

Cut from the Same Cloth Afterword

Dear Inquisitive Reader,

Although Valen and Izzie's romance culminates at a very good place, I received many letters from readers asking what happened to Izzie's father and older brother. Some readers asked after the frail health of Lord Ransley, and wanted to know how Robert and the title-hungry Miss Dunworthy fared. To answer those questions, I've written a short follow-up for those of you who would like to know what happened after the story ended.

One small caution . . .

As the author, I can see for miles and miles down my characters' paths, and I know in intimate detail what has occurred off page, even if the characters didn't. Sometimes it is better not to know.

To take you, my esteemed reader, any further than the where the story ends leads us to the fateful certainties of Lord Ransley's congestive lungs, and in the case of Izzie's father, the perilous particulars of sea travel in that era. As it is in real life, so it is in story—sadness often mixes with our joy. Some of what you will see here is lovely, but not all.

Out of respect for your inquisitive minds, I have set down on paper the facts as I have envisioned them. Please consider carefully whether you really wish to know.

The Interesting Case of Robert and Miss Susannah Dunworthy

ROBERT TOOK a great risk marrying the beautiful but spoiled Miss Dunworthy. It might have turned out badly. Indeed, Miss Devious Dunworthy coveted a title and went after it with scarcely disguised cunning and artifice. She might have been the sort to make his life miserable.

However, it is interesting to note that Susannah stopped lisping the day after wedding Robert. We can only speculate, but I like to think Robert made love to her in such a way that she no longer viewed herself a coddled young girl, but rather as an adored woman.

Robert put Miss Dunworthy's generous dowry to good use. He took his bride home to his country manor and set to work repairing his father's dilapidated estates. Happily, Robert's mother and younger sisters adored his vivacious wife. They enjoyed Susannah's company and soon became fast friends. She took the younger girls under her wing and eagerly planned for the day when they would be old enough for coming-out balls and a season in London.

Susannah's parents visited with regularity, basking in their connection with aristocracy. They

soon became fixtures at the estate, residing there most of the year. The walls of this once bleak and forlorn house now echoed with conversation, laughter and music. It became a bastion of social activity in the neighborhood. Later that year, Susannah discovered she was with child.

To Robert's great relief, his mother found less and less need to dose herself with patent medicines. Her glazed dilated pupils were replaced with a hesitant courage as her household filled with happy laughter. She basked in the warmth of her new daughter-in-law and found happiness again in the excitement of anticipating her first grandchild.

Shortly after Susannah's announcement, a bundle of letters arrived, letters from America bearing news of Izzie and Robert's father.

What Happened to Izzie and Robert's Father and Their Older Brother?

At the end of *Cut from the Same Cloth*, these facts are known:

- Robert and Izzie's father sailed for America to salvage some of his investments.
- No one heard from him for more than two years.
- The twins' older brother set out in search of him.
- All seemed lost when no one heard from either man.

ELIZABETH'S FATHER was a stern gentleman, but not so callus that he wouldn't send word of safe passage to his wife. He would have written if he could. Sadly, Lord Hampton fell ill with cholera during the voyage across the Atlantic. This happened to many travelers of the time. Port authorities were not as stringent as they became a few years later when cholera epidemics broke out in all the port cities along the Hudson. His ship was allowed to dock, and he stumbled ashore, extremely ill.

Making his way to an inn, Lord Hampton offered to pay heavily if anyone would be so kind as to care for him. Few things at that time in history carried more terror than the fear of *fever*. No reputable inn would allow him in. At last, he found a room in a ramshackle public house. Little was done to nurse him through his illness. Two days later, the hapless nobleman died.

Authorities found his body lying in a filthy cot in an airless attic room. The innkeeper had long since relieved him of his purse and possessions. Fortunately the innkeeper's wife yielded to a twinge of remorse. She made note of Lord Hampton's title and eventually sent an anonymous letter to the English government. Many, *many*, months later, the brief, poorly written note explaining the circumstances of his death and his place of burial found its way to his estate, and into Robert's hands.

THEIR OLDER BROTHER, Henry, fared much better than their father.

He traveled to America without mishap and discovered that his father had disembarked

and signed in at the port. After learning this, but finding no further information as to his whereabouts, Henry assumed his father had continued on his journey up the Hudson and went in search of the fur trading companies in which they had invested. Henry traveled west and with each mile, he fell deeper in love with the wild countryside. He savored every moment of his journey. So much so that he felt little or no homesickness.

He finally located his father's enterprises and found them floundering on the brink of closure, but under Henry's capable leadership and using his shipping connections he was able to salvage the companies and establish a thriving export business. With so many opportunities for growth, he could not bear the thought of returning to England.

All this news, Henry penned in weekly letters to his mother and family. His jubilant missives survived a haphazard journey on the Ohio River, and then traveled by coach. After several months they arrived in the New York Harbor. Ships to Britain were scarce at the time. Although the war of 1812 had ended, the embargo was newly lifted and privateers from both countries made the seas a perilous place. The mailbag containing Henry's letters was stowed aboard a merchant vessel headed for Portsmouth. The hapless frigate fell into the hands of gentleman pirate Hezekiah Frith. Luckily, Frith respected the mail enough to turn the bag with its contents intact over to a passing whaling sloop headed for the South Seas. When the whaling vessel finally returned to England, the travel-worn mailbag landed in Dartmouth and traveled by mail coach across England to the twin's estate.

Robert and Izzie were delighted to learn their brother was still alive. Susannah did not begrudge the fact that her husband would not hold the title. No indeed, she'd found new purpose in her home with Robert and his family.

Izzie and Valen

IZZIE AND VALEN married and resided at Ransley Keep, tending to Valen's father and his beloved lands. Lord Ransley far outlived his physician's expectations and, to his delight, became a grandfather. On the twenty-sixth of June, Valen presented him with a healthy and precocious grandson named in his honor.

Less than eighteen months later, Elizabeth found herself, once again, in an interesting condition.

Aunt Honore greeted this news with audible disgust, "Good heavens, Valen, I daresay there are rabbits who breed less often. Have you no self-control?"

Valen flexed his jaw, reflecting on the fact that he had not strangled his aunt on any number

of tempting occasions, which must be a testament to admirable self-restraint. He formed a rather flammable setdown to repay his aunt for her insulting remarks. But Izzie placed a gentle hand on his arm and rushed to his defense. “I daresay Valen has a great deal of self-control, which makes the experience all the more pleasant for me.” She tilted her lovely chin in the air and added a wicked challenge. “I’m sure you understand my meaning, Lady Alameda. Why would I deny myself such—”

“Stop!” Lady Alameda held up her hands. “La, child, have a care for my delicate ears.”

Delicate ears, indeed.

Izzie and Valen glanced at one another and erupted in gales laughter.

Lord Ransley

The years passed and two more children arrived to toddle happily through the halls of Ransley Keep. Although Lord Ransley’s lungs continued to plague him, he insisted on spending time with his grandchildren.

On a particularly warm summer afternoon, he strolled across the lawns holding the hand of the future Lord Ransley, now five years old. The young fellow insisted on stopping to inspect every fuzzy caterpillar and ladybug along the way. Short of breath, Lord Ransley sat down on a garden bench to rest.

His grandson chased after a butterfly, twirling and running with all the grace of a newborn colt. Lord Ransley leaned back, smiling. In that drowsy state he thought wistfully that he saw Valen’s mother coming to sit beside him and share in his joy. Content in the simple pleasure of the moment, he closed his eyes for the very last time.



THANK YOU for taking the time to read about how everything turned out with my favorite characters. I confess it makes me cry every time I read it. I miss them. And now, dear reader, I bid you farewell. May God bless you and keep you till we meet again.

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