



The Women's Print History Project

Of Monks and Mountains!!!, *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*

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Of Monks and Mountains!!!

Kate Moffatt and Kandice Sharren



Halloween is nearly upon us, and the time has come to gather round the (socially distanced) fire and swap scary stories. In this spirit, hosts Kate Moffatt and Kandice Sharren each chose, for better or for worse, a gothic novel to read from the WPHP: Elisabeth Guénard’s *The Three Monks!!!* and Catherine Cuthbertson’s *Romance of the Pyrenees*.^{*} Both published in 1803, these works respond directly to the gothic mode popularized during the 1790s, complete with abducted women, banditti, and buried family secrets.

This month’s episode “Of Monks and Mountains!!!” follows the winding plots and publication histories of these two largely forgotten works, which raise questions about genre, translation, readership, punctuation (!!!), and more. Join us—if you dare.

^{*}Please note that *Romance of the Pyrenees* contains a representation of a character in blackface. Although we touch on it in the episode, we wanted to note it again here, with additional framing. Because this representation predates the widespread practice of minstrelsy that was popularized in the United States and Britain in the 1830s, the novel’s use of blackface is more interpretively unstable than a later representation would be. Scholarly debates about the use of blackface in relation to Frances Burney’s *The Wanderer* (1814), which opens with its heroine Juliet disguised as a Black woman, offers a useful starting point for understanding how to read Cuthbertson’s use of blackface. For example, whereas Sarah Salih has argued that the revelation of Juliet’s whiteness amounts to “racial erasure—both narrative and literal” (302), Tara Czechowski posits that “Juliet’s act of racial counterfeiting and her subsequent treatment by other

characters allow Burney to deliver in remarkable ways on the implicit promise made at the novel's start to address the status of expatriated Africans, black Caribbeans, and African Americans in England at the close of the eighteenth century" (678).

For further reading on this topic, the following sources are a good starting point:

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Romance of the Pyrenees (title)

Austen, Jane (person, author)

Northanger Abbey (title)

Parsons, Eliza (person, author)

Castle of Wolfenbach (title)

The Mysterious Warning (title)

Roche, Regina Maria (person, author)

Clermont (title)

Sleath, Eleanor (author, author)

Orphan of the Rhine (title)

Radcliffe, Anne (person, author)

The Mysteries of Udolpho (title)

The Italian (title)

Guenard, Elisabeth (person, author)

The Three Monks!!! (title)

Sarrett, H.J. (person, author)

Reeve, Clara (person, author)

The Old English Baron (title)

Dacre, Charlotte (person, author)
Zofloya (title)
Godwin, William (person, author)
Wollstonecraft, Mary (person, author)
Thomas Tegg (firm, publisher)
Robinson, Mary (person)
Vancenza (title)
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Further Reading

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00:00:00	🎵	[music playing]
00:00:14	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	“Near an hour she had sat in this situation, when a kind of liquid brightness caught her attention, which after a moment seemed to dart in oblique rays from behind one of the maps at the west end of the room. Although Victoria’s curiosity was powerfully awakened, she yet hesitated to approach it, until its continuing playfully to emit a diversity of colours convinced her that it was the rays of the departing sun, which by some means penetrated from behind that map: and she was induced to advance to the spot, to find out if possible how this was effected, and, when, to her utter dismay, she beheld, through a large opening in between the map and the wainscot, in a long gloomy kind of apartment, a human figure, close to the aperture, of a most elegant form, clad in flowing white drapery, kneeling by the side of a black coffin.
00:01:13	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	Half terrified and half ashamed at her intrusive curiosity, Victoria, without attempting to offend the elegant mourner by a second look, was retreating back to her seat, when her speed was suddenly arrested by the sight of a majestic figure slowly descending the staircase nearest to her. It was the figure of a knight completely cased in black armour. A huge black plume nodded in his casque, confined at bottom by an immense crescent, formed of brilliants of dazzling lustre.
00:01:44	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	His lance and shield were slung in his scarf; his arms were folded across his breast; and with head erect and solemn steps he moved in equal steady paces, in an undeviating line, from the staircase he had descended to the one at the other extremity of the room, up which he went with the same steady air of solemn grandeur; and in the darkness of the gallery his figure was soon lost: nor did a single sound betray his movements; for in all the time he had been visible to Victoria’s view, though she saw his firm tread, no sound of a footstep had reached her ears.”
00:02:24	🎵	[music playing]
00:02:36	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	Hello and welcome to <i>The WPHP Monthly Mercury</i> , the podcast for <i>The Women’s Print History Project</i> . The WPHP is a bibliographic database that collects information about women and book production during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. My name is Kate Moffatt—
00:02:51	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	and I’m Kandice Sharren—
00:02:52	Kate Moffatt	and we are long-time editors of the WPHP, and the hosts of this podcast. On the

	(co-host)	third Wednesday of every month, we'll introduce you to anecdotes, puzzles, and problems related to recovering evidence of women's involvement in print.
00:03:05		[music playing]
00:03:12	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	The passage that we opened this episode with, from Catherine Cuthbertson's 1803 novel, <i>Romance of the Pyrenees</i> , is an example of the kind of terrors that one might find in the so-called "horrid novels" that Isabella Thorpe recommends to Catherine Morland in Jane Austen's <i>Northanger Abbey</i> , first published in 1818.
00:03:32	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	The list of horrid novels, all published between 1793 and 1798 includes Eliza Parson's <i>Castle of Wolfenbach</i> and <i>The Mysterious Warning</i> , Regina Maria Roche's <i>Clermont</i> , Karl Friedrich Kahlert's <i>Necromancer of the Black Forest</i> , Francis Lathom's <i>The Midnight Bell</i> , Eleanor Sleath's <i>Orphan of the Rhine</i> , Carl Grosse's <i>Horrid Mysteries</i> , and, of course, Ann Radcliffe's <i>The Mysteries of Udolpho</i> and <i>The Italian</i> .
00:03:58	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	These are, of course, what we would now call gothic novels. Typified by apparently supernatural occurrences, castles, monks, ruins, caves, forests [Kate laughs], and banditti, gothic literature was widely considered to be precisely what <i>Northanger Abbey's</i> designation suggests: deliciously "horrid" and entertaining, and just the sort of thing that a young woman might find herself thrilled to read.
00:04:20	Kandice Sharren (co-host)	We found ourselves in that very position, in fact, when we decided we would each read a gothic novel for this Halloween themed episode: I read Catherine Cuthbertson's four-volume behemoth, <i>Romance of the Pyrenees</i> , and Kate read Elisabeth Guenard's <i>The Three Monks!!!</i> , translated by H.J. Sarrett. Note the three exclamation marks that have long made this title a WPHP team favourite—and subject of debate. How exactly are you supposed to articulate the punctuation here? Are you excited? Angry? How loudly should you shout about those three monks? [Kate laughs]
00:04:56	Kate Moffatt (co-host)	In today's episode, we are, quite frankly, <i>thrilled</i> to share these works with you and all the fun that we had reading them—and to delve into the gothic more generally. Before we get going, we want to note that "gothic" is not actually a genre in our database, largely because works that fit this descriptor during the period did not necessarily self-identify as "gothic," but there are other ways to find gothic works in the WPHP!
00:05:18	Kate Moffatt	We're going to share a brief history of the gothic mode, discuss just how we knew

- (co-host) *Romance of the Pyrenees* and *The Three Monks!!!* were gothic novels despite not having the term “gothic” in our data anywhere, take a little meander through both of our reading experiences and the contents of the *delightful*—would we call them delightful novels, Kandice?
- 00:05:37 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I’d call them long! At least mine was [Kate laughs].
- 00:05:40 Kate Moffatt (co-host) The *long* and delightful novels that we read—get ready for a little segment called “Kate & Kandice Summarize Long, Weird, & Occasionally Wonderful Early Nineteenth-Century Gothic Novels in 10 Minutes or Less.” First though we’ll chat a bit about various searching strategies you can use for finding gothic works in the WPHP. You, too, can find and read a wonderfully horrid eighteenth-century gothic novel just in time for Halloween!
- 00:06:03 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Of course, it’s worth noting that while the gothic mode is often associated with the gothic novel, specifically, it isn’t always a novel. So, as Kate already mentioned, the gothic isn’t really a genre so much as it is a series of motifs or tropes—and there are a couple of different ways to describe what exactly the gothic is.
- 00:06:24 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So Michael Gamer has called it an aesthetic and traces it across different genres, including fiction, drama, and poetry; Ellen Ledoux calls it a mode, and her discussion of it I find particularly interesting because she focuses on how it’s a mode that demands reader engagement. It presents you with all kinds of different materials and asks you to interpret them and construct them into a narrative. And she links this to its political potential.
- 00:06:52  [music playing]
- 00:07:03 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, the gothic is not necessarily all fiction. Sometimes it’s plays, sometimes it’s poetry, and the motifs can vary widely. During our period, gothic referred to a historical period during the middle ages. If you think of the period that spawned gothic architecture, that is what the word gothic is usually being used to describe. And the word gothic does sometimes come up in the database, more on that in a minute. So in the 1790s what we would now call gothic fiction exploded in popularity, in large part because of Ann Radcliffe’s modifications to the genre.
- 00:07:40 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Often in the eighteenth century the origins of the gothic novel are traced to Horace Walpole’s the 1764 novel: *The Castle of Otranto*, which was originally published as a supposedly found manuscript that had been translated that outlined the history

of a castle in Italy. However, people picked up on this, modified it, and in the late 1770s Clara Reeve published *The Old English Baron*, which was actually first published as *The Champion of Virtue*, so it had a couple of different titles.

- 00:08:12 Kandice Sharren (co-host) This text rewrote *The Castle of Otranto* providing rational explanations for most of the supernatural events that take place in it, and this is something that Ann Radcliffe picked up on in the 1790s. So her novels really focused around castles, creepy things happening, but creepy things happening that always find some kind of rational explanation down the road. E.J. Clery has talked about the supernatural explained as a way for women specifically to write frightening gothic stories while avoiding accusations of excess, although imitators would later experience backlash of their own.
- 00:08:58 Kandice Sharren (co-host) In this episode, we're mostly going to focus on works that spawned sort of from this Radcliffean gothic. And the tropes that are common to Radcliffe's novels appear a lot. So, in addition to the supernatural explained, we are going to see things like orphans, castles, monks, banditti, etc. While Radcliffe had a lot of imitators, she also had authors who sort of wrote back to her and pushed back against the version of the gothic that she had popularized.
- 00:09:04 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, for example, Matthew Lewis's 1796 novel *The Monk* can be read as a pretty direct rebuke to the Radcliffean gothic generally. In this novel the supernatural is *actually* supernatural (characters make pacts with the devil and are able to perform magic), and men *and* women are extremely predatory and dangerous, and that's an important piece of this masculine thread of the gothic.
- 00:09:58 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Well, the works that kind of follow in Matthew Lewis's tradition tend to be referred to as the male gothic or the masculine gothic. It's also important to note that it wasn't just men who wrote in this mode. So, for example, Charlotte Dacre's novel *Zofloya* is dark, violent, supernatural and sexy. Much more in line with *The Monk* than something like *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.
- 00:10:27 Kandice Sharren (co-host) In the 1790s, the gothic was also frequently adopted by political writers such as William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. So, in Godwin's novel, *Caleb Williams*, we see a kind of class-based gothic persecution, in which the upper class characters are often figured as gothic villains who have tyrannical power over their lower class counterparts.
- 00:10:50 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And Mary Wollstonecraft kind of adopts a similar mode to talk about gender in the late eighteenth century. In her unfinished manuscript *Maria: or, the Wrongs of*

Woman, Wollstonecraft imports the persecution of women that is popular in the gothic novel into a contemporary narrative that details women's sexual and economic vulnerability. And it's important to note too that she focuses on women of different classes, not just upper-class women.

- 00:11:20 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The gothic mode was also disseminated widely in popular chapbooks. These were cheaper books that could find their way to a much wider audience—sometimes chapbooks reprinted abridged versions of longer novels. So, for example, Thomas Tegg publishes a version of Mary Robinson's 1792 novel *Vancenza* in 1810, but other times they were just highly derivative original stories, like much of what Ann Lemoine published in the early nineteenth century.
- 00:11:51 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Both Catherine Cuthbertson's *Romance of the Pyrenees* and Elisabeth Guenard's *The Three Monks!!!* engage with these tropes and respond to the popularity of the gothic: *Romance of the Pyrenees* is, as Kandice likes to aptly put it, a "rip-off" of Ann Radcliffe [Kandice laughs], and *The Three Monks!!!* invokes representations like Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk*, even as it completely subverts and pokes fun at the trope of evil monks scheming against beautiful and virtuous young women, substituting evil monks with very, very silly ones.
- 00:12:20 Kate Moffatt (co-host) "But you hadn't even read the books yet!" you might exclaim. "How did you know they were gothic?" An excellent question, dear listeners! As Kandice has pointed out, the gothic was a collection of tropes, crossing genres and formats and taking any number of forms and interpretations by different authors. So how *did* we identify these titles as gothic before reading them?
- 00:12:42 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I mean, *The Romance of the Pyrenees*, if you have read the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, is very, very, very clearly invoking Ann Radcliffe. However, to people to recognize this, you have to have actually read Radcliffe. If you've read the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, you would know that it includes long passages of landscape descriptions specifically of the Pyrenees, which the characters spend quite a lot of time stuck in and traveling to.
- 00:13:12 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Sadly, *Romance of the Pyrenees* does not include these long descriptions, and I'm a weirdo who likes them [Kate laughs], so I found this a little annoying. I actually ended up choosing it because it's a title that I use a lot when I'm training new research assistants, particularly because it lets me walk through a couple of common bibliographical problems with them, including how to handle anonymity in the database, as well as how to handle multiple editions.

- 00:13:40 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I first encountered it during the early days of the database, when I was going through and entering every title attributed to a woman from Garside, Raven, and Schöwerling’s bibliography, *The English Novel*. And it stuck in my head because it is so clearly a Radcliffe rip-off, but it’s not a canonical novel, so our research assistants aren’t necessarily going to approach the title record with any kind of expectations about what they might encounter.
- 00:14:10 Kandice Sharren (co-host) It was also published by the Robinsons, which was the firm that paid Ann Radcliffe £500 for the copyright to the *Mysteries of Udolpho* and published it, which made me suspect that it might be better than some of the other Radcliffe imitators published by less prestigious publishers like the Minerva Press. Unfortunately I was wrong in this assumption [both laugh].
- 00:14:33 Kate Moffatt (co-host) *The Three Monks!!!* was an easy choice as well! Aside from being a team favourite for its unlikely punctuation, and a personal favourite because I have a thing for exclamation marks, these exclamation marks, actually, are full of *drama*—the jury’s out on if they’re meant to be humorous, terrified, or enthusiastic (my money is on enthusiastic, having now read it).
- 00:14:53 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Mine is on humorous!
- 00:14:54 Kate Moffatt (co-host) I say this with all fondness, but it’s true, they are a bunch of idiots. And speaking of said idiots, the reference to “monks” in the title landed it firmly in the realm of the gothic. *The Monk* by Matthew Gregory Lewis, which we’ve already mentioned, was a popular response to Ann Radcliffe’s use of the explained supernatural, but in *The Monk*, as Kandice suggested, the supernatural is made real, to which Ann Radcliffe responded by writing *The Italian*, which resembles *The Monk* but explains those supernatural elements that he tried to make scary. Monks are, as such, pretty firmly embedded as tropes of gothic literature, and their inclusion in a title suggests, rather than genuinely monastic or religious literature, *gothic* literature. How delightful! [Kandice laughs].
- 00:15:34 Kate Moffatt (co-host) A further look at the title record really only confirmed my instincts. It was published by B. Crosby and Co., who published many novels with similarly dramatic titles—we actually mention Benjamin Crosby and these absurd titles in our first episode, “Jane Austen Adjacent”! In case you need a reminder, he’s the publisher who also purchased an early version of *Northanger Abbey* in 1803 but

never published it, and he did publish a number of other quite gothic titles that year, as well.

- 00:15:59 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So this is I think a great time to pause and chat about searching strategies! So as Kate kind of mentioned here, one great way to start finding gothic titles is to look at the publishers of gothic titles you already know. By looking at the title record of, for example, *Mysteries of Udolpho*, you can see that the first edition was published by the Robinson firm. You can click on the publisher name to see other titles that that firm published. And some publishers worked in very specific genres or styles, so if they printed one gothic work, there is a good chance that they may have printed more.
- 00:16:37 Kandice Sharren (co-host) If you follow this approach, you want to make sure to check out other versions of the firm, too, by searching for the publisher's last name in the firm list. And this is because we create a new firm record each time someone moves or whenever a new partner is added to the firm or if someone leaves the firm. And this is just to kind of capture the full amount of data.
- 00:17:02 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The gothic tropes or motifs that we've been mentioning throughout this episode are another great way to try to identify gothic titles in the database. So you can perform a title search for gothic keywords, and they will pull up handy lists. So, for example, if you search the word "Gothic" in our titles, you will come up with 43 results. Many of these, as we've noted, refer to the historical period, but it was a word that was in circulation during the period. "Monk" pulls up 19 titles, "Monks", plural, pulls up 4 more.
- 00:17:38 Kandice Sharren (co-host) "Castle" has 232 results, that seems a good place to start, "Abbey" has 134; the word "Romance", which is the sort of genre designation under which a lot of what we would consider gothic novels would fall, has 315 titles. That's quite a lot. You can also search by "Romance" as a genre by clicking the box in the advanced search, although "Romance" will sometimes turn up elsewhere as well. "Horror" doesn't get you very far. It'll only pull up 2 titles. "Horrors", plural, has 8. "Mystery", 23 titles, "Mysteries" plural, has 50. "Forest" has 104. So, there are a lot of different words you can pull out and just see which ones seem to have traction.
- 00:18:30 Kandice Sharren (co-host) A couple caveats about this method though. There is obviously some overlap in these results, you might find a title that has "Mysteries" and "Abbey" both in it. And not all of the results for each of these searches will be what we would consider

gothic. So, for example, one of the results, if you search “forest”, is a travel memoir about North America. [both laugh]

- 00:18:56 Kandice Sharren (co-host) There are also some words that just might not mean what you initially think. If you search “horrid”, you get five results, but all of them actually refer to violent crimes like the attempted assassination of George III or a maid who murdered her lady and was sentenced to death. [both laugh]
- 00:19:18 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Funny enough, despite the wide array of options for gothic fiction in the WPHP, we both ended up picking books published in 1803! So, what, exactly, did an 1803 gothic novel look like? We’re very excited to share our two examples with you—get ready for “Kate and Kandice Summarize Long, Weird, & Occasionally Wonderful Early Nineteenth Gothic Novels in 10 Minutes or Less.”
- 00:19:41  [music playing]
- 00:19:48 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Alright, I’m going to kick things off with *The Romance of the Pyrenees* by Catherine Cuthbertson. I dare you to try to say her name three times fast [Kate laughs]. This story opens with the tale of a castle passing into the hands of its lord’s widow, right after he dies in the mountains far away with his young son. She immediately marries someone else and all of the loyal subjects of this land hate them so they move to France, a country that is happy to enable their secretly dissolute ways.
- 00:20:20 Kandice Sharren (co-host) They shortly thereafter become the adoptive parents of two small children from a neighbouring lord’s house. Fast forward fifteen years, the husband of this widow makes a pass at his beautiful and virtuous young ward, Victoria, she flips out and turns him down. Smart choice, Victoria! [Kate laughs]. Her aunt uses this as an excuse to get her out of the picture: she’s been trying to seduce a young man who is in love with Victoria and in order to succeed she needs her ward out of the way. So, it is obviously time to get sent to a convent in Spain!
- 20:53 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Oh no, on the way there, they are waylaid by banditti! Who saw that coming! And they are taken to a fortress in the Pyrenees, where the leader of the banditti (Don Manuel) seems very determined to marry her. Also, her maid is extremely ready to stab her in the back at the urging of a sexy villain who actually wants to also get with Victoria and is using the maid to get to her. [Kate laughs]

- 00:21:15 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Luckily Victoria is young and beautiful and everyone who sees her and isn't irredeemably evil (a surprisingly large category considering how many mountain bandits are in this novel) naturally wants to help her. So, she soon befriends all the other captives in the castle, including Don Manuel's most loyal servant, Diego, and a Black man of great bravery and virtue named Hippolyto. Note that my cat's name is Hippolyta so this might get confusing. [Kate laughs]
- 00:21:43 Kandice Sharren (co-host) For me! Not for you! [laughs]. The book spends a lot of time telling us about how perfect Hippolyto is, which led me to believe that this book was either unexpectedly radical in some way that I hadn't quite seen yet, or, that Hippolyto was going to turn out to be a white dude in disguise. Go on, I dare you guess which! The team starts trying to plot an escape, and, at the end of the first volume, I noticed that this actually felt like an allegory for people rebelling against or trying to escape slavery, especially since many of the would-be escapees have been kidnapped and forced into various types of labour.
- 00:22:21 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Somewhere in here, also, Victoria discovers that her room has a trap door on the floor, and that there is a secret passage that leads to a church, where she meets the most beautiful man she has ever seen, who matches the portrait in a necklace that she found on the floor in her room—her room is like a place of lots of traffic apparently [Kate laughs], and she has become obsessed with this portrait.
- 00:22:44 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, obviously she falls in love with the man that she meets. Meanwhile, Hippolyto, along with every other man in the novel, is in love with Victoria. Alright. So, as they are planning to escape, Victoria's dissolute uncle turns up and says he will save her if she agrees to marry him after he divorces her aunt. She's still not into this situation [Kate laughs], so says no. Meanwhile, the villain who seduced her maid tries to kidnap her, but Diego and Hippolyto save her—unfortunately Diego is wounded! Also, Hippolyto stabs her evil uncle, who maybe dies? We don't know.
- 00:23:20 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, they escape! In a boat! Diego has gone missing though so they had to leave him behind, so sad. There is a battle at sea, they are briefly captured, but, fortunately, Diego is on the boat that captures them, so he helps them escape and they land on the French coast and find shelter at a nearby castle. Unfortunately, Victoria's kind of evil aunt who tried to send her to the convent at the beginning of the novel is on her way there.
- 00:23:42 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And does not yet know that her husband is probably dead in a castle in the Pyrenees, supposedly. When her evil aunt shows up—also, please note, we are only

halfway through this book! [Kate laughs]. So, Victoria's evil aunt shows up, and kind of panics, because she is worried that the young man who she has now successfully seduced is going to see Victoria, fall back in love with her, and abandon her. So she needs to get Victoria out of the way. She decides the best way to do this is to force Victoria to marry Hippolyto. And she manipulates them into doing this by saying that she will not call the French police to arrest Hippolyto for killing her husband. Uh oh, shouldn't have stabbed the evil uncle. [both laugh]

- 00:24:29 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) The interesting thing about this is that clearly Victoria's aunt thinks that it is the height of punishment to force Victoria to marry a Black man. But she is really the only one who seems to think so. The book is surprisingly chill about this marriage which does actually take place, and it seems like it's a much bigger deal that nobody knows who his parents are, and he doesn't really seem to have any money.
- 00:24:56 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) Also, though, once they are married, Hippolyto reveals that, surprise, he is in fact the beautiful man that Victoria falls in love with. The most far-fetched element of this book—and there are many—is how easily he manages to take off his disguise in about five minutes while he's in the other room, even though he was in a sea battle and he got wet and it stayed on! Anyway! Black face, yikes. Can't say I was too surprised, though.
- 00:25:30 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) So, it actually turns out, just flipping to the end of the book here, that Hippolyto was a real person, who was this beautiful young man's childhood companion, and he kind of shows up briefly at the end, he is as great as he was supposed to be earlier on, and he gets to go off home to South America. Hey, happy endings for everybody who isn't a creepy manipulative guardian [Kate laughs].
- 00:25:53 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) Anyway! Victoria is thrilled that her husband is the beautiful stranger she met twice and fell in love with, but he has to go back to the castle and rescue another woman who was being held there named Matilda. Uh oh, who is Matilda? Oh it's a secret sister, it's fine. Anyway, through various machinations, everyone ends up back at the castle, everyone who needs to get rescued gets rescued, and there is a friendly old man who was also imprisoned in the castle but I didn't mention earlier because there are like eight billion characters, who can keep track, and he turns out to be Victoria's husband's father, and he tells them the story of his life, and also how this castle came to be.
- 00:26:31 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) Long story short, Don Manuel was in love with his wife and kidnapped her, she died in childbirth, that is where Matilda came from, and then Don Manuel

kidnapped him to get revenge, along with his child, Victoria's husband, and they were those people who died, remember, back at the very beginning of the novel. So, everyone gets their respective castles back, and literally everyone gets married.

- 00:26:56 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) Also, Don Manuel and the creepy aunt and uncle are part of a Europe-wide secret society of evildoers and villains who pool their funds and support each other in crime and debauchery, and obviously this falls apart when virtue is restored. Oh yeah, and, all the supernatural stuff has an explanation. For example, the knight who appears in the passage I read at the opening of this episode is actually a morally ambiguous monk who is psychologically tormented by his crimes so he dresses up in a suit of armour and roams the castle at night as part of his penance? [Kate laughs]. I don't know.
- 00:27:31 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) Anyway, basically the last two thirds of the last volume just rehashes the entire plot, explaining away every single vaguely creepy supernatural thing that happens, including all the ones you forgot about because the novel is *so* long and *so* much happens [both laugh]. So, at this point, I started to feel like I was in a tunnel and the light at the end of it was just getting further away. I feel like in some ways I'm maybe still in that tunnel. Maybe it's a mountain tunnel in the Pyrenees? Maybe the Pyrenees were a metaphor for the experience of reading this novel? I think it broke me. [Kate laughs]
- 00:28:04 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) So, Kandice, would you recommend this novel to our listeners?
- 00:28:10 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) It depends what you are hoping to get out of it, but no, not really. It was simultaneously bananas and somehow very, very boring. And I spent the last half of the novel mad about the blackface, so I was reading really resentfully. Like I said, I kind of saw it coming because the novel up to that point was surprisingly not-racist and I wasn't sure that I thought a novel from 1803 could be that not-racist, but this was a case where I really wanted to be proven wrong. Also, I wanted more characters to weep and write poetry about the beautiful landscape. Why even set a novel in a sublime landscape if you're not going to spend three chapters describing it in devastating detail and having your heroine compose spontaneous poems? Anyway, Kate, tell us about *The Three Monks!!!*
- 00:29:01 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Happy to! So, *The Three Monks!!!* was set in the Italian town of Ferrara, and it follows three young boys, all born on the same day in the same town: Silvino, the illegitimate son of Clementina; Dominico, born out of wedlock to Fansonetta, who

claims to be his aunt to save her virtue; and Anselmo, a foundling discovered at the town's castle, and adopted by the castle's Duchess, Celesta.

- 00:29:24 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) I have to say, I'm impressed that you've kept all these people straight.
- 00:29:27 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) I took notes! The Duchess had no children of her own—her husband, the Duke, cared only about politics. Like, literally, only about politics. His wife did not impact the country, so, he did not care about his wife. Prior to their marriage, she had, in fact, been in love with the Duke's younger brother, Alonzo, so, it was doomed from the start, but Alonzo had, at the beginning of this tale, been missing for many years. Because the castle stood between Silvino's house and Dominico's house, the three boys grew up together, close and immediate friends, often to be found playing in the gardens behind the castle, and also, of course, in the subterranean caverns beneath it—because you need subterranean caverns!
- 00:30:02 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Anselmo was as golden as his hair, described by Silvino as “gentle”; Dominico thoughtful and smart, and described as a “visionary” by Silvino; and Silvino himself was fun, amiable, as the novel constantly tells you, and *incredibly* badly behaved. Silvino was eventually caught stealing from the Duchess by Fansonetta, and for reasons that matter later, he was stealing in order to pay for something that he'd borrowed from his lover, Rosa, who also matters, so Fansonetta and the Duchess—the two mothers, so to speak, of Dominico and Anselmo—decided to send their two boys as far as possible from Silvino's terrible influence: they were sent to become monks at an abbey.
- 00:30:42 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) As you do!
- 00:30:43 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) As you do! What kind of punishment is there other than to become monks at an abbey? On the way to the abbey, they were told a story by an old guard about Alonzo and the Duchess Celesta: upon hearing that Celesta was to marry his older brother, the Duke, Alonzo stole into the castle after the wedding—why would he wait until after the wedding? And he was masked, to try and kidnap his love! He failed miserably and was mortally wounded and taken to a house nearby to die. Neither Dominico nor Anselmo care about this story, at all.
- 00:31:12 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Silvino shows up at the abbey as a travelling salesman; everyone loves him, because no matter how ill-behaved Silvino is, his strongest trait is his amiability! And a visiting monk from another abbey who also loves him invites him to go become a

monk there. He does, and he sets up Rosa in a little house in the town near both abbeys, and he and his friends, who are truly terrible monks, hang out there a lot. Rosa thinks that Dominico and Anselmo are extremely handsome—the book tells us so only about a thousand times—and so she tells Silvino, “Oh, it’ll be such a shame when they leave you for a woman!” to which Silvino, as she wanted, tells Rosa that she must also seduce his friends so that they can all be together forever [Kandice laughs]. Bonkers.

- 00:31:52 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Anselmo does, in fact, fall head over heels in love with Rosa. But then, because he is the golden child, he feels so incredibly guilty about it that he immediately leaves and goes home to the Duchess. Now, get ready: Anselmo is living with her quite happily when he suddenly discovers he is no longer in love with Rosa because he has actually fallen completely in love with the Duchess Celesta, who in case you’ve forgotten, is also his adoptive mother. Weird [Kandice laughs]. He tells her so, she rejects him, and Anselmo then attempts to stab himself in the chest for the first time (yes, this happens more than once!) to prove just how much he loves her.
- 00:32:29 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) His old nurse, who was eavesdropping (got to love a good eavesdrop), jumps out of the bushes and tells him that Celesta might actually love him, too. Wow. Now, one evening, when the sky is beautiful and the air is sweet, Celesta wants to go on a boat trip down the river—so they’re all out there, having a grand time, when suddenly a truly massive and ridiculous storm crops up and completely capsizes the boat. I actually didn’t know storms of that size could happen on rivers. Anselmo saves Celesta, of course, and they wind up on some little island in the middle of said river, which must be very large.
- 00:33:07 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) She’s half-conscious, so he cuts off her bodice so she can breathe and is completely overtaken by her beauty. One thing leads to another, and after the deed is done, Celesta comes to and shouts “villain! villain!” at him. This is actually an example of a really popular trope in eighteenth-century novels: the woman is half-conscious for the lovemaking, and comes around after it is over, which gives her plausible deniability of chasteness while allowing her to submit to her desire. *The Three Monks!!!* actually goes so far as to include that, almost explicitly. This is a quote: “Celesta loved Anselmo, and perhaps was not very sorry that this event allowed her the merit of resistance, while her soul yet thrilled with pleasure.”

- 00:33:42 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) So they quite happily have a little weird affair situation until they're discovered. The Duke sends Anselmo away and punishes his wife by forcing her to spend every waking boring minute with him. Yikes! Anselmo is actually sent to another, different abbey where he actually becomes a really successful and beloved monk. This is literally the only instance of good monkhood in the entire book [both laugh]. At the behest of Fansonetta, Anselmo finally heads off to the town where Silvino and Dominico, both still monks, are quite happily living with Rosa, who it seems has turned into some sort of brothel-owner/procurer of pretty women, and she is also a merchant, and she is also really rich. Way to go, Rosa!
- 00:34:20 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Anselmo gets totally sucked into it, as one does, and they all live together for a while. While he's there, he accepts confessions from noble ladies—part of the whole monk thing. It is while being confessed to one day that he falls in love with young Eliza because of the view of her breasts through the confession screen. She is 14—Anselmo! Honestly!—and she can't read. She is the daughter of the Prince of the town, and also promised to the son of a friend of the Prince's who saved him during battle, but Anselmo and Eliza both don't care. He tells his friends how much he loves her and they say "don't worry, if she doesn't love you back we'll kidnap her for you." [Kandice laughs]
- 00:34:56 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Anselmo convinces the prince to let him tutor Eliza, and they are very in love but also very appropriate. He loves her too much to seduce her. Silvino gets in trouble with the law at about this point, because he is actually part of this massive band of this crime ring of rich noblemen in Italy, and informs his friends they all must flee to France. The boys make yet another bad decision here and they kidnap Eliza because Anselmo refuses to go without her. When she realizes she's being kidnapped, Anselmo threatens to stab himself in the chest for, if you are keeping track, the second time. And she stops him and agrees to go so that he won't kill himself. I would call that unhealthy relationship dynamic.
- 00:35:32 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) They run off to the subterranean caverns that are beneath the Duchess's castle, where they're in hiding from the law until they can flee properly. On one very ill-fated eve, Silvino disappears, and Dominico and Anselmo hear something at the mouth of the caverns. This is meant to be a very gothic, very creepy moment, but when they get there, there's just a bag of money wrapped in a blood-stained handkerchief, with a note, and, no one there. Silvino left them money and instructed them to leave the girl behind and meet him in a particular forest. Anselmo is sad about leaving Eliza, but he trusts his friend—silly!—and writes to

the *Duchess*—his former lover, to take care of Eliza, his current lover. Can't see that going badly.

00:36:07 Kandice Sharren
(co-host)

Kate, you're running out of time!

00:36:09 Kate Moffatt
(co-host)

I swear, I'm almost done! There were so much in two volumes! So the note that Anselmo sent ends up in the hands of some guards who are at the castle because it turns out the Duke has actually been assassinated. Oh boy. They think it was the Duchess who did it, and after seeing the note, they come to the caverns, find Eliza and the blood-stained handkerchief, which it turns out belonged to the Duke, and accuse them both of assassinating the Duke together. Celesta, the Duchess, and Eliza, the fourteen-year old, are sentenced to death by beheading.

00:36:37 Kate Moffatt
(co-host)

Meanwhile, Anselmo and Dominico finally find Silvino. On their way to find him, they come across two older women traveling and invited them to travel with them. These women are looking for the hermit Nicholas. For reasons unbeknownst to me, they all decide to go look for the hermit Nicholas in the woods, and discover, once they find Nicholas, that he is, in fact, Alonzo, who did not die after trying to kidnap the Duchess Celesta, and it turns out that the two traveling women are Clementina, Silvino's mother, and Eleanora, Anselmo, the orphan's, real mother. Alonzo, as it turns out, is also their dad. Yeah. Everyone's related! Of course they are! [Kandice laughs].

00:37:12 Kate Moffatt
(co-host)

Alonzo relates how he literally slept with all three women in the same night, one Christmas Eve: Eleanora, Clementina, and Fansonetta—which makes our three monks brothers! but then Alonzo had to disappear because of his failed kidnapping of the Duchess Celesta, the only woman that he's actually in love with. Eleanora, it turns out, has carried a torch for Alonzo for almost thirty years but, upon seeing Alonzo again, and his wrinkles, specifically, she decides she doesn't actually love him.

00:37:39 Kate Moffatt
(co-host)

Fansonetta enters this delicious scene, having travelled hard to find them all, and she lets them know that the Duchess Celesta and Eliza are about to be beheaded for assassinating the Duke. Everyone freaks out, of course, and they travel as quickly as they can back to Ferrara. But not before Dominico makes Silvino promise not to come, since he knows, of course, that *Silvino* was the one who assassinated the Duke and that the guards will arrest Silvino. He promises not to go with them.

- 00:38:03 Kate Moffatt (co-host) They arrive *right* as the women are being led up to be beheaded, Anselmo tries to stab himself for the *third* time—because he thinks they’re already dead, and he doesn’t want to live without Eliza—and then suddenly Silvino jumps up onto the platform, declares his guilt, and saves the women. Dominico and Anselmo jump up to defend him from the guards who are going to arrest him, but then, Silvino says, “Worry not, friends, I shall not die an ignominious death” and he turns gray...and he dies. Because he poisoned himself before jumping up on the thing [Kandice laughs]. Everyone basically gets married to the people they want to get married to, except for Elonzo, who refuses to marry Celesta because Celesta had a thing with his son and he decides that’s really wrong—agreed [Kandice laughs], and that’s it. The end.
- 00:38:47 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Kate, would you recommend this book to our listeners?
- 00:38:50 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Oh, *absolutely*.
- 00:38:52 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I’m so jealous that you picked the fun book. Just furious [both laugh]. So furious I could use three exclamation points about it [Kate laughs]. So, I guess I should contain my rage until the end of this episode so that we can talk about these books a bit more. Despite the fact that they have *very* different approaches to the gothic, they have a lot of things in common; among other things, they both have characters named Clementina and Anselmo.
- 00:39:22 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Your book had a Clementina too?
- 00:39:24 Kandice Sharren (co-host) It has *so many characters* [both laugh]. I cut all of them out of my summary. It got too confusing [laughs]. So, one of the things, one of the many things that stuck out to me is how, in their own way, both books are assuming that their readers have a degree of familiarity with the *kind* of story being told to the extent that, in my case at least, some of the characters seem to share readers’ expectations.
- 00:39:56 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So, during the beginning of the *Romance of the Pyrenees*, while Victoria is being held hostage in the castle, she keeps coming across these weird, seemingly supernatural events that she can’t explain, and she responds to them in a really interesting way, where she kind of, she has moments of feeling afraid, and then she kind of logics herself out of it by saying, “oh there is got to be a rational explanation for this, I just don’t know what it is yet.”

- 00:40:22 Kandice Sharren (co-host) For some things like the knight who appears in the passage from the beginning of this episode, where she can't explain it, her response is something like: "well, I'm not really afraid of the supernatural, I'm more afraid of these banditti who are holding me hostage." So, there is an interesting thing where it is always kind of assuming that the supernatural is going to get explained, which it does, in great detail. This is the kind of reaction that a reader of gothic novels, who is used to having the supernatural explained, might also have.
- 00:40:54 Kate Moffatt (co-host) *The Three Monks!!!* does something a little bit similar where the narrator explicitly comments that she is writing a novel for young ladies rather than their guardians, their aunts and their mothers and their cousins, suggesting that this is being written against a really specific mode that the reader will actually already be familiar with.
- 00:41:10 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And it turns out that this has a pretty undeniable element of parody; so, for example, when they arrive at the first abbey, when they are first being sent to be monks as a punishment, they describe the prior who greets them as this spectre, this grotesque spectre, is the language that they use, but any horror that's associated with that is immediately dispelled by the fact that this prior is really, really slow. So slow that the boys can't walk beside him, because he's too slow. And he's always telling them to slow down. It's absolutely ridiculous! And the novel's completely aware of it. It's completely aware of it.
- 00:41:52 Kandice Sharren (co-host) I really wish that my book had that much self-awareness! [both laugh]. So, as I mentioned earlier in the episode, I picked *Romance of the Pyrenees* to read because I thought it might actually be good—it was published by the Robinsons who published *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which I do actually sincerely really like, and, I also thought that, given this firm published so much political writing in the 1790s, this novel might have an interesting political angle to it as well, and for a while it actually seemed like it might!
- 00:42:21 Kandice Sharren (co-host) Hippolyto was an interesting Black character to have in a book during the years when debates about the slave trade were raging, so before the slave trade was abolished in Britain, but it was definitely being widely discussed and debated in 1803. And also just the fact that so many of the people Victoria meets in the castle shared this experience of being kidnapped and exploited seemed to be creating an interesting political narrative, or potentially political narrative.
- 00:42:56 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And, even though, I think it should be said, even though Hippolyta ended up being a white character in disguise, the first third or so of the novel opens up a

really interesting space because his race, or he supposed race, seemed to be such a non-issue for any of the other characters. We know he is a Black character because he is described that way, but nobody really has anything to say about his race. They have more to say about his good virtuous character and his intelligence, etc.

- 00:45:30 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) And, later on in the novel, Victoria’s only real objection to marrying him is that she doesn’t like being forced into marriage—fair enough—and she’s in love with someone else! She actually really quickly silences a maid who expresses dismay about the wedding because she is like, “Hippolyto is decent, he is a good guy, and he is my friend!” [both laugh]
- 00:43:53 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) So, it’s interesting when you think he is a Black character, what it’s doing with his race. Of course, that all very quickly falls apart. So, anyway, the first third of the novel has some really interesting political avenues being opened up, but that thread really frustratingly gets completely, not even abandoned, like actively shut down in the rest of the novel, in which everything is restored to what the novel seems to think of as the natural proper order, which is one of virtuous aristocrats getting their property back. And anything potentially subversive is really subsumed by that ending. What about the *Three Monks!!!*? Did you see anything politically interesting or potentially subversive going on in it?
- 00:44:46 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Honestly, I think, I think that the *Three Monks!!!* could have, it could be seen because it’s so funny, that it’s actually maybe kind of poking fun a little bit at conservative or traditional ideas of virtue, like what you are describing—think about the representations of female desire, for example, like Celesta’s appreciation of the boat incident so that she can appear to show resistance, even as her “soul is thrilled to pleasure” at the moment, and that the book is so explicitly open about that. And it’s interesting because other than—there is one incident where they are describing—Fansonetta being seduced by Alonzo under kind of questionable consent, other than that, the entire book is women having *very* consensual sexual relations and feeling pretty thrilled about it. [both laugh]
- 00:45:34 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) And our women who act “*un-virtuously*” are forgiven, almost immediately, for other reasons, that the narrator starts to sort of present as more important: like, Fansonetta, as they are describing her having Dominico out of wedlock, they mention in basically the same breath that she is very educated! She reads Ovid, she reads Plutarch. Same with Clementina, who is Silvino’s mother, and had, and cheated on her husband, she is described in the same breath as being the *prettiest* of the three “mothers.” So, it’s interesting that these details are given right at the

beginning of the novel, while they're pointing out the fact that they've had these illegitimate children.

- 00:46:09 Kate Moffatt (co-host) And it's funny because it's even things like the conversation that reveals Alonzo's trysts with each of the mothers doesn't shame these women for these sexual encounters; in fact, it's a moment of comedy, it's—I'll share it with you later—but it's all jokes by Alonzo and the mothers are even offering asides and more information about their particular tryst with Alonzo, which is just, it's absolutely delightful.
- 00:46:31 Kandice Sharren (co-host) So it sounds like your book was quite funny, at least your summary of the book was quite funny [both laugh], was that fair to say?
- 00:46:39 Kate Moffatt (co-host) The book itself is fabulously funny.
- 00:46:42 Kandice Sharren (co-host) And, I think that's really, I don't know, it feels like that humour as an element is something that really makes it possible to read it now and still find it enjoyable. It is really hard to take a book like *Romance of the Pyrenees* seriously when it is taking itself *so seriously* the whole time. It's really a book that's committed to that version of virtuous femininity, that your book seems to be making fun of. Anyone who doesn't conform to the sort of vision of this perfect beautiful virtuous woman is either an old woman who just kind of hangs out in the background, or, quickly becomes clearly someone who is evil.
- 00:47:27 Kandice Sharren (co-host) The only potentially borderline case is Matilda, who is raised in a convent by very uneducated nuns so she doesn't have Victoria's education, and it results in her having a really bad temper [Kate laughs], that she has to actually kind of be weirdly trained out of before Victoria's brother falls in love with her and marries her.
- 00:47:50 Kate Moffatt (co-host) It's interesting to consider the two very different takes that these books take on female virtue and femininity—representations of women and their involvement with men. And I don't usually like to apply the biography of the author to works by the author, but Elisabeth Guenard—so, first of all, information about her largely eluded me—other than that, most everyone agrees she was absurdly prolific, with something like 300 publications [Kandice laughs]. You can't find a lot of other information about her—
- 00:48:23 Kate Moffatt (co-host) but she did, when she was twenty three, get married to her eighty-eight year old cousin, which kind of makes me wonder, occasionally [Kandice laughs], and these

works were written after that marriage, it kind of makes me wonder if that could have potentially come into play with these works that are so, look at all of these handsome young men, and these beautiful young women that get themselves involved with them. It's like this freedom that maybe she didn't have, right, which obviously I think most women wouldn't have had to the extent that they do in the *Three Monks!!!* [both laugh], but, you know.

00:48:54 Kandice Sharren
(co-host)

But also I think that marriage can afford women, at least maybe French women, a degree of freedom that young unmarried women don't have.

00:49:04 Kate Moffatt
(co-host)

That's true, and I was going to say that one really explicit interaction between Elonzo and Celesta, or sorry, *Anselmo* and Celesta [Kandice laughs]—Celesta's married, and they even have a whole passage about how she is still so young and beautiful and what a shame it is that she is ignored by the Duke [Kandice laughs], and how she deserves to have a lover but she is so lovely and genteel that people are like "oh she would never take a lover" and she is like "no I want one! I want a lover!" [Kandice laughs]

00:49:30 Kandice Sharren
(co-host)

It's interesting, because Catherine Cuthbertson is another woman in our database who we don't know very much about. Jennie Batchelor has recently uncovered some pretty basic information about her through her work on the *Lady's Magazine*, including that Cuthbertson was likely born in Ireland, which is why birth dates were difficult to find for such a long time.

00:49:51 Kandice Sharren
(co-host)

So, most of what we know is actually what she published. She published seven novels in total, and the first two, *Romance of the Pyrenees* and *Santo Sebastiano*, were really quite successful—at least five editions of each appeared during the dates covered by the database, and that's including, I think, American reprints. And she actually continued to be reprinted throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. *Romance of the Pyrenees* was also actually translated into French, and interestingly enough, marketed in French as by Ann Radcliffe herself. So it was enough of a solid imitation of Radcliffe to Radcliffe's contemporaries that people [Kate laughs] felt able to attribute it to Ann Radcliffe, at least in another language.

00:50:38 Kate Moffatt
(co-host)

We're totally running out of time, but I find translation is such an unexpected and interesting issue that came up. I didn't pick up this book thinking about the fact that it was translated, but it has coloured, obviously, my entire experience, not only while reading (there are a couple of "translator's notes", not a lot, in the book), but

also while trying to find further information about Elisabeth Guenard who somehow just hasn't really made it into English scholarship.

- 00:51:02 Kandice Sharren
(co-host) Kate, would you like to finish off the episode with a favorite passage from your delightful *Three Monks!!!?*
- 00:51:07 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Would I? Of course I will.
- 00:51:09  [music playing]
- 00:51:15 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Alonzo was delighted with the manner in which Silvino performed the honours of the table: at the dessert, the conversation became animated, and Eleonora requested Alonzo to relate how it happened that his three mistresses became mothers on the same day.
- 00:51:28 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) “It was, I think, on Christmas eve.”
“Oh! Yes,” exclaimed Clementine, “it snowed, and was excessively cold.”
“I was going, with my mother to the mass of midnight,” continued Alonzo; “next to my mother’s pew was that of the lovely Clementina. I had often admired her charms. That night she appeared still more lovely; and whilst my mother was employed at her devotions, I addressed a few words to my bewitching neighbour: she pointed out to me her husband, who was kneeling devoutly: “the opportunity is favourable,” said I to her; he will not return home for a considerable time: I will meet you there.”
- 00:52:04 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) Whilst my mother was at confession, I went to Clementina’s house; as she had forgotten to shut the door, and that we were afraid of the husband’s return, we set aside all preliminaries, and you were made, my dear Silvino, in less time than I have taken to relate this event.”
“I do not wonder at it,” said Dominico, gravely, the productions of genius are as rapid as lightning; they never require correcting, and Silvino would have been a less perfect being had you taken more time.”
- 00:52:29 Kate Moffatt
(co-host) “That may be; however his mother and I were again seated in the church, before my mother returned from her confessional, and before Pietro Pezzali had finished his devotions; I had the satisfaction, as I passed by him, to make him a very friendly salutation.”
“And do you remember,” exclaimed Clementina, “how kindly I smiled at him, when he kissed his hand at us as he passed?”

- 00:52:50 Kate Moffatt (co-host) “Bravo! Dear authors of my existence; I find you are not better than your son. Now you have told the story of one son; now for that of the other two.”
- 00:53:59 Kate Moffatt (co-host) “After hearing mass very devoutly, I conducted my mother back to the palace; as I passed by the house of Fansonetta, to whom I had already paid some attention, which she appeared to receive with pleasure, she was seeking for the key of the door, which she had dropped in the street; I ordered one of my mother’s servants, who carried a torch, to light her. The key could not be found; my mother stopped, and said many kind things to her. Fansonetta blushed, and appeared still more lovely; at last, my mother said, “If you should not find the key, my dear girl, come and sleep at the palace,”
- 00:54:26 Kate Moffatt (co-host) “You are very kind,” said Fansonetta, blushing still deeper.
“I insisted upon her accepting the offer; and Fansonetta did not wish to refuse; she came to the palace, and brought with her a treasure, which she was destined never to carry back with her.”
- 00:53:40 Kate Moffatt (co-host) “I knew the apartment she occupied; it communicated with one of the duchess’s women; I bribed her to let me pass into Fansonetta’s apartment: an old duenna lay in the same room; but fortunately she was asleep.”
“Fansonetta was extremely frightened at seeing me in her apartment; but still much more so, when, notwithstanding all she could say, I got into her bed. She was on the point of screaming; but I soon stifled her cries with my caresses. I was obliged to use more caution with her than Clementina, for she had not yet been initiated into the mysteries of love. But notwithstanding all my precautions, she could not refrain from uttering an exclamation, which nearly ruined us. The duenna awoke and said:
“What is the matter?”
- 00:54:19 Kate Moffatt (co-host) “Nothing; I was only dreaming that I had a rose, and that a child, in endeavouring to take it from me, had inflicted a wound, which made me cry out.”
“This dream is a sentence,” said the duenna; “no rose without a thorn; but the worst is that the rose soon fades and the thorn remains.” She then fell asleep again.
- 00:54:37 Kate Moffatt (co-host) Fansonetta, notwithstanding her presence, was extremely alarmed when she found the duenna awakened, she entreated me to leave her, for fear that the other women should awake, I consented, for it was three o’clock in the morning, the blissful hour in which I was to meet my charming Eleonora. I quitted Fansonetta,

after she had promised to admit me for the future at her house. I went to my lodgings, and soon after to Mons. de Mercoeur's palace.


00:55:01 Kate Moffatt
(co-host)

"I will not trouble you to relate that adventure," said Eleonora; "and, I assure you, that if I had known how you had employed the former part of the night, I should have spared *you* the fatigue, and *me* the sorrow of that fatal night."

"But then I should not exist!" cried Anselmo.

"Upon my honour, that would be a shame, for thou art a good fellow," said Silvino.

"And he will be the prop of your old age," added Dominico.

00:55:26 

[music playing]

00:55:38 Kandice Sharren
(co-host)

This has been the fifth episode of *The WPHP Monthly Mercury*. We will be releasing an episode every third Wednesday of the month. If you're interested in learning more about what we discussed today, we've compiled a list of suggestions for further reading and links to some relevant entries in the WPHP in a blog post that you can find at womensprinthistoryproject.com.