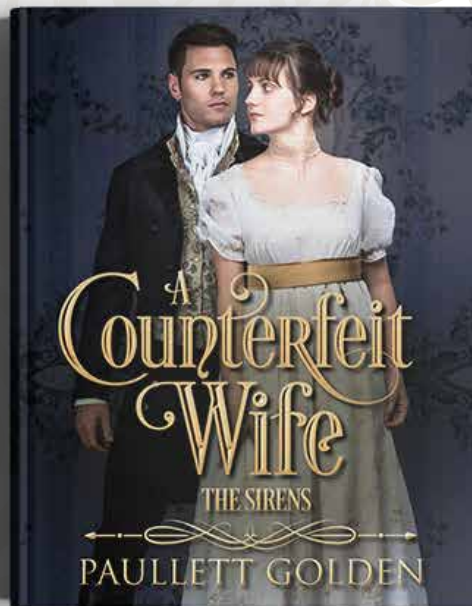


A Counterfeit Wife

THE SIRENS



Book Club Kit

PAULLETT GOLDEN



Dear Reader,

Thank you for choosing *A Counterfeit Wife* for your book exploration needs, be it to further professional development, engage in lively discussion, try new activities, or beyond. This book club kit will guide your group experience. Use what serves you, skip what doesn't, and be inspired to delve into other explorations that might be sparked by the kit's content.

This novel had several iterations before its completion. It was intended to be my second novel following my debut with *The Earl and The Enchantress*. I began writing *Counterfeit* immediately after completing *Earl*. While *Earl* was making its rounds through various editorial teams, and I was on the hunt for a cover artist, and all those fun tasks a new writer must learn about and complete, I steadily wrote *Counterfeit*. There was a clear plot outlined, leading me to the finish. Halfway through the writing process, I realized I needed to focus on publishing *Earl* first. It was, after all, my first-ever publication, i.e. I had no idea what I was doing! And so, I put *Counterfeit* on hold. *Counterfeit* continued to wait as I turned my attention to the other novels in The Enchantress series. By the time I returned to the half-finished draft, I knew changes to the plot were necessary. Too many similarities to *Earl*, too long and convoluted of a plot, not in keeping with the time it was set, poorly paced... I knew in that moment the multiyear delay between starting the novel and finishing it was meant to be. Long story short, the plot was completely revised. The bare bones remained the same, but how everything occurred and paced on the page changed.

Rather than the focal point be society scandal, as it was in the original script, I wanted the focal point to be on the vulnerability of young ladies at the time. The focus needed to be on J'on, not society. The reality of a young lady's situation, of her complete dependence on family, needed to be explored. This doesn't mean Trevor took a backseat, for he had his own reality to deal with, that which ruined a number of estates and families or nearly ruined a number of estates and families – the inheritance of a destitute property combined with a lack of training in how to care for such a property. In their own ways, both J'on and Trevor combated destitution, each approaching the situation differently, but both facing the weighty burden of being responsible for their own survival.

I hope this kit will offer the opportunity to open conversation and stir creativity.

Cheers!

Paullett xx

Character Spotlight:



GUNNER

Lurcher



Gunner, a Lurcher, is a mix between greyhound + Irish Wolfhound: sleek, graceful, strong, fast

Greyhounds are aerodynamic hunters known for their agility, endurance, and speed



Irish Wolfhounds are gentle giants known for their hunting prowess

Lurchers can run up to 45 mph, faster than the average racehorse



Personalities are gentle, loyal, loving, and eager to be trained, one of the best breeds for children

They are sensitive to their pet parent moods and highly sociable, loving puppy playdates



Activities

The following activities are ways to engage your creativity. Some activities are better suited for book clubs, others for classrooms, and so forth. Enjoy the choices that best suit your group or be inspired to design your own activity.

Proceeding the list of activities is a “Learn & Apply” that offers the chance to craft something alongside a brief tutorial.

Writing

- ♥ Select a scene from the novel in which you wish to change the choices made by the hero and/or heroine. Either outline what the characters could have done differently and how that would have then altered the story or rewrite the scenes to have the characters make the alternative choices.

Music

- ♥ Create a music playlist inspired by the novel. The playlist can be of any musical styling, be it historically accurate selections or modern music. Comparing playlists and sharing playlists with the group could prompt further discussion.

Movies

- ♥ Create a mood board for the movie or series based on the novel. The mood board can include the casting choices (especially for the hero and heroine), the fashion choices, the setting locations, important scene inspiration, soundtrack ideas, etc.

Design

- ♥ Create one or more memes and quote images by selecting quotes from the book that resonated with you.

Researching

- ♥ Using either a traditional story arc or a romance story arc, plot the key moments of the story, such as the inciting incidences, the climax, etc.
- ♥ The Old Bailey was London’s central criminal court between 1674-1913. Trial transcripts were available for purchase, which was a source of entertainment for society. Consider exploring the archives to find at least one case to share with the group that not only fascinated you but also helped you learn a little something (be it about the time period, culture, legal system, or otherwise). <https://www.old-baileyonline.org/>
- ♥ During the 18th and 19th century, founding hospitals and women’s homes were on the rise, but nothing quite like the Noach Cottage we see in the story. Investigate what was available at the time, and share with your group one hospital/home that stood out to you and why.

Learn & Apply Activity

The Scotch Reel became one of the most popular country dances during the 1790s.

It involved a line of three to four dancers, the steps alternating between interlacing dancers (called "heyng") and individual dancing in place with fancy steps (called "setting").

While there was a basic understanding of what the reel involved, the music and steps were mostly improvised, the leading dancers or majordomo establishing the footwork and tune for the occasion. This was part of the fun of the dance and ensured dancers rarely experienced the same reel twice even if the reel appeared at three assemblies in a row. Great news for good dancers and poor dancers alike.

If you're not familiar with Scotch Reels, you might have heard of the Sir Roger de Coverley dance, which became the most popular and longest lasting of all dances, later being referred to as the Virginia Reel. The Coverley is a type of Scotch Reel.

Over time, the most well-liked footwork and music combination earned names so that they may be repeated elsewhere if so desired. There is a nearly endless number of the names of popular Scotch Reels, such as "The Flying Scotsman," "Hedwig's Reel," "Simon's Dance," "The Brudenell Jig," "The Merry Reapers," "Granville Market," and many more.

In this Learn and Apply, we'll cover some of the basics of the reel to offer an opportunity to try dancing it yourself. Included in this Learn and Apply will be a plethora of links that may prove helpful, from YouTube videos showing the reel (with a few variations) in action, websites offering information about the reel, and resources with sheet music and audio clips that you may use to accompany your attempts at dancing the reel. As a disclaimer, these links are viable as of the publication of this kit, but in the nature of the Internet, links may break and sites may close at a moment's notice. My humblest apologies if any links do not lead to their intended destination.



Country Dancing

During the 18th century, social dancing rose in popularity to become the height of social interaction and courting, the most popular dances being court dances with precise, choreographed figures. The two most popular were the Allemande and Cotillion. During the 1790s, a movement towards more lively country dances occurred, the younger generation desiring to move away from the stuffiness of the dances of their parents and grandparents. This gave way to the Scotch Reel, and after the turn of the century to the Quadrille – which was based on the Cotillion – and the Waltz.

What is English Country Dancing?

- ♥ The style is fast paced, lively and rowdy, involving clapping, spinning, hopping, bouncing, turning, and all that was not stately or formalized, as were the courtly dances prior.
- ♥ The dance is performed by two or more couples, the men and women in lines facing each other.
- ♥ The three most common forms are longways sets, square sets, and circle dances.
- ♥ This pattern of a group of dancers is called “a set,” each set consisting of three or more couples.
- ♥ The men keep their left shoulder nearest the music, which is called the “top” of the “set.” The couple at the top of the set is called the “first couple,” each couple numbered sequentially down the line.
- ♥ The progression of the dance is one of the most important features. After each turn, the couple at the top finish one place further down so that each couple will have taken a turn as the leading couple by the end of the dance.

What's special about a Scottish Country Dance?

- ♥ The men take the lead position, but any gender may partner with each other, especially if there is a scarcity of one gender or another. In this way, women may dance with women and men may dance with men.
- ♥ Scottish Country Dances consist of a series of formations, each arranged in a different sequence for each dance. In this way, no matter how the dance changes, if one has mastered the basic steps and formations, improvisation and changes will be easy.

For a quick look at popular variations of the Scotch Reel, visit these YouTube videos:

- ♥ Regency Reel posted by Chestnut Cecile Laye: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVY2sHIKj30>

- ♥ The Scotch Reel posted by Commonwealth Vintage Dancers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5dHZdUYSQI>
- ♥ Sir Roger de Coverley from *A Christmas Carol* (1951) posted by MakeltFolky: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjwrSy_YI2Q&t=46s
- ♥ Barn Dance-Virginia Reel posted by Geoff Groberg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBBdgcHimoM&t=312s>
- ♥ 19th Century Scotch Reels posted by Richard Powers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZsa3rXpN1M>
- ♥ Regency Reel at Bath Assembly Rooms posted by Chestnut Cecile Laye: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJiT27m-5Tw>

Once you've had a look at the examples reproduced over the next few pages, consider revisiting these links to identify the steps and types as applicable. Choose which looks fun and simple to try with your group.

Throughout the 18th and 19th century, publications abounded with dance figures, variations, sheet music, and more. Many such publications are available on the Internet with a bit of digging, usually in pdf form, although some are available as print-on-demand. A few examples include Dukes' *A Concise & Easy Method of Learning the Figuring Part of Country Dances*, 1752; A.D.'s *Country-Dancing Made Plain and Easy*, 1764; Wilson's *An Analysis of Country Dancing*, 1808; Cherry's *A Treatise on the Art of Dancing*, 1811; Payne's *A New Companion to the Ball Room*, 1814; Wilson's *A Companion to the Ball Room*, 1816; Wilson's *The Complete System of English Country Dancing*, 1820.

For a thorough exploration of the types of dances, including video clips of each, please visit the article from Real Life Artist titled "'Mary, play a reel! Nobody wants your concertos:' Regency Music and Dance," at <https://reallifeartist.wordpress.com/2014/01/26/mary-play-a-reel-nobody-wants-your-concertos-regency-music-and-dance/>

Another source to explore is from Early Dance Circle, "Regency Dance, the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries," at <https://www.earlydancecircle.co.uk/resources/dance-through-history/regency-dance/>

Music, Steps, and More

For your dancing pleasure, the guide to Reels from The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) is *the* definitive source, including:

- ♥ sheet music if anyone in your group is musically inclined to play a reel while everyone tries the dance steps,
- ♥ music clips of different Scotch Reels that can be played while trying the dance steps,
- ♥ steps and techniques from simple to complex
- ♥ and more

If the link does not work, a search for the RSCDS and then a perusal of their information for the Scottish Country Dance / Reel section should yield positive results.

• <https://rscds.org/learn/music-resources/types-tunes/reels>

For the music section so that you may play while dancing (from clips or sheet music), follow the on screen navigation to Music Resources, then to Reels.

Let's Dance!

Before digging in, consider perusing these resources to learn all the details about

- ♥ Formations: <https://rscds.org/learn/steps-techniques/formations>
- ♥ Steps & Holds: <https://rscds.org/learn/steps-techniques/steps-holds>
- ♥ Specific Simple Scottish Dances: <https://rscds.org/learn/steps-techniques/simple-scottish-dances>

Terminology:

Top/Bottom

- ♥ The area nearest the music is the "top," and the area furthest from the music is the "bottom." To dance towards the top of the room (towards the musicians/pianist), is called "dancing up," and the reverse is called "dancing down."

Opposite

- ♥ In a longwise set, dancers stand facing their partners. If the dancer finishes on their partner's side, they are on the "opposite" side. This term is also used in sets of two, where one couple faces another couple, then the couples dance with each other rather than their original partner.

Petronella Turn

- ♥ This is a two bar turning movement on a diagonal. This can be danced from the sidelines into the middle of the set, or from the middle of the set to the sidelines.
- ♥ The couple dance diagonally to the right, dance a three quarter turn, rotate clockwise, and finish facing their partner. This entire move, which is one Petronella Turn, takes two bars of music to complete.

Sets

- ♥ A group of dancers together for the duration of the tune.
- ♥ Each set contains a certain amount of couples.
- ♥ Each type of dance varies in the amount of couples involved, from two to eight couples, typically.
- ♥ While the couple, or partners, begin and end the dance together, they may change partners during some of the moves.

Reproduced here are several ways to dance the reel.

1. Reel of Bogie

- These steps reproduced from RegencyDances.Org as originally retrieved from Preston's *Twenty Four Country Dances for the Year 1794*, published in 1794
- For a visual, visit Regency Dances at <https://www.regencydances.org/index.php?wL=2417>

8 bars	The top two couples set and change sides, then set and change back again
8 bars	The first couple lead down the middle and return to second place, seconds move up; the first couple allemande
<i>Repeat whole dance from progressed position</i>	

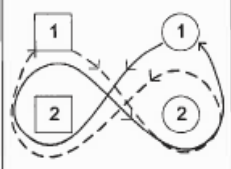
2. Reel of Tulloch

- These steps reproduced from RegencyDances.Org as originally retrieved from Longman and Broderip's *Complete Collection of 200 Favourite Country Dances*, published in 1781.
- For a visual, visit Regency Dances at <https://www.regencydances.org/index.php?wL=2461>

8 bars	The first couple cast off two couples, then set and return
4 bars	The first couple lead down 1 couple, then return and cast off
4 bars	The top two couples four passes of a circular hey
8 bars	The first couple swing their right hand corner, then their partner, then their left corner, then their partner
8 bars	The first man dances a figure of eight around the third couple at bottom, the first lady does the same with the second couple at top; the other dancers turn single as they are passed
<i>Repeat whole dance from progressed position</i>	

3. Lady Catherine Bruce's Reel

- These steps reproduced from RSCDS Dance Instructions

<p>Dance in 2 couple sets before progressing to 3 couple then 4 couple sets</p> 	Bars	DANCE INSTRUCTIONS - Lady Catherine Bruce's Reel	
	1-8	1st couple lead down the middle for 4 steps, turn towards each other and lead up for 4. Finish in the middle of the set facing up, 2nd couple stepping in behind 1st couple on the last bar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The couple leading down and up take RH.
9-16	1st and 2nd couples dance the allemande to change places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a 4-couple set, on the third turn of the dance there are two allemandes, one for the two couples at the top and one for those at the foot of the set. This needs careful phrasing and co-ordination - see DVD. 	
17-24	1st couple dance a figure of 8 round the 2nd couple who stand still.		
25-32	2nd and 1st couples dance a circle round and back.		
<p>In a 4 couple set, 1st couple will dance 3 times - with 2nd couple, then 3rd couple, then 4th couple, to finish at the foot of the set. On the third time through, when 1st couple are dancing with 4th couple, the new top couple also start.</p>			

4. Reel of Six

- a. These steps reproduced from Social Dance at Stanford as originally retrieved from Wilson's *The Complete System of English Country Dancing*, published in 1820.

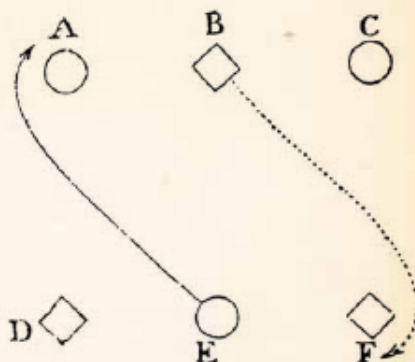
Reel of Six

from *The Complete System of English Country Dancing*
by Thomas Wilson, 1820 Reconstructed by Richard Powers

FIGURE I

A line of two gents and a lady, lady in the middle, face a line of two ladies and a gent in the middle, as shown.

- ◆ Join hands and advance with steps [1] [1]
- Set in place with steps [2] [2] [3] [3]
- Retire to places with [5] [5] [5] [5]



- ◆ Lady B and gent E travel forward to the left, along the path shown above, to strike a Hey for Three at the sides, i.e. E passes right shoulders with A to strike a Hey with A and D. Use traveling steps [1].

A note on Heys: When crossing through the center of the figure-8, always head out of the set. When you reach the end of the line, always turn in toward the center. Travel for eight bars of music. Lady B and gent E will end their Hey in the center of the set, back-to-back; the other four are in place, facing in.

- ◆ Take hands-3 in a two separate circles and all circle left with "Sevens" [4] (*R foot crosses behind*). Set with "Threes" [3] [3]. Repeat back to places, beginning with the opposite feet (*L foot crosses behind*).

- ◆ The outside two dancers raise the hand they are holding with each other to form an arch (A arches with C) then the center dancer B dives through and turns right, essentially passing R shoulders with C. Then the arching two pass left shoulders to strike a Hey for Three at the ends. Travel with step [1] for a total of eight bars and end at home, facing as you began the figure.

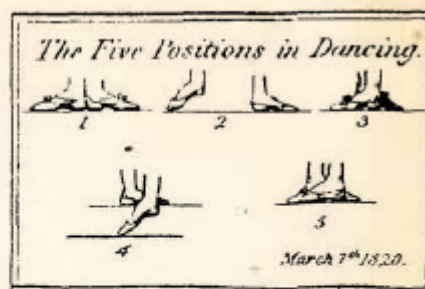
FIGURE II

- ◆ Join hands and advance with steps [1] [1]. Drop hands and set to the one you meet with [2] [2]. Give both hands to this person and quickly circle to the left with [1] [1] all the way around to your place. Join hands in one large circle as you retire with [5] [5].
- ◆ All circle left with Sevens [4] (*R foot crosses behind*) and Threes [3] [3]. Circle right with the same. At the end, gents turn to their right and ladies turn left to face your First Corner.
- ◆ Set to First Corners with [1] [1]. Then continue with Fosgladh [6] turning halfway to face your Second Corner. Repeat the setting and Fosgladh, turning at the end to face your First Corner.
- ◆ Give right hands and Grand Chain with right and left hands around the set, using traveling step [1]. Take your time: you only pass six hands in eight bars of music, not one hand per bar.

Alternate Figure I with Figure II until the music ends.

Scotch Reel steps

from *Sketches Relative to the... Practice of Dancing* by
Francis Peacock, 1805 Reconstructed by Richard Powers



1 KEMSHOOLE (*Traveling Step*)

• Step R forward to 4th position. • Close L up to R to 3rd position. • Step R forward again. • Hop on R.
Repeat forward on the opposite feet. This is done rapidly, high on the balls of the feet, shading the body very slightly to the sides on each step. Peacock didn't say what to do with the free foot during the hop, but late 19th century sources suggest swinging the free foot forward into the air, toe pointed down.

2 LEMATRAST (*Cross Springs*)

• Cross R tightly over the L to 5th position, possibly with weight, possibly with just a light tap.
• Uncross R, keeping it in the air. • Step R straight backwards. • Hop on R. Repeat opposite.

3 KEMKOSSY (*Setting Step, or "Threes"*)

• Cross R behind L to 5th position. • "Bound" to the left with the L to 2nd position.
• Cross R behind L again. • Hop on R, extending the L foot to the left side to 2nd position air.
Repeat opposite, crossing L behind R.

4 DOUBLE KEMKOSSY (*Sideways Traveling Step, or "Sevens"*)

• Cross R behind L to 5th position. • "Bound" to the left with the L. • Repeat. • Repeat again.
• Cross R behind L again. • Hop on R, extending the free L foot to the left side, 2nd position air.
Repeat all seven counts to the right side, crossing L behind R.

5 MINOR KEMKOSSY (*Footing Step*)

• Place the R tightly behind the L into 5th position and sink onto it. • Hop R in place, extending L to the left side, 2nd position air. • Repeat opposite, crossing L tightly behind the R.

6 FOSGLADH (*Open Step*)

• Slip the feet apart to 2nd position. • Spring straight up into 5th position upon the toes.
• Drop back into 2nd position. • Spring up into reverse 5th position. The foot which was behind last time is now in front. • Repeat the first two steps. • On count 7, do a quick half-turn, unwinding from the 5th position to face the opposite direction, dropping into 2nd position.

A Day in the Life

This is a glimpse into both the lady's maid position, of which J'non held for about a month with the Whittington family, and the employment agencies of the late 18th century and early 19th century, through which J'non was able to connect with the Whittington family thanks to the patrons of Noach Cottage networking with certain London agencies.

In terms of story realism and accuracy, a few aspects of J'non's tale that seem implausible were quite possible, even if unlikely:

♥ A gentlewoman passing for a lady's maid.

♥ As the story progresses, we learn J'non was forced into servitude under her aunt's roof, first as a companion and then as a maid. This was not uncommon for poor relations, although typically they would have remained companions, not been demoted to maids. That said, this experience would have prepared J'non for the role, baptism by fire, in this case. If she then received further training at Noach Cottage, this would have perfected her role. She could easily have been one of the best lady's maids of any mistress' acquaintance, regardless of her upbringing as a gentlewoman.

♥ If she had *not* served as a maid under her aunt's roof, and if she had *not* received training in becoming a household servant at Noach Cottage, it would have been difficult for a gentlewoman to assume the role of a lady maid. Difficult, but not impossible. The most difficulty, aside from the mental, emotional, and behavioral challenges, would have been in the skills needed, for in all likelihood, a gentlewoman would not have known some of the essential skills necessary, such as removing stains from white linen, handmaking cosmetics from scratch, cleaning and bandaging wounds, etc. The physical strain would have taken its toll, but it's the lack of certain skills that would have proven the most challenging. Had J'non moved from a manor where she had lived as a gentlewoman all her life into a household where she then had to play the role of lady's maid, her ability to "fool" the Whittingtons would not have been convincing without a great deal of effort, quick learning, and possibly help from fellow staff.

♥ The Whittingtons securing a lady's maid from an employment agency.

♥ While it might seem that most wealthy households secured servants through personal recommendations, this was not the case. It would have been more likely to hire only through recommendations in the rural countryside, but many households in the city, and especially the merchant class, would have used employment agencies to find the best servants. A lady's maid would have been no exception. If the agency provided the right references, all the better. Since not many women using an agency would have had the credentials and training for a lady's maid, J'non would have been a starred candidate for the position. Her personality would have secured her the position without hesitation.

- ♥ Another aspect of this that might seem unlikely is the falsification of J'non's references. While it fits the narrative of Noach Cottage's services, this may appear at first unlikely in terms of accuracy. *Au contraire*. It would have been more common to falsify references when using an employment agency than to have real ones. More on this soon!
- ♥ A shelter that trained destitute women for the workforce and helped aid in finding employment.
- ♥ This may sound modern and too good to be true, especially given the high numbers of homeless women and prostitutes of the time, all with nowhere to turn. There were, however, just such places. Some were more reputable than others, and most tailored to specific clientele, such as a home for homeless girls between 13-16, a home for fallen women seeking help, a home for prostitutes needing shelter from pimps and wanting to redeem themselves, etc. Sadly, many of these homes were more inclined towards indentured servitude, but there were good ones that did just what they promised—trained the women to serve a household and helped find those women employment.

Interestingly, some of the best lady's maids were purported to have been daughters of merchants. Somehow I can't imagine Phoebe Whittington fitting that role well.

Lady's Maid of the Georgian Era

A lady's maid served her mistress in a multitude of ways. It's important, first, to establish that the lady's maid replaced *all* housemaids within the mistress' chambers, thus ensuring no other servant in the household entered the mistress' domain. The lady's maid was thus responsible for all cleaning, tidying, laundering, maintaining, etc. within those chambers.

This position was considered one of honor in the staff hierarchy and was a rarity to find since there were few positions open, a mistress keeping her lady's maid for the majority of her life. Rather than reside downstairs with the staff, a lady's maid had her own room next to her mistress so that she may be available at a moment's notice around the clock. Timing is a skill to master for the lady's maid, for she must do all things out of sight of her mistress while being available and at bedside within a moment's notice.

While young women could serve the role, this position typically went to a woman of experience, good characters, and proven skill, someone who would be senior in training and knowledge to all other maids in the household.

There were many tasks in which to fill the day, but with the right rhythm, a lady's maid could have a good deal of personal freedom during the day, unlike any other maid in the house, but that personal freedom was expected to be filled by improving one's skills for the job. One challenge with personal freedom was a lady's maid was always at the beck and call of their mistress, 24 hours of the day.

WANTED Lady's maid who is modest in person and manner, and maintains the strictest sense of honor. Trust is a must. She will read and speak pleasantly; neat, legible handwriting is a plus. Preferably skilled in plain work (darning stockings, mending linens). Fastidious and discrete, the ideal candidate will have the ability to plait muslin in addition to performing daily duties in a timely manner. Experience desirable, but unnecessary. Will train to dress hair, if necessary.

Finding the perfect lady's maid was challenging, the top complaints amongst mistresses being a lady's maid who gossips, acts above her station, bullies the other servants in her superiority, allows herself to be bullied by jealous servants, flatters her mistress, covets her mistress' dresses and jewels, is too chatty, forgets her manners by becoming too familiar with her mistress, complains about her duties, is not skilled enough or able to keep up with her duties, eavesdrops or snoops, mimics her mistress' speech and mannerisms in an attempt to put on airs, insolence to others in the household, dressing nicer than the mistress, not dressing nicely enough. It's a tall order to please one's mistress!

A glimpse of her duties:

- ♥ Waking prior to the mistress and retiring after the mistress
 - ♥ Cup of chocolate at the mistress' bedside in the morning
 - ♥ Opening of curtains in the morning
 - ♥ Opening of windows to air the room in the afternoons
 - ♥ Closing windows and curtains in the evening
 - ♥ Ensuring mistress' privacy is never disturbed
- ♥ Selecting clothing and millinery
 - ♥ Ensuring the color choices best match her mistress' complexion
 - ♥ Ensuring the cuts and styles best match her mistress' physique and assets
 - ♥ Understanding both the up-and-coming fashions and the mistress' physical wardrobe needs
- ♥ Protecting, maintaining, and repairing her mistress' skin from all imperfections
 - ♥ Maintaining a skin routine that discouraged pimples, warts, and other ailments
 - ♥ Utilizing cosmetics to hide blemishes while enhancing one's natural beauty and coloring
 - ♥ Understanding the types of cosmetics available and how best to use them, as well as the ability to make such cosmetics when necessary
- ♥ Hairstyling to remain *en vogue*
 - ♥ Understanding the current hairstyling trends
 - ♥ Knowing what best suited the mistress' frame, face, and hair
 - ♥ Knowing how to style and cut successfully
 - ♥ Washing and applying pomatums and hair oils as needed
 - ♥ Brushing hair with combs and brushes in soothing and meditative manner
- ♥ Overseeing all wardrobe needs
 - ♥ Mending and repairing clothing, stockings, buttons, clasps, hooks and eyes, etc.
 - ♥ Laundering and ironing of whites and linens

- ♥ Arranging linen drawers to ensure equal wear, no wrinkling, and special care for delicate garments
- ♥ Keeping track of the “washing book” to record each item sent to the washerwoman, each item beyond repair, each item needing mending
- ♥ Keeping inventory of all mistress’ belongings from jewelry to minor possessions
- ♥ Aiding with washing and other matters of the toilette
 - ♥ Helping the mistress with her toilette while she’s present, such as bathing needs
 - ♥ Cleaning the dressing room and all necessities within, such as removing stains from soiled garments, starching muslins, cleaning hair combs, organizing supplies, replenishing supplies, etc.
- ♥ Maintaining tidiness in mistress’ chambers and dressing room
 - ♥ Cleaning basins, washstands, water jugs, mirrors, glasses, floor, rugs, etc.
 - ♥ Changing bedding and towels
 - ♥ Dusting
 - ♥ Tidying and organizing
 - ♥ Supplying fresh water
- ♥ Assisting with medical needs as necessary
 - ♥ Changing bandages
 - ♥ Being present during all doctor examinations
 - ♥ Washing dressings
 - ♥ Applying leeches
- ♥ Confidante and secret keeper
 - ♥ Knowing all secrets of mistress and household but maintaining discretion
 - ♥ Listening to mistress’ woes, victories, and stories
 - ♥ Serving as companion and chaperone if needed
- ♥ Personal secretary
 - ♥ Paying all tradesman’s bills as necessary, such as the washerwoman’s costs for laundry
 - ♥ Writing and reading letters on mistress’ behalf as requested
 - ♥ Reading aloud when needed
 - ♥ Seeing to all comforts and conveniences before the mistress knows she’s in need of them

While the physical needs of one’s mistress must be kept, a lady’s maid served in a much more personal capacity as being the primary confidante of one’s mistress. She was the one person who knew all her mistress’ secrets, not only from the close relationship and intimacy required of a personal assistant but also as a listener of every woe, joy, or gossip the mistress cared to share.



One's mistress put complete and total trust in her lady's maid not to pry in her affairs while also keeping mum about the secrets the mistress willingly divulged or any household drama the maid might have been privy to.

Training involved learning not only every task of every maid in a household and even tradeswomen, such as modistes and milliners, to be able to serve in that capacity for one's mistress, as needed, but also to be the best at those tasks, constantly improving in those tasks, and knowledgeable in how to network with other staff both inside and outside of the household. Being the most skilled, best networked, and top performer in professional development only reached so far, though, as personality could make or break one's chance at a position. This position was the ultimate Mary Poppins for the ladies of the house.

A glimpse of her training:

- ♥ To be selected as a candidate to train, a lady's maid must possess the right attributes
 - ♥ Pleasant speaking
 - ♥ Able to read and write skillfully
 - ♥ Handy and quick with a needle
 - ♥ Trustworthy
 - ♥ Personable but not too chatty
- ♥ Potential candidates trained first as an assistant to a lady's maid
- ♥ Wardrobe training
 - ♥ Must learn the rules of contrast and harmony
 - ♥ Must learn basic millinery, namely what best suits certain head sizes and shapes, as well as occasions, seasons, styles, and outfits
- ♥ Cosmetic and physique training
 - ♥ Must learn about different types of complexions – sallow, fair, pale, florid, etc.
 - ♥ Must learn about different hair colors and face shapes
 - ♥ Must learn about different physical sizes and shapes to avoid clothing that might pinch, hang or highlight imperfections, instead knowing what clothing choices would be functional, fashionable, and flattering
- ♥ Position in household
 - ♥ Must learn the delicate balance between being an upper servant in the household with an intimate relationship with the mistress while also maintaining a humble servant's role, never to be overly familiar with mistress or superiors.

♥ Self-care training

- ♥ Must be able to improve themselves with new skills
- ♥ Must know how to acquire knowledge of new fashions, styles, techniques, etc.
- ♥ Must maintain a level of fitness
- ♥ Must maintain personal cleanliness of both body and clothing
- ♥ Expected to read and write during daily lulls, especially to read aloud and practice penmanship
- ♥ Encouraged to improve sewing skills

Sources to learn more:

- ♥ Geri Walton, "Lady's Maid in the Georgian and Regency Eras," 2014
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Employment Agencies of the Georgian Era

The larger and more rural the household, the longer servants tended to work for the same employer, mostly from convenience of location and the low prospects of other households nearby. Servants were in high demand, and the more skilled the worker, the more sought after, meaning a good worker could demand higher pay from their employer or leave to work elsewhere for higher pay. Workers who did a poor job would not keep their position long and be quickly replaced with someone else. Typically, a good worker would stay about 3 years before looking for higher pay elsewhere, while a poor worker could be hired and fired on the same day.

Most households had at least one servant, no matter their financial situation. The poorest of households might employ a single maid to help around the house, while the most modest of families would employ two servants at minimum, one maid and one manservant. These household helpers were typically hired from recommendations by friends, family, and neighbors. To help family and not be a burden, the age of about 12-13 was when children could seek work amongst neighbors, such as taking on a position as a scullery maid. This helped the family in need of household help and aided the family who needed the work and extra income.

To be a servant in a household was a position of pride, typically those in larger houses, especially homes of the upper classes, having come from a long line of familial servants. While this

was a type of trade, it was a respected position in society, one that paid well, required minimal labor, came with many perks, including housing and food, and offered bartering power for more pay and higher rank if one proved oneself. Compare this to, say, a factory worker.

References, or “a written character,” from employers enabled servants to find work elsewhere, while also providing confidence to a new employer that they were hiring a strong worker rather than hiring someone who might have been caught stealing, gossiping, not completing work, etc. To be turned out without a character meant they likely would not find work elsewhere as a household staff member and would thus have to find a position at a factory, on the street, in a workhouse, or worse.

Newspaper ads were a popular way for employers to post vacancies needing to be filled through classified advertisements. Of course, one needed to have access to a newspaper to spot the vacancies, ability to read and write, and the means to write to the employer to apply for the position. As an alternative, some newspaper offices provided notice boards around town where employers could post vacancies, but this was not customarily for household servant positions rather more for short-term hire, laborious positions, and employers favoring migrant workers for low pay. While a person seeking employment, especially one in desire of a household servant position, could place an ad in the newspaper just as an employer could, to place an ad cost about a month’s wages.

Employment agencies offered a way for employers to find employees without needing to advertise or solicit recommendations from acquaintances and for employees to find suitable positions. There were a few different types of employment agencies:

- ♥ **Women’s shelters**, sometimes called “female asylums,” “laundries,” “redemption cottages,” or variations thereof, were open to homeless teenage girls and fallen women to learn the servant duties in hopes of becoming household servants.
 - ♥ Some of these were legitimate and provided training and employment along with room and board, a safe haven for homeless women, regardless of their background or circumstances.
 - ♥ Some of these, however, were little more than prisons for indentured servitude, abuse, maltreatment, and trafficking.
- ♥ **Job fairs**, sometimes called “statute fairs,” “hiring fairs,” “servant’s bazaars,” or “mop fairs,” were similar to what we have now, but were usually hosted by the registry offices and cost money to participate. They were held annually in November in market towns, Yorkshire being one of the top areas for these fairs.
 - ♥ Historically, these began in 1351 by the Statute of Laborers following the labor shortages after the Black Death.
 - ♥ These fairs varied from century to century in design and purpose, even serving in the 16th century as a place to set and negotiate pay rates and working conditions.
- ♥ **Registry offices**, also called “statute halls,” “register offices,” and “intelligence offices,” were open to anyone needing employment, requiring only that the person leave their name, job skills, and kind of employment they sought, while the registry office would set out to find the best match.

Registry Offices:

Some of the offices were specific to employment while others served multiple roles, including dating services, housing services, and lost and found services, among others, called “offices of intelligence.” Since the registry offices tended only to be open certain days of the week and only for a few hours on those days (such as open Monday and Wednesday between 10-4), proprietors at local coffeehouses and pubs would sometimes take registration details from those seeking work on behalf of the registry office. Offices often set certain days for separate genders, such as being open on Monday for women only and open Wednesday for men only. And still others could specify further by job type, such as tradesmen register on Tuesdays.



Some of the offices, especially the Statute Halls, worked quite well and became trustworthy agencies for employers to seek new employees since the offices did all the leg work, such as checking references, negotiating the wage, ensuring suitability for certain employer needs, etc. Obviously not all proved trustworthy, some agencies not bothering to check anything before sending an employee to a new employer, but those agencies that were competing against other nearby offices would typically work harder to fulfill their goals.

Some individuals, especially women, had better luck than others with agencies. A fallen woman who happened to be producing milk, for instance, might find great luck at an agency since wet nurses were in high demand. An agency could provide fake references alongside a story about widowhood or a military husband, thus securing the woman with a position, which then could lead to rehabilitation if the family chose to redistribute her in the house after her wet nurse servicing was no longer needed, such as serving as a maid. Many employment facilities, such as foundling hospitals, checked references themselves to prove if they were legitimate, but employers using agencies rarely did.

Three types of registry offices:

- ♥ Those that charged a fee from both employer and servant
- ♥ Those that offered free registration for servants with the future employer paying the fee once hired *or* the servant paying a hiring fee after finding employment
- ♥ Those that were available to foreign servants only

A few problems with these employment agencies:

- ♥ They cost money, and some agencies would take the money but never follow through by helping to find work.
- ♥ Some charged exorbitant fees, well over a day's wage, charges including the initial registration, the additional enquiry fee to search for an employer, a final finder's fee if employment is secured. A time frame for the search could be established, and if no employment was secured during that time, the payment would expire, thus requiring the person to repay all fees yet again.
- ♥ Some agencies sold the information to prostitution homes, pimps, and prostitution rings so the procurers could lure the unemployed person into service. Many city prostitutes did not choose the street over the agency rather were sent to the street by the agency, many times by nefarious means, including debauchery during a supposed employer interview.
- ♥ Some were flooded with employees, such as 70 applications per day.
- ♥ Some *would* help employees find work but would ignore the guidelines from the employer just to make the money for the transaction, such as falsifying references for the employee, lying about the vetting process and skills held by the employee, etc, or even match an employee with an employer known for abuse, indentured servitude, and other ills.
- ♥ If an agency faked the credentials of an employee, it could prove disastrous for the family, such as vouching for a wet nurse as a respectable woman only for the family later to learn she carried a contagious venereal disease that passed to the baby or was a substance abuser who then neglected the baby.

Sources to learn more:

- ♥ John Huntingford, *The Laws of Masters and Servants Considered: With observations on a bill intended to be offered to Parliament, to prevent the forging and counterfeiting of certificates and servants characters*, 1790.
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- ♥ Vic Sanborn, "Hiring Servants in the Regency Era and Later," *Jane Austen's World*, 2009

Image Info

Lady's Maid advertisement from *The Lady's Maid: Her Duties, and How to Perform Them*; Painting of *A Lady's Maid Soaping Linen* by Henry Robert Morland; Painting of *Scene from 'The Register Office'* by Joseph Reed by Benjamin Vandergucht from Leicester Museums and Galleries



Discussion Questions



- 1 When J'non shares her tale of destitution, she alludes to a few ways she tried to seek help from others, only to be turned away. She sought help from neighbors, innkeepers, strangers, and even clergymen. What would you have done differently in her shoes?
- 2 How would you describe Trevor? How does his character grow and develop throughout the story?
- 3 Do you think, based on Trevor's misgivings with trust and love, he trusted J'non too deeply and too soon?
- 4 What themes did you see in the story, either well developed or nuanced?
- 5 At which points during the love story's evolution were you surprised, be it by their choices in the relationship, reactions to each other, or otherwise? Could you predict the course of their relationship or the challenges they faced?
- 6 Assuming the story's climax took you by surprise, how had you expected the climax to happen, and what would the trek to resolution have looked like for your expected climax?
- 7 Did you empathize with J'non's decision to continue the charade once you learned of her past and her fear of what would happen if she was turned away, or did you feel she should have been honest?
- 8 Do you think J'non repented of her deception, or did she seem unremorseful?
- 9 How do you suppose the vicar and his wife reacted to receiving a new register and needing to "renew" the vows of J'non and Trevor?
- 10 Because of J'non's upbringing as a gentlewoman, followed by her working as a servant in her aunt's home, she was able to move between worlds, posing as a maid if needed and acting as a gentlewoman if needed. The two worlds were so different in reality, do you think this would have been possible to achieve convincingly? What characteristics and knowledge would have been needed for her to emulate each role?
- 11 How would you describe J'non? How does her character grow and develop throughout the story?



12 Who were your favorite and least favorite secondary characters, and why? How did those characters help drive the story and/or the romance of our lead characters?

13 Were there characteristics about J'non that helped you resonate with her? Were there any characteristics or actions that made Trevor swoon-worthy?

14 If the novel were to become a movie or series, what plot points and themes are the most important to keep, and what could hit the cutting room floor or would be too challenging to film?

15 Despite both characters facing internal conflicts that made them hesitant to trust, they fell in love quickly. What factors contributed to this, and how did this affect their resolution of internal conflicts?

For additional information about the Georgian era, fashion, etiquette, and more, consider exploring the author's research blog: <https://www.paullettgolden.com/bookresearch>



About the Author



Inviting Pullett Golden

If you would like to engage Pullett Golden as a keynote speaker, workshop facilitator, etc., interview her, or invite her for a book signing or book reading, please visit the presenter section of her website: www.pullettgolden.com/presenter.

For recent interviews visit: www.pullettgolden.com/interviews

Book Boxes

For those engaging Pullett Golden as a guest speaker, virtually or in-person, a specialty book box may be sent to the group (be it a club, classroom, or otherwise) with book swag, such as bookmarks for the group readers, autographed bookplates, one autographed copy of the book, and other thematic goodies ranging from tea leaves to poetry pocketbooks, all inspired by the book of discussion.

About Pullett Golden

Celebrated for her complex characters, realistic conflicts, and sensual portrayal of love, Pullett Golden writes historical romance for intellectuals. Her novels, set primarily in Georgian England, challenge the genre's norm by starring characters loved for their imperfections and idiosyncrasies. The writing aims for historical immersion into the social mores and nuances of Georgian England. Her plots explore human psyche, mental and physical trauma, and personal convictions. Her stories show love overcoming adversity. Whatever our self-doubts, *love will out*.

Paullett Golden completed her post-graduate work at King's College London, studying Classic British Literature. Her Ph.D. is in Composition and Rhetoric, her M.A. in British Literature from the Enlightenment through the Victorian era, and her B.A. in English. Her specializations include creative writing and professional writing. She has served as a University Professor for nearly three decades and is a seasoned keynote speaker, commencement speaker, conference presenter, workshop facilitator, and writing retreat facilitator.

As an ovarian cancer survivor, she makes each day count, enjoying an active lifestyle of Spartan racing, powerlifting, hiking, antique car restoration, drag racing, butterfly gardening, competitive shooting, and gaming. Her greatest writing inspirations, and the reasons she chose to write in the clean historical romance genre, are Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and Elizabeth Gaskell.

