

CHAPTER 1

Goodbye to Miss Pinkerton

A fashionable carriage stopped outside Miss Pinkerton's School for Young Ladies. Inside, Miss Pinkerton was writing the final report for one of her best pupils, Miss Amelia Sedley. Miss Sedley was returning to her parents' home in Russell Square after six years of music, dancing and French.

Amelia was a dear little thing. Everyone at Miss Pinkerton's loved her. Her face was fresh and pretty. Her eyes shone, specially when they filled with tears, which really was too often. She would cry over a dead flower, the end of a novel or an unkind word.

Miss Pinkerton spoke sharply to Miss Jemima, her nervous younger sister.

'Get me a dictionary for Miss Sedley, Miss Jemima,' said Miss Pinkerton. All of Miss Pinkerton's pupils received a dictionary on their last day at the school.

Miss Jemima brought two dictionaries.

'Here is a dictionary for Miss Sedley, and one for Miss Sharp,' she said. 'Miss Sharp is leaving too.'

'MISS JEMIMA!' cried Miss Pinkerton. 'I have done enough for Miss Sharp. I don't need to give her a dictionary!'



The two young ladies prepared to leave.

Miss Sharp said goodbye to Miss Pinkerton in perfect French. Miss Pinkerton did not understand French, but she was too proud to say so.

'Good morning, Miss Sharp,' she said icily. Then she turned to Amelia. She made a boring goodbye speech. Everyone cried and wanted to kiss their darling Amelia.

As the carriage was leaving, Miss Jemima ran up to the window.

'Miss Sharp,' she said, 'here's a dictionary for you too. Goodbye.'

The carriage moved off. Miss Sharp looked out of the window and threw the dictionary into the garden.

Miss Jemima nearly died of shock and the girls set off into the world.



Becky Sharp was small and thin. Her hair was light red and her large eyes were very attractive. One look from those eyes could kill a man across a room. Becky was