



EXTRACT 3: SCANDAL (Taken from Chapter 14 – The library, Godmersham Park)

‘But *what happened* to Mr Drummer? I hear he has been taken to prison!’

‘Yes, yes, he has,’ her father conceded, turning back to his papers with a shake of the head. ‘Stealing. In Canterbury. A bad, bad business. I had no idea that his means were so slender that he felt the need to steal ... items of clothing. Gloves, I believe it was.’

‘Papa!’ Fanny’s surprise made her voice a little shrill, and she swallowed hard in order to lower it. ‘Really?’ she began again. ‘I mean, it sounds so unlikely.’

‘Well, Mr Fortescue told me,’ her father said. ‘And he’s another magistrate, you know. Fine fellow. Couldn’t have got it wrong.’

‘And what did Mr Drummer say?’

‘Oh, well, I don’t know, I’ve been too busy to see him.’

If he wasn’t such a jolly, hearty man, Fanny would have said that her father looked a little mortified. And now he was continuing with his explanation, almost as if he felt a need to justify his behaviour.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is meant and implied by the term ‘scandal’? What scandal is Mr Drummer at the centre of?
- How does the justice system of Jane Austen’s lifetime differ to today’s? Explain your ideas.
- How do Aunt Jane and Fanny help Mr Drummer? Who lets him down?
- Why would Aunt Jane’s and Fanny’s involvement have seemed unladylike and even controversial?
- What other kinds of scandals or threats of scandals are mentioned in the text? Give examples.

ACTIVITY: READ ALL ABOUT IT!

- Write an early 19th century newspaper article detailing Mr Drummer’s scandal. Remember that at this time the newspaper was a major source of information and gossip, so try to make your article as informative and persuasive as possible.
- Before you start writing your article, think about the position you are going to adopt and your coverage of the story. Here are some questions to help you plan:
 - How much of the scandal will you cover? i.e. just the initial arrest of Mr Drummer, or the whole story?
 - How biased or sensationalised will your story be? i.e. will it be fair and balanced or will it be very one-sided?
 - Will the content be mostly factual or will you include gossip and rumours?
 - Will you include any quotes? If so, who from?
 - How will you encourage the reader to buy the paper again tomorrow to follow the story?
 - How will your headline grab the reader’s attention and give a clear view of your position?
- Once you have finished planning, write up your ‘19th Century Newspaper Article’ using language and phrasing that makes it read as if it’s really from the 19th century. Put your articles on display in the classroom.

