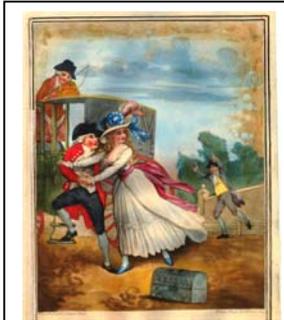
PARADE GARDENS



THE CIRCUS



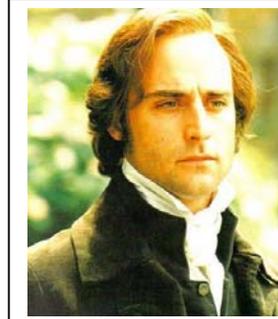
SYDNEY GARDENS



ELOPE



Miss Lydia Bennet Match
– Mr George Wickham



Mr George Knightly
Match – Miss Emma
Woodhouse



HIGHWAYWOMAN



Mr Jeremy Corbyn (a
'Radical') **Match** – Miss
Mary Bennet



Miss Mary Bennet **Match**
– Mr Jeremy Corbyn



Miss Kitty Bennet **Match**
– Mr Justin Beaver



DUEL



The restless ghost of the
Miss Serena Middleton



Captain Henry Monkfish
**Already matched and
wed to Lady Julia Topham**



Sir Jasper Middleton **Rake**
and philanderer – eligible.



Philippa Middleton
**Already matched and
wed to Lord Greystoke**



Lord Greystoke **Already
matched and wed to
Philippa Middleton**



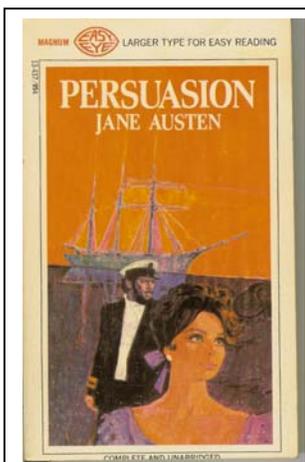
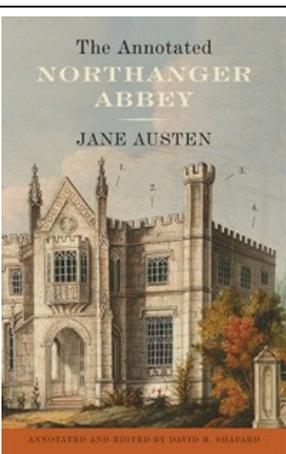
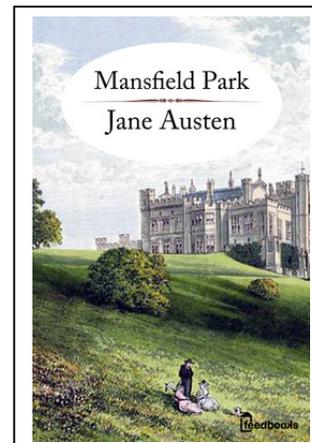
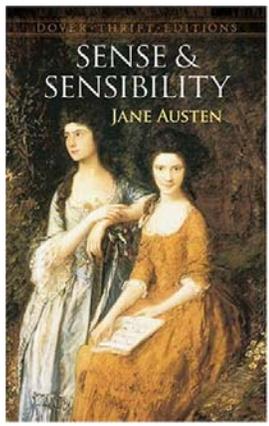
Lady Julia Topham **Already matched and wed to Captain Henry Monkfish**



Admiral Sir Frederick Topham **Noted sailor - eligible.**



Mrs Fitzhenry **Widow - eligible**





Miss Keira Knightly
eligible



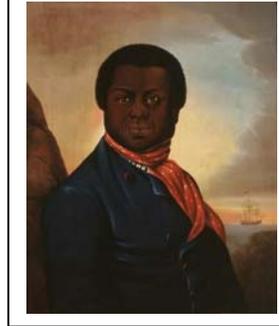
Mrs Theresa May **Widow**
- eligible.



Lady Aardvark - eligible



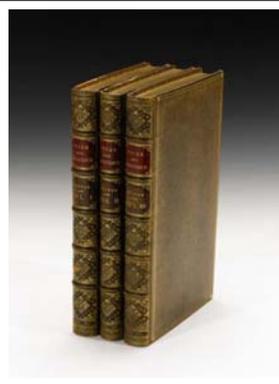
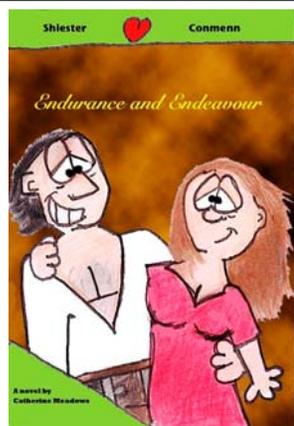
Sir George Highgrove
(agriculturalist) eligible



Mr Ignatius Warren
(colonial industrialist)
Widower - eligible.



Colonel Winton -
eligible



'Pride & Sensibility'



Colonel Winton -
eligible

Templates for designing one's own characters

