



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

Cinderella Theme In *Mansfield Park*

A None Magical Fairy Tale Ending

Ritgerð til B.A. prófs í Ensku

Rhea Pardillo Juarez

Janúar 2014

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Abstract

Mansfield Park was first published in 1814 and written by Jane Austen. The story has fairy tale elements and is influenced by Charles Perrault's story *Cinderella*, *The Glass Slipper*. *The Glass Slipper* is about a poor neglected young girl that hopes that her own family will accept her as part of the family. After many years of neglect by her family she still manages to find happiness and overcome those who believed that she will never become something more than a cinderwench. *Mansfield Park* is the story of Fanny Prince, a girl with a poor background, who is neglected by her relatives who see her only as a burden. From a young age she stayed quite while those who were supposed to be her family, friends and allies found a way to find faults with her existence in Mansfield Park.

This B.A. focuses on a thesis on theme from *Cinderella* and *The Glass Slipper* are found in *Mansfield Park*. The heroine is discussed and it is explained why she can be seen as a typical Cinderella. The obstacles she has to face to become the heroine of *Mansfield Park*. She is being bullied, rejected and neglected by her family to being loved and adored by the same family. Fanny not only won the heart of the man she loved but also the entire family. Fanny is the rock of Mansfield Park. She works really hard and she always put her family's need above her own and she never stop loving Edmund, the love of her life even if she is pressured to accept the proposal from Henry Crawford, the man that falls in love with her. The minor characters in *Mansfield Park* are explained and compared with the characters in *Cinderella*, *The Glass Slipper* and films adaptation of *Cinderella*. This is an examination of how the heroine manages to overcome all the obstacles she encountered without having magic to rely on.

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I. Introduction

Mansfield Park is one of Jane Austen's major novels. The novel was published in 1814 and tells the story of a young girl named Fanny and her struggle among people in the upper class in the early 19th century. Fanny comes from a poor family and is being raised by her rich relatives, the Bertrams, at Mansfield Park. In the beginning, she is excluded from being part of the family due to her lack of education. The Bertrams make sure that she is given an alternative upbringing to her cousins. She struggles to cope being different amongst her relatives but tries to remain strong despite their negligence and poor guidance.

Mansfield Park has fairy tale elements in which the protagonist rises to the occasion and becomes the heroine. It has a *Cinderella* theme with a poor, young girl abused by her relatives; Fanny is abused by her aunt, Mrs. Norris, and by some of her cousins. Mrs. Norris has always emphasized that Fanny can never achieve anything other than a lower class standing, due to the fact that her family background does not give her that opportunity. *Mansfield Park* is Jane Austen's version of *Cinderella*, *The Glass Slipper* by Charles Perrault. It is a fascinating novel where Fanny rises to the occasion and becomes the heroine Mansfield Park needs without having to rely on magic but rather on people that cares about her. We follow her development from a small, weak girl into a strong woman that wins the heart of Edmund and Sir Thomas without changing herself or the moral beliefs she holds.

II. The Fairy tale elements in *Mansfield Park*

The definition of fairy tale according to the *Oxford Dictionary* is: "something resembling a fairy story in being magical, idealized or extremely happy: A fairy tale romance". Jane Austen introduces the pattern of the *Cinderella* tale into *Mansfield Park*. It is not a classic fairy tale story starting with the monologue: "once a upon a time in a far away land," nor is it a typical story where a prince meets a poor helpless girl and they fall in love and live happily ever after in his kingdom. Instead, *Mansfield Park* is based on the social struggle of a girl who, despite the hurdles she encounters, manages to become the superior figure of Mansfield Park, and after a long struggle to maintain her dignity and not compromise her moral beliefs, she finally receives the happy ending she deserves by marrying the man of her dreams.

The obvious element of the *Cinderella* tale in *Mansfield Park* is “the wonderful fortune” that has been bestowed upon Fanny Price (Fleishman, 68). Fanny is the daughter of Mrs. Price, the sister of Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris. Mrs. Price is the only sister who married for love, differing from her sisters and marrying a man with no education or stable income. Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris feel that it is their duty to help their sister by educating one of her daughters and giving her a stable life. In many fairy tale stories, e.g. *Cinderella*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Rapunzel* etc., the heroine always has to struggle before rising to the occasion. Fanny Price arrives in Mansfield Park at the age of ten and is described as a fragile girl who looks small for her age. Her family is poor and she feels intimidated by her new surroundings. She feels unwelcome and unloved and is constantly being abused by her cousins and aunt, Mrs. Norris. Julia and Maria think that she is stupid and illiterate and find it funny that she does not know the difference between Europe and Asia:

Dear Mamma, only to think, my cousin cannot put the map of Europe together – or my cousin cannot tell the principal rivers in Russia – or she never heard of Asia Minor – or she does not know the difference between water-colours and crayons! – How strange! – Did you ever hear anything so stupid? (Austen, 17)

Mrs. Norris reprimands her for being ungrateful and behaving selfishly, declining to do things she does not want to do. These three characters from Fanny’s childhood represent the evil forces in the story. They are a source of cruelty that Fanny has to endure while being in their care. In the Charles Perrault version of *Cinderella*, Cinderella’s pain is caused by her stepmother and stepsisters, but in the end, after many years of neglect, Cinderella triumphs over her family by marrying a prince. Similar to Cinderella, Fanny triumphs by eventually marrying into the family. This type of story is called a *Rise Fairy Tale*. According to Bottigheimer, a *Rise Fairy Tale* begins with a poor girl or boy, who battles poverty and has to endure trials and tribulations before magic can intervene and give the hero the happy ending they deserve by marrying them into great wealth (12).

Cinderella has a fairy godmother that grants her a wish so that she can attend the Royal ball. The fairy godmother uses magic to accomplish this by waving her wand. Cinderella’s ragged dress is transformed into a beautiful golden gown and animals are turned into people (Bottigheimer, 67). In all fairy tale stories magic is always involved. However, Fanny’s transformation is not magical. She does not have a fairy godmother that waves her magical wand while singing “Bibbidi – Bobbidi – Boo”

(Cinderella, 1950) or a pumpkin that turns into a carriage and there are no mice that transform into horses (Bottigheimer, 67). Fanny's transformation occurs due to her daily exercise and healthy environment. Edmund helps her by loaning her one of his mares for her outdoor activity. When Maria and Julia leave Mansfield Park, Mrs. Norris is outnumbered by the people who care for Fanny and are willing to stand up for her. However, *Cinderella* elements are still visible. Sir Thomas buys her a dress for Maria's wedding and provides her with a carriage to take her to her first dinner invitation at Mr. and Mrs. Grant's house. He then later throws a ball in her honour, resulting in the envy and admiration of all the guests that attend. Sir Thomas can be seen as Fanny's surrogate fairy godmother. Jane Austen portrays the role of the fairy tale godmother using a different gender. Cinderella's godmother is an old woman, while Fanny's fairy godmother is represented not only by one male character, but two: Edmund, who attends to her feelings, and Sir Thomas, who provides for her material needs (Simpson, n.p).

Fairy tales stories must also have a villain. Without a villain there is no plot and the hero cannot grow as a character. Their moral development is limited and their success is not a triumph when there is no villain to defeat. The villain is usually someone that knows the hero personally. It can be a neighbour, a friend, a cousin, brother, sister or parent. Lady Bertram is too lazy to be considered evil. She is too self-absorbed to even realize if she has mistreated anyone and instead her sister, Mrs. Norris, portrays the wicked aunt. The evil stepmother is better portrayed in Disney's adaptation of *Cinderella*. She is evil, cunning and manipulative and intentionally neglects Cinderella. She feels that Cinderella's beauty is threatening and that her beauty overshadows that of her own daughter's. When the stepmother thinks that Cinderella has over stepped her boundaries, she punishes her by making her feel guilty and do household chores all over again. Mrs. Norris is no different from Cinderella's stepmother. Her behavior towards Fanny is malicious without any merit. She constantly verbally abuses her and often reminds her that her role in Mansfield Park is not to overshadow her cousins, or the rest of the family, and it is her obligation to say, "yes" to everything they ask her to do. Fanny thinks the play that her cousins are putting on is an insult to Sir Thomas. She knows it is dishonest and she does not wish to be a part of something that her uncle might disapprove of. Mrs. Norris finds her insulting and selfish for declining the part her "kind" cousins have offered her:

What a piece of work here is about nothing, - I am quite ashamed of you, Fanny, to make such a difficulty of obliging your cousins in a trifle of this sort, - So kind as they are to you! – Take the part with a good grace, and let us hear no more of the matter, I entreat. (Austen, 123)

Mrs. Norris feels threatened by Fanny's existence in Mansfield Park. Fanny has been provided with a great opportunity, while she herself had to make her own opportunities. Mrs. Norris always emphasises that Fanny's future does not include wealth and that her status in the family is to remain the "lowest" and the "last" (Fleishman, 59). Every time Fanny disapproves of Mrs. Norris's rules or behavior, Mrs. Norris questions Fanny's loyalty by telling her that she is rude and ungrateful to the people that have helped her (Austen, 123). When with company, Mrs. Norris deliberately demeans Fanny in front of them. She has no empathy, and feels no or remorse regarding her cruelty towards her niece. Unlike, Cinderella, Fanny is not being made to serve her relatives or clean up after them. However, she does sleep near the servants' rooms and she is responsible for assisting her cousins and aunts whenever they need something (Fleishman, 68).

A hero must always have someone they can rely on, someone that is willing to fight for their honor and that will fight the villain along side them. All the heroes or heroines fight for love and are usually determined to get the girl or boy of their dreams, despite adversity. The prince from *Ash Girl*, a darker adaptation of *Cinderella* written by the Grimm brothers, is very persistent. When he realised that Ash girl stepsisters deceived him he brought them back to their house and insists that they bring him the only girl left in the house. The parents are reluctant and doubtful whether to bring Ash girl to the prince, since she is no one important. The prince, however, insists that, important or not, she is still to try on the golden shoe (Grimm, 28-29). Edmund Bertram is Fanny's love interest. He is the person that encourages her to explore what life has to offer and helps her grow to be a strong person that is willing to fight those who try to demean her. He sacrifices many things for her, e.g. he gives her his horse and offers to stay behind in Mansfield Park so Fanny can visit the Sotherton estate. Edmund is willing to fight for Fanny and often insists that Fanny deserves better care and attention from her aunts. He fights on Fanny's behalf when she cannot defend herself. However, it takes Edmund many months to see Fanny as a love interest because he loves someone else and is being manipulated by her beauty and charm. Fairy tale romances always have hurdles to overcome before a happy

ending can be achieved. The main love interest must go through changes e.g. being set free from an evil spell that has been cast on him by the love rival of his or her true love (Bottigheimer, 95).

Cinderella's victory lies in her triumph over her wicked stepmother. She marries the prince and becomes a princess. There is no one to abuse her anymore and she is finally content with her life (Perrault, 21). Fanny's fairy tale ending is marrying the man of her dreams. Edmund might not be the heir of Mansfield Park, but he is Fanny's true love. Fanny does not become an heiress of Mansfield Park but she does become a chief authority in the family, and the daughter Sir Thomas always wanted, especially after Julia and Maria deliberately disgrace the family name. Julia elopes with a man her father disapproves of and Maria, a married woman, has a scandalous affair. Maria moves away to a foreign land taking Mrs. Norris with her, leaving Fanny to finally be happy (Fleishman, 68).

III. Fanny Price as Cinderella

Fanny Price is a small, scared girl when she arrives at Mansfield Park. Her new surroundings intimidate her. In the beginning she is very homesick and often cries when she is alone. She misses her family, especially her older brother, William. She wishes he were there to comfort her and save her from loneliness. Cinderella cries when her mother dies, and she weeps for her every day.

In movies and novels that have a *Cinderella* theme, the heroine is always the envy of everyone: Cinderella for her beauty, patience and kindness, and Fanny for having being given such a great opportunity. When Cinderella's father marries again, her stepsisters and stepmother treat her unkindly. She is not allowed to eat or sit among them. Cinderella is made to sleep on a straw bed while her stepsisters sleep in comfortable beds. Similarly, Fanny is allowed to have the "little white attic that is close by the housemaid" (Austen, 10). The room is small and impersonal and she can only have a small fire to warm her bedroom. She is excluded from any family activities and always feels that she is an outsider rather than a family member (Copeland, 140).

Cinderella is verbally abuse by her stepmother and stepsisters without the knowledge of her father (Perrault, 16). Fanny's cousins, Maria and Julia, along with her aunt Mrs. Norris, deprecate her lack of intelligence and her poor background, and

Mrs. Norris always reminds Fanny that her role in the family is to comply with their requests without objection. During every social gathering Fanny is left behind to entertain her two aunts, Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram. Similarly, Cinderella is excluded from any social gathering. Although Cinderella is part of the family, she is not allowed to attend the ball. Cinderella's stepmother's and stepsisters' behavior towards her is similar to Mrs. Norris's attitude towards Fanny. Mrs. Norris behavior to her niece is unfair and cruel, yet Fanny cannot do anything about it. The only thing she can do to help herself is to try not to listen and to ignore her aunt's negative remarks as best as she can. Cinderella's father is unaware of his wife and stepdaughters' hostile behavior towards Cinderella. However, he does not worry himself or ask any questions about why Cinderella does not attend the royal ball with them (Perrault, 17), just as Sir Thomas does not question why Fanny is depressed after arriving at Mansfield Park.

Cinderella never dreams of wealth and fortune, she only wants happiness and love. What makes Fanny a typical Cinderella is that she and Cinderella share similar backgrounds and are both rejected by their families. Cinderella is described as a person who is full of goodness and who has a forgiving heart (Bottigheimer, 68). Mrs. Norris's and the Bertrams' neglect is what shapes Fanny's morality, as well as Edmund teaching her the difference between right and wrong. She sees her cousins, the Crawfords' and Mrs. Norris's unethical behavior as something that they cannot help. Cinderella never complains when she is given chores and she is expected to clean for her family. She is patient with their commands and is attentive to their needs. When her stepsisters are getting ready for the ball, Cinderella makes sure that they look elegant (Perrault, 17). Fanny is somewhat like Cinderella. She is patient with people's ignorance and stupidity. When her cousins are at social function she is left behind and reads for Lady Bertram or does some housework that Mrs. Norris has already supplied her with, and in the play, her role is to help Mrs. Norris sew the costumes and help the actors remember their lines and, although she feels that it goes against her uncle's rules, she still does it to avoid an argument (Austen, 138).

Cinderella and Fanny portray the beauty of innocence and both characters illustrate the naïve and timid behavior of a helpless heroine before dramatically turning their lives about (Bottigheimer, 12).

IV. The Prince: Edmund Bertram

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *Prince Charming* as a: “man who is handsome, brave, polite, etc., and would be a perfect husband or boyfriend”. Born as the second child of Sir Thomas Bertram and Lady Maria W. Bertram he is the second in line to inherit Mansfield Park. He is thoughtful, caring, and has a gentle heart that hates to see people suffer. Upon arriving in Mansfield Park, Fanny feels excluded and vulnerable. Her new surroundings scare her and she has no one to turn too. Edmund is the only person to take notice of Fanny’s suffering. He helps Fanny become acquainted with everyone and makes sure that his family welcomes her with open arms, and treats her positively. Edmund is the only family member that has the decency to get to know Fanny personally, asking her about her siblings, her parents and so on:

You are sorry to leave Mamma, my dear little Fanny,” said he, “which shews you to be a very good girl; but you must remember that you are with relations and friends, who all love you, and wish to make you happy. Let us walk out in the park, and you shall tell me all about your brother and sisters. (Austen, 14-15)

All Edmund wants to do is help others no matter what the consequences are. It is no wonder Mary and Fanny fall in love with him and fight for his attention. As the younger brother, Edmund cannot inherit Mansfield Park and the wealth that comes with it and must choose a profession that can provide him with a stable income in the future for himself and for his potential wife (Fleishman, 59).

The princes in fairy tales are always reliable and disciplined. Women often swoon over them as they pass by. At the Royal ball, before Cinderella arrives, the women fight for the prince’s attention. The stepsisters buy new dresses for the occasion and behave like sophisticated ladies, and even princesses from other lands travel long distances hoping that the prince might fall in love with them at first sight (Perrault, 18). Edmund is a reliable person that has two women vying for his attention. His principles and moral beliefs are something Mary and Fanny admire. Mary tries to charm him with her witty personality while Fanny stays loyal to him. Edmund is the man that Mary can picture herself marrying and enjoying domestic bliss with, something she had not expected to happen, whereas Fanny has been in love

with him since the beginning. The way Edmund treats people reflects the adoration of these two women (Fleishman, 59).

Edmund sees Fanny as the little sister that he has taken care of since she arrived in Mansfield Park. A sister that he has encouraged to broaden her mind and to think differently and unconventionally. He has not only taught her to expand her creativeness but also to stand up for herself when others put her down. Edmund does not hesitate to defend her honor against those that mistreat her. When Mrs. Norris abuses Fanny in front of everybody he stands up for her without any hesitation:

Do not urge her Madam, said Edmund, - It is not fair to urge her in this manner.
- You see she does not like to act. - Let her chuse for herself as well as the rest of us. - Her judgment may be quite as safely trusted. - Do not urge her anymore. (Austen, 122)

Although, Edmund is the perfect example of a moral man, he still makes mistakes. From the moment Mary Crawford arrives in Mansfield Park he is bewitched by her personality and has difficulty defining right from wrong. Edmund allows Mary to ride whenever she pleases without considering the harm that it will cause Fanny, who already makes use of one of his horses. Fanny's lack of daily exercise, due to not being able to ride, causes her health to wane. It is not until Mrs. Norris points out to Edmund that Fanny's lack of health is due to his own negligence, by depriving her the horse she needs for her exercise, that he realizes what he has done. He then tries to make it up to her by persuading his mother to let Fanny go to Sotherton (Wright, 131).

Cinderella's prince has difficulty finding her whereabouts due to the fact that Cinderella's family tries to hide her from the world, and because her appearance and looks are different from the night before (Perrault, 21). Edmund sees Fanny her as a sister. It is not until the end that he sees Fanny in a different light after he realises what kind of a woman he wants to marry due to Mary's immoral behavior.

Cinderella's slipper saves her, as without it the prince would never have found her. Fanny's morality represents her glass slipper, as without it Edmund would probably have continued to regard her as a sister:

Scarcely had he done regretting Mary Crawford, and observing to Fanny how impossible it was that he should ever meet with such another woman, before it began to strike him whether a very different kind of woman might do just as well - or a great deal better; whether Fanny herself were not growing as dear, as important to him in all her smiles, and all her ways, as Mary Crawford had ever

been; and whether it might not be a possible, an hopeful undertaking to persuade her that her warm and sisterly regard for him would be foundation enough for wedded love. (Austen, 387)

V. The Scoundrel: Henry Crawford

Henry is not Fanny's main love interest but rather someone who distracts Fanny away from Edmund. Henry Crawford comes from a wealthy family. He is raised mainly by his uncle, and he has two sisters, Mary and Mrs. Grant. He is a flirt and likes being the centre of attention. Before meeting Fanny, he cares little for her and only sees her as the girl who tags along with her cousins. However, when he gets to know her better he sees that she is different. Henry realises that she is not only passionate but also intelligent, warm and full of strength. She is unlike any other girl that he has flirted with. Henry suddenly wants to be a better man. Marrying Fanny will give him the opportunity to be a better version of himself, but Fanny rejects his proposal. She knows what kind of a person he is and the thought of marrying someone that lives in an immoral way is unthinkable. Henry is self-centered and Fanny's rejection is something he finds difficult to accept. He cannot bear to think that Fanny, who comes from a poor family, would reject a wealthy man who is willing to sacrifice everything for her. He hopes that by showing her his gentle and caring side she might change her mind.

It is not Henry's intention to fall in love with Fanny. At first all he wants is to kill time while he is in Mansfield Park. When Julia and Maria leave Mansfield Park he has plenty of free time and since Fanny is the only eligible young girl present and he decides to flirt with her to boost his self-centered ego. However, his plan backfires. Instead of getting his ego hurt he finds her rejection alluring and tempting. Henry feels that she challenges his superiority and intelligence. Fanny is a very humble person who only wants the best for the people she cares about. Henry finds this very attractive. To make Fanny accept his proposal he decides he must understand her. He judges that he cannot just start flirting with Fanny like he always does and hope that it will produce a good outcome. Henry concludes he must find her weakness and study that. Fanny's brother is one of Fanny's weaknesses. William is a naval officer hoping to be a lieutenant someday. Henry uses his connection to help William get promoted to a lieutenant in the hopes that Fanny will see his good side. Admiration is what

Henry seeks. To see Fanny admire William gives him a pang of jealousy. The attention and admiration that she shows her brother, without expecting anything in return, makes Henry wonder about the feelings that must accompany her behavior. Henry wants to be admired like that without being expecting to give something in return. Fanny's unselfishness behavior is what Henry's find attractive. Henry grew up in a house where compassion and caring were both absent. He believes that Fanny's selfless behavior and gentle heart will finally give him the happiness that he deserves (Austen, 269).

In a true love story the scoundrel always falls for the leading lady. Fanny brought out the gentle side of Henry and he becomes considerate and serious about life. She gave him an opportunity to make something of himself and in return Henry wants to free her from the neglect her family shows her. Fanny is the typical damsel in distress that needs rescuing and someone to make her happy. He tells Mary:

Maria and Julia will now see their cousin treated as she ought to be and I wish they may be heartily ashamed of their own abominable neglect and unkindness.

Yes, Mary, my Fanny will feel different indeed: A daily, hourly difference, in the behavior of every being who approach her (Austin, 245).

Henry wants to redeem himself in Fanny's eyes by doing what he can to make her happy: "It will be the completion of my happiness to know that I am the doer of it, that I am the person to give the consequence so justly her due," (Austen, 245). Fanny is the only one has that given his life meaning. All his life everything has been given to him without his earning it in just manner. Fanny gives him a purpose in life. He no longer wants a woman that can only give him short-term happiness, but rather a woman that will give him happiness for eternity.

VI. The Prince and the Scoundrel: Edmund vs. Henry

Edmund and Henry combined are Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* by Austen. Henry is the arrogant, selfish and obnoxious side of Mr. Darcy and Edmund is the gently and compassionate side of him (Simpson, n.p). These two men are opposite to one another and have very different priorities in life. Edmund, knowing he cannot inherit Mansfield Park, chooses the academic path in order to secure a good life for himself, while Henry uses his money to get ahead in life. They are the best of both worlds in Fanny's life. These men help Fanny achieve her goal in life by making her

and her family happy. Edmund gives her encouragement to take risks in life and Henry makes William's dream come true by helping him become a lieutenant.

Henry is the modern literature bad boy prince whom every women reader falls in love with due to his handsomeness and his arrogant behavior. He comes off as mysterious and emotionally unavailable. Every romance novel where the leading male character is repulsive, sexist and egotistical in the beginning sees him redeem himself in the end, when the female heroine shows him the meaning of what true love and happiness is (Mauro, n.p). Henry is an early example of this pattern. He is the bad boy that wants to be the good guy to get the girl he loves. In fact, Henry has always been the good guy but does not really know how to show it. He was raised by his uncle, who mistreated women and saw them only as objects that could be bought with money. Instead of simply showing Fanny that he is more than just a man that does not know what he wants in life, he instead showers her with unwanted attention by offering to help her and her family. He believes that by giving her material things, she will give him the benefit of the doubt. In *Ever After* (1998), a *Cinderella* adaptation, the Prince resembles Henry. They are both obnoxious and selfish and believe that the universe revolves around them. Cinderella changes the prince's bad boy image to that of a person that cares for his people and the less fortunate. Henry could have been the perfect man for Fanny, but due to his unethical behavior he loses that chance.

Princes are supposed to be kind and loving, and supportive to those they care about. Edmund is the perfect prince. Henry only shows his kindness when he realises he wants Fanny. Edmund, however, has always been there for her, not because she is available but because he cares for her happiness and knows that she deserves only the best life. Both in the Perrault version and in the Disney's adaptation of Cinderella, the prince does not appear until the end, and the only description the viewers and readers are given is that he is handsome, kind, and that he falls in love with Cinderella at first sight. Edmund's sudden attraction to Fanny mirrors the attraction the prince has when Cinderella enters the ball nervously. He takes her hand and never lets go of her (Austen, 230). Edmund is the perfect candidate for Fanny because of his moral and selfless behavior to those that are near and dear to him.

If Henry had not committed adultery with Maria, Fanny's cousin and a married woman, he could have married Fanny, but his urge to be wanted and needed got the better of him. The excitement of having an affair with a married woman was much more fun than being a good man to a good woman that might or might not

marry him. He could have been the better version of himself. At first, he tries his best to avoid temptation, but in the end his desires win him over. Edmund is not perfect. He has done some things wrong that he is not proud of and regrets, for example, when he participates in a play that he objects to, and when he forgets about Fanny's needs, however, he always redeems himself by doing something good for her. He feels guilty every time he does something bad, whereas Henry does not. Henry's impulses always get him into trouble. Henry cannot see the consequences of his behavior. He thinks it is acceptable to manipulate and hurt people as long as it gives him entertainment. Edmund is different. When he realizes that Mary is not the girl for him he regrets falling for her, and confesses to Fanny that he was blinded by her beauty and charm. Edmund knows the difference between right and wrong and tries to be a good man, one that he can be proud of being. His sympathetic nature makes him the kind of man the heroine, Fanny, deserves.

VII. The Cunning Miss Mary Crawford

Mary Crawford is not like one of the evil stepsisters in *Cinderella* or in *The Glass Slipper*. She is not hideous, talentless or malicious; instead she is friendly, charming, playful and kind. She is cast as the nemesis to Fanny, as the one who catches Edmund's affection and prevents him from falling for the heroine. However, Mary's ego stops her from becoming the potential wife of the male protagonist.

Mary does have some of the same traits as the evil stepsisters however. The stepsisters in *The Glass Slipper* adaptation from Disney's *Cinderella* to *Ever After* are represented as shallow and self-absorbed. Mary is similar to the evil stepsisters in this regard. She likes to be admired. Admiration from both men and women feeds her self-centered ego. Mary is very manipulative and always gets what she wants. She does not think of the consequences of her behavior, unless it can benefit her. When Mary convinces Fanny to accept one of her necklaces without informing her that it is a gift from Henry, Fanny exclaims: "Do you mean, then, that your brother knew of the necklace beforehand? Oh! Miss Crawford, that was not fair" (Austen, 300). When Edmund is adamant he will not participate in their play, Mary persuades him to do so, arguing that as a future clergyman there is no other man to play Anhalt than him: "If any part could tempt you to act, I suppose it would be Anhalt, for he is a future clergyman, you know" (Austen, 121). Mary and Henry are very much alike in

personality. They know what they want and how to get it. The siblings like to help each other out by deceiving those that they can benefit from, for instance, Mary directs Mr. Rushworth's attention towards something else so that Henry can flirt with Maria. She also helps Henry in his attempt to make Fanny love him, by making Henry look like a good man (Austen, 300-301).

The stepsisters in every *Cinderella* film and novel always have the best of everything. They have never been deprived of anything, and usually get the things they desire. Their mother prepares them for a future where they will marry into wealth and be spoilt for the rest of their lives. The women at Mansfield Park do not have any expectations of becoming doctors or lawyers' wives. All they want to do is go to balls and hope that some wealthy men will take notice and marry them. The women see material possessions as the means to a happy life. Mary is smart and independent but her ambitions are very simplistic. She is raised solely by her aunt and is taught that to make herself happy she must find someone that has a stable income and can provide her with the material things she desires from life. Love has nothing to do with happiness; marriage is a job and people seek partners to help them get ahead in life. Mary's idea of happiness is to be wealthier than she is: "I mean to be too rich to lament or to feel any thing of the sort. A large income is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of" (Austen, 177). Mary thinks that she has finally found a man to marry but when she finds out that Edmund wants to be a clergyman she is shocked and disappointed. She hopes that although Edmund will not inherit Mansfield Park, he might pursue a respectable career in the future, since a man that has a good family background and connections can easily become a lawyer or get into parliament. Mary looks down on people that are less fortunate than her, and also believes that if their profession does not benefit them, then it is worthless. Mary's view of clergymen is that they can never be "high in state" or "fashion" (Austen, 77). Mary is very much in love with Edmund, although she tries her best to hide it, so she tries to manipulate him, and to make him change his mind about his chosen profession by demeaning it, because she really wants to be with him.

Mary likes to deceive people through showing kindness and making thoughtful gestures. Margaret, one of Cinderella's stepsisters in *Ever After* is very kind to Queen to show her good side but in reality she is cunning, deceitful and a liar. She treats Danielle, the girl that portrays Cinderella, her servants and those that are less fortunate badly and she despises the thought that Danielle has caught the attention

of the Prince. Mary is like Margaret. She is kind to people when she is with them, but then gossips about them behind their backs:

Mrs. Fraser has been my intimate friend for years but I have the least inclination to go near her. I can only think of the friends I am leaving: my excellent sister, yourself and the Bertrams in general. You have also much more heart among you than one finds in the world at large. You all give me a feeling of being able to trust and confide in you, which in common intercourse one knows nothing of. (Austen, 297-98)

Mary says that Fanny is like a littler sister to her and that she can never think ill of her, that Fanny's generosity and kindness towards her can never be repaid, and that she will always cherish their time together. She says she cannot even wait until Fanny officially accepts Henry's proposal, but when Henry has an affair, Mary blames it entirely in Fanny. She claims that if Fanny has accepted Henry's proposal in the first place, the scandal would never have taken place:

Why would not she have him? It is all her fault. Simple girl! – I shall never forgive her. Had she accepted him as she ought, they might now have been on the point of marriage, and Henry would have been too happy and too busy to want any other object. (Austen, 376)

Mary considers Fanny as one of her best friends, but when Henry declares to her his love for Fanny and his intention of marrying her, Mary is shocked. Mary has difficulty accepting Henry's decision, not because her concern for Fanny, but rather because of concern for Henry: that he will never be able to extend his wealth in the future.

Cinderella's stepsisters always present themselves with pride and dignity. They do not deceive people with their beauty, but mainly through their kindness. Mary Crawford is not a bad person but her capacity in understanding ethical behavior is limited. She believes that by being kind to people she associates with can get her ahead in life. Mary's downfall is her choices. When she wants something she goes and gets it no matter what the consequences are. It does not matter if she will lose friends or allies, as long as it gives her an advantage in society.

VIII. The Cruel Mrs. Norris

Mrs. Norris is a selfish and cruel woman. She only cares for herself and for the Bertram family. Fanny is her niece and her feelings towards Fanny are somewhat cold.

and heartless. Mrs. Norris is childless and takes pride in her two nieces, Maria and Julia. She adores them and will do anything for them. She is like the evil stepmother who despises Cinderella but loves her daughters dearly. The stepmother believes that Cinderella's kindness and beauty will overshadow her own daughters. Fanny is not described as beautiful in the novel. She is plain and simple, but Mrs. Norris still feels that Fanny's presence is threatening, so she uses negative remarks to remind Fanny where her place is among the family. Mrs. Norris is the antagonist of the novel and is judgmental of those who she believes threaten the upper class, e.g. Fanny and William.

In the beginning of the film *Cinderella* (1950), the narrator explains that the stepmother is kind to Cinderella. She is jealous of Cinderella's beauty but hides it until Cinderella's father dies, at which point her true nature is revealed. In comparison, Mrs. Norris is glad that she can help raise one of her sister Frances Prince's children. She feels that it is her obligation to help her sister, despite their fallout and even convinces Sir Thomas of her idea. Fanny will live in Mansfield Park and will get the same education as her cousins, but Sir Thomas and Mrs. Norris make a compromise regarding Fanny, in that Sir Thomas will provide her with education and living expenses, as long as Mrs. Norris takes in Fanny's care. When Mr. Norris dies, Mrs. Norris refuses to take Fanny with her to her cottage. She claims that she is too poor and weak to take care of a teenager:

Fanny live with me! the last thing in the world for me to think of, or for any body to wish that really knows us both. Good heaven! what could I do with

Fanny? – Me! a poor helpless forlorn widow, unfit for any thing. (Austen, 25)

Mrs. Norris's intention from the start is that Sir Thomas will provide Fanny with all the living expenses and she will take all the credit and praise from people regarding how lucky Fanny is to have such a thoughtful aunt like her - after all it was her idea.

When Sir Thomas leaves for Antigua, Mrs. Norris becomes the superior figure at Mansfield Park, taking control over everything. She even finds Maria a suitable suitor, even though Maria can do better. No one wants to disagree with Mrs. Norris except Edmund, who believes that his father is better suited to find Maria a match. Mrs. Norris's does not like anyone challenging her authority. At times she feels Edmund's persistence in allowing Fanny to have everything is annoying. She believes that Fanny does not deserve the things she requires. The description of Cinderella's stepmother is that she makes selfish choices to help her daughters if it helps them to

achieve the goals she has set for them. In *Ever After*, the stepmother goes great lengths to get one of her daughters the chance to be admired by the prince and his parents. She lies, steals and even commits forgery, just so her daughter can have a chance of marrying a prince. In Disney's adaptation of *Cinderella* (1950), the stepmother buys her daughters the best dress money can buy for the ball. Their ball gowns are colorful and make them stand out from the crowd. Mrs. Norris is secretly manipulative just like Cinderella's stepmother. People see her as a helpless widow that only wants good things for those whom she cares about, but her treatment towards Fanny is unjustified. She treats strangers better than her own niece. In *The Glass Slipper* by Perrault, and Disney's *Cinderella* (1950) the stepmothers are cunning. Mrs. Norris is as cunning as they are. The stepmothers give Cinderella false hope that she can go to the ball if she finishes all her chores. On the surface Mrs. Norris is a kind woman that will do anything for her family and is even willing to sacrifice her leisure time to help her sister, Lady Bertram, and her family while Sir Thomas is away. Mrs. Norris is an actor that plays her part well and to those who do not know her she comes off as selfless.

Mrs. Norris marries a reverend with a thousand pounds a year. They were not blessed with children so she becomes the nurturer to her two nieces. She cherishes them as if they were her own. In a way, she envies both Lady Bertram and Fanny - Lady Bertram for marrying a wealthy man and having children, and Fanny for having the chance of a better life. Fanny is given a better education and is considered important in the Bertram family. She has the opportunity to have more than her mother or Mrs. Norris. She can marry someone respectable with a stable income due to her connections. Mrs. Norris despises the thought that Fanny can do better than her in life. When she feels that everyone is kind to Fanny she objects. She thinks that Fanny does not deserve that kind of treatment because her low status does not give her that entitlement. One such instance is the horse incident, when Edmund argues that Fanny needs a horse not just for pleasure but also for health issues (Wiltshire, 60).

Fanny becomes the center of attention after Maria and Julia leave Mansfield Park. She finally gets caring admiration from Sir Thomas, and the Grants even invite her for a dinner party. Mrs. Norris is outraged that Sir Thomas offers Fanny the carriage to attend the dinner party when she can easily walk, and she is even more horrified that he throws a ball in Fanny's honor: "She saw decision in his looks, and

her surprise and vexation required some minute silence to be settled into composure. A ball at such time! His daughters absent and herself not consulted” (Austen, 209). The thought that Fanny, who is below her in social status, is being admired like Maria and Julia, prompt her to remind Fanny that although she is being treated kindly, does not make her someone important:

The nonsense and folly of people’s stepping out of their rank and trying to appear above themselves, make me think it right to give *you* a hint, Fanny, now that you are going into company without any of us; and I do beseech and intreat you not to be putting yourself forward, and talking and giving your opinion as if you were one of your cousins – as if you were dear Mrs. Rushworth or Julia.

That will never do, believe me. Remember, wherever you are, you must be the lowest and the last. (Austen, 184)

Mrs. Norris’s attitude to her own niece is merely out of jealousy. She does not consider her treatment as unfair since Fanny’s poor family background is below her own social status. Cinderella’s stepmother is jealous of her beauty so she makes her work the dirtiest and most difficult chores in order to hide her beauty. Mrs. Norris feels that it is necessary to show Fanny that her life will not change just because people around her care for her. When Fanny complains of any sickness, Mrs. Norris rejects her views and often tells her to stop complaining and continue the chores she is required to finish. Mrs. Norris often objects that Fanny does not need a fire in the former schoolroom since her nieces Maria and Julia are not using it (Middleton, 20). Mrs. Norris believes that Fanny does not deserve good things in life unless it will benefit her or her two nieces.

IX. Sir Thomas Bertram: The Caring and Thoughtful Uncle

Jane Austen presents Sir Thomas with different set of values. He possesses the moral characteristic of generosity towards others, love of his family, adherence to duty, order, and reason as well as being a pragmatic man who wishes to increase his wealth, refine his social connections and gratify his social ego (Muse, n.p.): “Sir Thomas Bertram had interest, which, from principle as well as pride, from a general wish of doing right, and a desire of seeing all that were connected with him in situations of respectability [...]” (Austen, 3).

Finding one word to describe Sir Thomas's behavior towards Fanny is difficult since his character is somewhat complex. In the beginning, he opposes the idea of Fanny moving in with them because of her lack of education:

We must not, for our children's sake, continue her in the family; but there is no reason to expect so great an evil. We shall probably see much to wish altered in her, and must prepare ourselves for gross ignorance, some meanness of opinions and very distressing vulgarity of manner; but these are not incurable thoughts – nor, I trust, can they be dangerous for her associates. (Austen, 10)

His concerns are full of prejudice and he believes that Fanny is a threat to his daughters through her immoral behavior. He thinks that Fanny's poor upbringing will pollute their minds. Sir Thomas is skeptical about the responsibility of raising his niece without neglecting his principal values towards his own children. He is adamant that she must realize that she is not and will never be one of the Bertrams:

As to the distinction proper to be made between the girls as they grow up: how to preserve in the minds of my *daughters* the consciousness of what they are, without making them think too lowly of their cousins; and how, without depressing her spirits too far to make her remember that she is not a *Miss Bertram*, but still they cannot be equals. Their rank, fortune, rights, and expectations, will always be different. (Austen, 11)

Everyone is petrified of Sir Thomas: his wife, his own children and even Mrs. Norris. They often tiptoe around him when he is around. The strict patriarchal values he sets for his family are what keeps the family intact. Fanny is scared of him, though she wishes it were not the case since she views him as a father figure (Muse, n.p.): “Sir Thomas, who had done so much for her and her brothers, and who was gone perhaps never to return! That she should see him go without a tear! – it was a shameful insensibility” (Austen, 29). Sir Thomas is a replica of the father figure in Charles Perrault's *The Glass Slipper*. The father in Perrault's tale does not care for Cinderella and shows more affection for his stepdaughters than for his own daughter. He probably would not even notice if she went missing. In a way, Sir Thomas is very similar. He knows Fanny is there but does not really care. It is not actually until he returns from Antigua that he becomes a caring father to Fanny. The father in the Disney adaption is caring and is willing to do everything for his daughter, including marrying a woman with two daughters just so Cinderella can have a mother figure who can nurture her. Sir Thomas changes from a strict father to a caring and

thoughtful father, attentive to his children feelings. Sir Thomas's caring side mirrors the love that Cinderella's father (1950) shows her daughter before he dies.

After arriving in Antigua he no longer behaves as a strict father, but as a nurturing one. He is more considerate of his niece's and his children's needs and often worries about them. Sir Thomas even throws a ball in Fanny and William's honor. Fanny is no longer deprived of nice things. He buys her a dress for Maria's wedding and insists that Fanny use the carriage to attend Mr. and Mrs. Grant's dinner invitation. These material objects are very similar to those, which the fairy godmother provides Cinderella. Fanny never expects that one day she will marry Edmund and be part of a family. However, not only does she become the daughter Sir Thomas always wanted, but she triumphs over her aunt who always emphasized that Fanny would always remain "lowest" and the "last" (Fleishman, 62).

Fanny was indeed the daughter that he wanted. His charitable kindness had been rearing a prime comfort for himself. His liberality had a rich repayment, and the general goodness of his intentions by her, deserved it. He might have made her childhood happier; but it had been an error of judgment only which had given him the appearance of harshness, and deprived him of her early love; and now, on really knowing each other, their mutual attachment became very strong.

(Austen, 389)

The King seeks a caring and thoughtful daughter for his son. He finds it in Cinderella. Sir Thomas finds it in Fanny. Fanny remains humble in spite of everything she has gone through and never shows any bitterness towards him and his family, only great respect and gratitude (Fleishman, 62).

X. Conclusion

Fanny never dreamt of marrying someone respectable. Her parents are poor and the only connections she has are those of her relatives, the Bertrams. Mrs. Norris sees her as a burden, although, it is her idea to help her get educated. She thinks that Fanny is ungrateful for the opportunity that they have provided for her. The family often neglects and excludes Fanny and when in their company she often feels that she is unimportant. However, Fanny can always count on Edmund to help her through everything: to make her smile and cheer her up when she is down. After the arrival of Henry and Mary Crawford she participates more in her cousins' daily gatherings and when Sir Thomas arrives back from Antigua she becomes part of the social and daily activities of the family. From then onwards, Fanny is no longer excluded and is often asked to be part of social functions outside of Mansfield Park. Suddenly, she becomes someone important to everyone, despite Mrs. Norris's objection that she is not supposed to be treated equally and does everything in her power to shatter Fanny's confidence, Fanny still manages to triumph over her.

All the characters in *Mansfield Park* have money and beauty, but they cannot buy integrity, something that they lack. Fanny's advantage is that she does not have any high expectations in life due to the fact that Mrs. Norris has very often emphasized that she will remain low and the last among her relatives, and the changed behavior of Sir Thomas and the Crawfords towards her, did not make her change. Her values and morals are still the same. Henry's attention, care and affection for her did not give her hope that he would change his immoral ways, and while she hopes and dreams that Edmund will see her as more than a sister, she is not optimistic. Her expectation in becoming part of the family is little to none. Fanny does not dream big. She hopes that maybe in the future that she can be happy and that everyone around her will be happy. She is a selfless character like Cinderella, who did not wish for a prince or wealth, but for happiness and love. When Fanny marries Edmund, she becomes the chief authority at Mansfield Park. She finally has the approval of Sir Thomas, and the people who are mean to her are excluded from Mansfield Park. Finally, by becoming part of the family, Fanny gets to live happily ever after.

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