

Penguin



Readers

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Persuasion

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CHAPTER ONE

The Elliots of Kellynch Hall

In the summer of 1814, Sir Walter Elliot was living at Kellynch **Hall** in Somerset, England. Sir Walter's wife was dead, but he had three daughters – Elizabeth, 29, Anne, 27, and Mary, 23. Elizabeth and Anne were still not married, so they lived at Kellynch Hall with their father. Sir Walter's youngest daughter, Mary, *was* married. Mary, her husband and their two little boys lived three miles away at Uppercross **Cottage** in the village of Uppercross.

Sir Walter was a handsome man, and he was also very **vain**. He only **approved of** people from important families. He enjoyed reading only one book, the **Baronetage**. This book had information about all the **baronets** in England, and their families. His favourite part was the part about his own family, the Elliots of Kellynch Hall.

Elizabeth was beautiful and vain, like her father, and she had the same ideas about families. So she and Sir Walter had a very good **relationship**.



Elizabeth **looked after** Kellynch Hall, but she was bored with her life there. She wanted to get married, but she could not find a rich husband from an important family.

Anne, Sir Walter's second daughter, was kind, **gentle** and intelligent. When she was a young girl, Anne was very pretty, but now she was thin and not as beautiful. She did not **care about** important families, so Sir Walter and Elizabeth usually **ignored** her. They were not interested in Anne or her feelings. Every year they went to stay in London, and went to parties and had a good time. But they never took Anne with them.

Sir Walter had a nephew, William Elliot. Sir Walter had no sons, so William Elliot was his **heir**. Many years ago, Sir Walter and Elizabeth sometimes met William in London. Elizabeth liked William very much and she wanted to marry him. Sir Walter was very happy about that because he and Elizabeth wanted to keep Kellynch Hall in the family. So Sir Walter **invited** William to visit Kellynch Hall, but William did not come.

Then William married a very rich woman, but Sir Walter did not think that her family was important enough. He was angry with William, so he **ended** their relationship. Elizabeth was angry with William, too.

For a long time, Sir Walter's wife had a good friend, Lady Russell. Lady Russell was still a good friend of Sir Walter and his daughters. She loved Anne very much, and Anne loved her. She felt sorry for Anne and did her best to help her. She also tried to give Sir Walter **advice**, but he did not always listen to her.

Sir Walter loved expensive things and he enjoyed spending money. But now, he had big money problems. First, he talked to Elizabeth, but she could not help him. Then he asked Lady Russell and his **lawyer**, Mr Shepherd, for their advice.

"I'm very worried about my money problems," he said. "What can I do?"

"You must find ways to **save** money, Sir Walter," replied Lady Russell.

"That's very difficult," said Sir Walter. "I love going to London, and buying nice things and having a good time. If I can't do those things, I **prefer** to leave Kellynch Hall."

"That's a very good idea," said Mr Shepherd. "Why don't you move to London or to Bath, or to a smaller house in Somerset?"

"A smaller house is a good idea," said Anne. "We can still be near Lady Russell and Mary, and

see the gardens at Kellynch Hall sometimes.”

But Lady Russell did not agree with Anne. She tried to **persuade** Sir Walter to move to Bath. “Bath is the best place for you,” she said to him. “It’s only about fifty miles away, and it’s much cheaper to live there than at Kellynch Hall. I like Bath very much and I go there every winter. Lots of rich people stay there, too.”

“And you won’t have to sell Kellynch Hall,” said Mr Shepherd. “You can **rent** it to a good **tenant**.”



“Rent Kellynch Hall?” said Sir Walter. “But I can’t do that. It’s my family home.”

“Yes, Sir Walter,” said Lady Russell, “but you need to save money.”

“Hmm,” thought Sir Walter. “Maybe Bath is not a bad idea. I can still have a good life there, and be an important man.”

Elizabeth was happy about moving to Bath, but Anne was not. She did not like Bath. She was at school there when her mother died. Also, Anne wanted to stay in the **area** around Kellynch, her home. But her father and sister ignored her feelings.

“It won’t be difficult to find a good tenant,” said Mr Shepherd. “The **war** between England and France ended three months ago. So now many **naval officers** are coming back to England. They have lots of money and they’re looking for nice houses.”

“Oh,” said Sir Walter, “but I don’t want a naval officer to live at Kellynch Hall.”

Mr Shepherd was surprised. “Why not?” he asked.

“The **Navy** have helped our country very much,” said Anne. “They work very hard.”

“Yes, but most naval officers aren’t from good families,” said Sir Walter. “And they aren’t very handsome. Their faces are brown from the sun, with lots of lines. I met a naval officer last year in London. He was only 40 years old, but he looked more than 60.”

A few days later, Mr Shepherd visited Sir Walter again.

“I have good news,” he said. “I’ve found an excellent tenant. His name is **Admiral** Croft. He and his wife are looking for a comfortable home in this area. They’re very interested in Kellynch Hall.”

“Who is Admiral Croft?” asked Sir Walter in a cold voice.

“Don’t worry, Sir Walter,” said Mr Shepherd. “He’s from a very good family. And he’s also quite handsome.”

“I’ve heard about Admiral Croft,” said Anne. “He fought in the war against France some years ago.”

“The Admiral and his wife don’t have any children,” said Mr Shepherd. “I’m sure that they will look after Kellynch Hall very well. A few years ago, Mrs Croft’s brother lived in this area, at Monkford. But I’ve forgotten the **gentleman’s** name. Oh, what was it?”

“I don’t remember a gentleman living at Monkford,” said Sir Walter.

“Do you mean Mr Edward Wentworth?” asked Anne.

“Yes, that’s it,” said Mr Shepherd. “Edward Wentworth.”

“Oh,” said Sir Walter. “I thought that you were talking about a *gentleman*. Wentworth was a nobody.”

“May Admiral and Mrs Croft come and see Kellynch Hall?” asked Mr Shepherd.

“Well . . . all right,” said Sir Walter. “You can invite them here.”

Suddenly, Anne’s face felt very hot. She left the room quickly and went out into the garden to get some air. She was remembering the past, and a sad love story.