



Illustration by Juliet McMaster

"Dear Abby:" Letters Jane Left Out

Herewith the results of Group Discussions at our September Regional Meeting where groups were asked to compose a letter from their assigned character stating his/her problem to an advice columnist like Dear Abby.

Q How would Marianne ask for advice for dealing with rejection by her one true love?

Group # 1

Dear Abby,

I cannot play. I cannot eat. I am without hope. My beloved (whom I will call Willow the Wisp) even refused my hand when I offered it to him. I have heard he plans to marry an heiress and has an illegitimate child with a second woman. I still worship him. No one can understand my anguish.

What can I do?

Signed

Forlorn

Group # 3

- Dear Abby,
 - My life is over.
 - I can't eat or sleep or play the piano.
 - The only man I could ever love is marrying someone else.
- I would have died for him.
This is worse than *Clarissa*.
Shall I go to a convent?
Or shall I devote myself to my mother and sisters?

Signed

Desperate

Q How would Fanny Dashwood ask for advice in dealing with her greedy in-laws preying on her husband's feelings of guilt?

Group # 2

Dear Abby,

How can I prevent my husband's generous heart from being exploited by grasping in-laws' unending demands? He believes that a deathbed promise he acquiesced to requires a huge diminution of our capital resources in these difficult times. How can I prevent greedy relations from taking the very linen and china from our closets?

Group # 10

Dear Abby,

My poor dear husband has been given the thankless task and responsibility of providing for three sisters of half-blood and their grasping mother, who is no relation at all. This is an inheritance intended for my son, Harry. My son will inherit a great responsibility and will require all that is rightly due to him by law and custom. How can I protect my dear husband from his overgenerous spirit? I earnestly seek your wisdom.

Q How would Colonel Brandon ask for advice for captivating a much younger woman on the rebound?

Group # 4

Dear Abby,

Although one does not reveal one's personal affairs, however, on behalf of an acquaintance, how does one capture the attentions of a beautiful, obstinate young woman? (*Who gave you my name? I would never ask such a question.*)

Q How would Edward Ferrars ask advice on dissolving, with honor, an onerous engagement?

Group # 6

Dear Abby,

Unfortunately when I was but a lad, I contracted an alliance with a young girl with whom I believed myself in love. In the heat of the moment, I took no account of my future circumstances. At this time, upon more mature reflection and after having now met another young lady of extraordinary qualities and character – I find a pressing need to solicit your advice as to how I might honorably extricate myself from my ill-conceived prior engagement.

Please reply instantly to me at efferrars@aol.com or you may text me at (801) 216-1775.

Your obedient and anxious servant.

Edward F.

Group # 8

Dear Abby,

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my humble letter. I find myself in an unfortunate predicament, which started four years ago, when I was young and impressionable and not as discriminating as I am now. What do I do? I am sure you can advise me in my dire circumstances. I seem to be engaged to the wrong woman and I need some guidance to remove myself honorably from my current misfortunes without compromising the lady in question or my esteemed mother.

Sincerely yours,

Torn in Town

Q How would Lucy Steele ask advice for justifying keeping one brother interested whilst she explores the possible advantages of a liaison with his brother?

Group # 7

Dear Abby,

You who understand so much must tell me what to do.

I am engaged to a man I no longer love. I love his brother. What shall I do? The man to whom I was betrothed lost everything to his brother. What shall I do? What will they think of me?

Group # 9

Dear Abby,

When I was young and naïve, I became secretly engaged to a determined young suitor who persuaded me to agree to an extended and clandestine engagement against the wishes of his family. Now, however, the situation has changed. He has announced his desire to become a clergyman. I feel that I am not worthy to be a fit helpmate to a clergyman and am questioning my decision to become his wife. I do have to think not only of myself but also of my obligations to my unmarried sister and other family. Would it not be my duty to consider at this time making the sacrifice of transferring my affections to his younger brother for the good of all?

Q How would John Willoughby ask advice for continuing a relationship with one woman whilst married to another?"

Group # 5

He would not ask for advice – he would just go ahead and DO IT.

Of all the characters in the book, why did we get *Willoughby*?