

*Emily, a young woman, has been adopted by her Uncle Montoni who is leading her to his castle in the mountains.*



Towards the close of day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened, that exhibited the Apennines<sup>1</sup> in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits, rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur, than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the

top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam<sup>2</sup> the summits of the forest, that hung upon the opposite steeps<sup>3</sup>, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle, that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade, which involved the valley below.

'There,' said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, 'is Udolpho.'

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering<sup>4</sup> walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper, as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour<sup>5</sup>. From those, too, the rays soon faded<sup>6</sup>, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness<sup>7</sup> of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity, and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen, rising over the tops of the woods, beneath<sup>8</sup> whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.

The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. At length, the carriages emerged upon a heathy rock, and, soon after, reached the castle gates, where the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon<sup>9</sup> to give notice<sup>10</sup> of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions, that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates,

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<sup>2</sup> Light

<sup>3</sup> Slopes / sides of the mountain

<sup>4</sup> crumbling

<sup>5</sup> Here, the light of the setting sun

<sup>6</sup> disappeared

<sup>7</sup> Darkness

<sup>8</sup> Under

<sup>9</sup> Hit

<sup>10</sup> Warn

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<sup>1</sup> Mountains between France and Italy



she anxiously surveyed the edifice: but the gloom, that overspread it, allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ramparts, and to know, that it was vast, ancient and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze<sup>11</sup> rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain<sup>12</sup>, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis, surmounting the gates: from these, the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers, overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam, that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war.-- Beyond these all was lost in the obscurity of evening.

While Emily gazed with awe upon the scene, footsteps were heard within the gates, and the undrawing of bolts; after which an ancient servant of the castle appeared, forcing back the huge folds of the portal, to admit<sup>13</sup> his lord. As the carriage-wheels rolled heavily under the portcullis, Emily's heart sunk, and she seemed, as if she was going into her prison; the gloomy court, into which she passed, served to confirm the idea, and her imagination, ever awake to circumstance, suggested even more terrors, than her reason could justify.

### *Reading Guide*

- How is Nature described in this extract? Make a parallel with the painting
- How is the castle described? (Focus on the adjectives)
- How is Emily described? Focus on her actions and thoughts

#### Going Further:

- What elements of the Romanticism can you find in this extract?
- What characteristics of the Gothic Genre do you find in this extract?
- How does the setting (in a foreign country) allow Emily to be unsettled.
- Explain how the lack of light allows Emily's imagination to run wild

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<sup>11</sup> Gentle wind

<sup>12</sup> A wall

<sup>13</sup> Welcome