



*Put a  
Bonnet on it!*



*A proper lady's  
Colouring Book of  
Elegant Regency Headwear.*

**by Susan Gee Heino**

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**She's scheming to get him out of her house.  
He's plotting to get her into his arms.  
A dutiful spinster and disreputable earl battle for  
possession of a thriving country estate. Much more  
than mere property is at stake, though,  
when hearts are on the line...**

Lord Dovington made sure everything was being loaded properly into the carriages. It was, after all, the perfect day for a picnic. He appreciated the gentle breeze that tossed Miss Langley's skirts playfully, and the warm sun that made her soft skin practically glow. The butter-cream color of her gown accented the golden tones in her hair, and her green eyes sparkled. They turned to fire, though, when she caught him looking at her.

"I hope these preparations are up to your standards, sir," she said curtly when she was forced to stand near him and help with the loading of the hampers. "As you know, we did not have much time to arrange things."

"I'm sure everything will be more than adequate, Miss Langley. My cousin and I appreciate very much that you have indulged us in this."

"I didn't realize I had the option to refuse," she said, shoving an unruly curl back up into her bonnet.

"You always have that option, of course. But I am happy you chose to go along with us on this. In fact... I wonder if I can request a favor."

"Another?"

*from THE EARL'S PASSIONATE PLOT  
by Susan Gee Heino*

'Tis a beautiful morning,  
come girls let us go  
And rummage the shops;  
there's an elegant show  
Of caps, hats, and bonnets;  
some trim'd with a feather,  
Some with flowers, some plain,  
the whole put together.

*S.H. Rowson, 1811*



"Where did you get that quiz of a hat? It makes you look like an old witch."

*John Thorpe* in *NORTHANGER ABBEY*, by Jane Austen



The proper Regency lady did not go about with her head unadorned. Her headgear consisted of caps, hats, bonnets and turbans. The styles and shapes of these changed over the course of the Regency decade and the years surrounding it, but in all cases the goal was elegance, beauty, and individuality.

Prevailing hairstyles were a determining factor in the style and shape of Regency headwear. The large, poofy hats from their mother's and grandmothers' eras had been crafted to fit over the voluminous wigs of those time periods. With more simpler, natural hairstyles in vogue at the turn of the 19th century, headwear followed suit. The variety among them was staggering. Hats and bonnets could be capotes, scuttles, pokes, and even gypsy style.

## The Proper Times to Wear Your Best Bonnet

There are certain times when a Lady simply must be seen in nothing less than her very best bonnet. We shall attempt to list some of the most urgent scenarios here. Please bear in mind that this listing can, by no means, be complete due to space constraints here. The Lady is entreated to use her best judgment--and a bit of imagination--when considering the usefulness of any given bonnet.

1. A Lady should wear her best bonnet when she has been invited to an outing at Box Hill or any other location where mischievous (and eligible!) gentlemen might be present.
2. A Lady should wear her best bonnet when she has wandered foolishly out into the rain and must needs a handsome (and eligible!) gentleman to come rescue her. (Note: the bonnet shall be a complete loss, but quite worth the sacrifice.)
3. A Lady should wear her best bonnet when there is the possibility she might be kidnapped by a pirate, or at the very least, waylaid by a highwayman. There is clear evidence that both of these rogues are very often good-looking dukes in disguise (and eligible!).
4. A Lady should wear her best bonnet when her hair is especially out of control. Not to hide the hair, of course, but to allow the proper amount of stray locks pop out at opportune moments. The only good use for unruly hair is to be re-tucked by attractive (and eligible!) gentlemen.
5. A Lady should wear her best bonnet whenever she likes. That, of course, is the finest part about being a Lady.



"My black cap was openly admired by Mrs. Lefroy, and secretly I imagine by everybody else in the room."  
Jane Austen, *Letter to Cassandra*, December, 1798



"Silly things do cease to be silly if they are done by sensible people in an impudent way."  
Jane Austen, *EMMA*

Someone should have told Mr. Darcy...

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a \_\_\_\_\_ man in  
(adjective)  
possession of a good \_\_\_\_\_ must be in want of a \_\_\_\_\_.  
(noun) (noun)  
However little known the feelings or \_\_\_\_\_ of such a man  
(emotion)  
may be on his first \_\_\_\_\_ a neighborhood, this \_\_\_\_\_ is so  
(verb, -ing) (noun)  
well fixed in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the surrounding \_\_\_\_\_, that he  
(body parts) (plural noun)  
is considered as the \_\_\_\_\_ property of someone or other  
(adjective)  
of their \_\_\_\_\_.  
(family members)

*from PRIDE AND PREJUDICE by Jane Austen*

"Look here, I have bought this bonnet. I do not think it is very pretty; but I thought I might as well buy it as not. I shall pull it to pieces as soon as I get home, and see if I can make it up any better."

*Lydia Bennet* in *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*, Jane Austen



"I never saw so many shocking bad hats in my life."  
Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington



## Regency Word Find

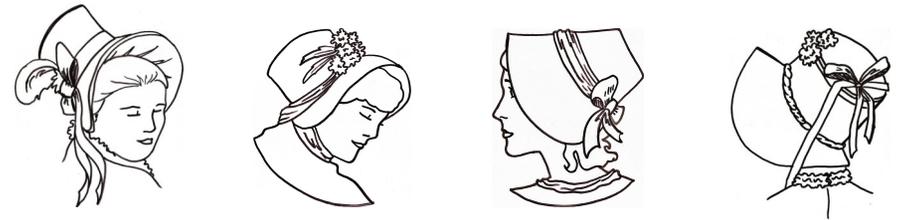
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 n y p c u h l n t u r b a n o  
 d e b u t a n t i o z t l w o  
 o s h b f t d p g e n b h y m

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. bonnet    | 9. ballroom |
| 2. gloves    | 10. heir    |
| 3. carriage  | 11. turban  |
| 4. betrothal | 12. novel   |
| 5. lady      | 13. fan     |
| 6. regent    | 14. heart   |
| 7. debutant  | 15. ton     |
| 8. belles    | 16. call    |

"I swear by my pretty floral bonnet, I will end you."

Capt. Mal Reynolds, *Firefly*, 2002





Caps were worn indoors. Younger, unmarried ladies generally did not bother with them, but married ladies--and those who were firmly on the shelf--wore them nearly all the time. When these ladies went out, they popped their bonnet or their hat over top of the cap. Presumably, this protected their hair and left them time for more matronly duties besides sitting to have their hair done and redone.

Hats and bonnets are similar creatures. The difference between them is fairly simple: hats did not need to be tied on, while bonnets did. For walking peacefully in the garden, a hat might be just the thing. For traveling in an open carriage on a breezy day, the young lady would most certainly require a bonnet. Both items could be made of straw or of fabric, or of straw covered with fabric. All manner of fruits, flowers, feathers or bows could be used for adornment. Ribbons or scarves would be used to tie on the bonnet.

Turbans were elegant and loved by many. They were basically a hat, created by twisting and wrapping fabric, then stitching into place. They were especially popular earlier in the Regency era. The most elaborate turbans were worn for formal occasions, while less elaborate versions were worn during the day.

"Laugh as much as you choose, but you will not  
laugh me out of my opinion."

Jane Austen, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

### Looking Just Dandy

Beau Brummell was the "\_\_\_\_\_ Man of Fashion".  
(adjective)

His influence on men's dress was based on \_\_\_\_\_ coats,  
(color)

full-length \_\_\_\_\_, and immaculate \_\_\_\_\_ linens.  
(article of clothes) (color)

He claimed he took \_\_\_\_\_ hours to get dressed, spent over  
(number)

£ \_\_\_\_\_ per year on his wardrobe, and used \_\_\_\_\_  
(large number) (a liquid)

to polish his boots. Modern \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
(job title, plural) (job title, plural)

owe him a debt. Their \_\_\_\_\_ suits and neckties still  
(adjective)

bear The Beau's \_\_\_\_\_ influence.  
(adjective)



"...and next week (I) shall begin my operations on my hat, which you know my principal hopes of happiness depend."

Jane Austen, *Letter to Cassandra*, October, 1798



**How well do you know your Regency Trivia?  
Let's find out!**

1. Which king was on the English throne during the Regency era?  
a. George IV    b. George III    c. George II    d. Arthur
2. In what year was PRIDE AND PREJUDICE first published?  
a. 1810          b. 1799          c. 1813          d. 1815
3. When did Napoleon finally meet defeat at Waterloo?  
a. June 1815    b. Nov. 1813    c. May 1811    d. Apr. 1815
4. Who was made regent when the king became ill in 1811?  
a. M. Thatcher    b. Prince of Wales    c. Brummell    d. Lord Byron
5. When was the final Frost Fair held, due to climate change causing the Thames to no longer freeze over?  
a. 1811          b. 1815          c. 1814          d. 1819
6. If you were caught "diddling", what did you do?  
a. played the lute    b. spilled your ale    c. adultery    d. cheated at cards
7. Which article of clothing would a Regency belle *not* wear to an elegant ball?  
a. fashionable hoop skirt    b. gloves    c. Chinese silk shawl    d. a turban

**How well did you do? See answers below!**

1) b 2) c 3) a 4) b 5) c 6) d 7) a

**They were harmless white lies,  
or so she thought. Will Miss Wheaton's whiskers  
lead her to ruin, or help find true love?**

Lord Dothingley was a fine man. A good catch. Everyone said so. Best of all, Mamma said so. And wouldn't it be just lovely to finally be done with Mamma's nagging, Mamma's lecturing, and Mamma's continual parade of eligible gentlemen? Indeed, it would. If only Elizabeth didn't need to be married to someone like Lord Dothingley to gain such peace in her life.

Not that she didn't imagine herself happily wed at some point to someone... but why couldn't she possibly imagine Lord Dothingley in that role? Who did she want instead? No one in particular, of course. She was not given to romantic fancy. Still, if she had ever dreamed of someone—not that she ever had, of course—she had to admit it would not be Lord Dothingley. It would be someone like...

Like him.

Her glance had strayed out the window, searching for something to distract her, to help her forget these foolish jitters and get her mind back onto things at hand. Her mind, however, was completely unprepared for what she saw. The jitters became worse.

The rush of late morning traffic had created a clutter. Several carriages were caught up in it and people were causing some measure of disturbance. There, in the midst of the chaos, was a gentleman of supreme calm. He sat still, quite content and fully unconcerned, ignoring the bustle around him as if he could brush it aside on a whim.

**Continued**

His curicle was new, painted in deep forest green with glittering gold-colored wheels. His two matching greys danced anxiously, but he held them masterfully with just one hand while his other hand drooped lazily over the back of the seat beside him. That empty seat seemed quite vacant... and quite tempting.

Yes, he was a gentleman indeed. He was elegantly dressed in the height of fashion, yet somehow maintained an untamed quality that Elizabeth was quite unfamiliar with. His dark hair was thick and seemed to fight rebelliously with the warm spring breezes, yet his rakish hat remained perfectly in place. The brim sent just enough shadow over the man's face to make him a bit mysterious, but not enough to quite hide his eyes.

She could see these eyes easily. They were aimed directly at her, peering through her window and watching her with unabashed intent. One eyebrow rose slowly as he realized she had caught him staring. He smiled just the slightest bit.

Good gracious! That stranger on the street was staring at her in her own home! How rude! How appalling! Worse, she realized she was helpless to look away. And Lord Dothingley was still lolling at her feet, stroking her hand and begging for... well, her hand.

*Excerpt from MISS WHEATON'S WHISKERS  
By Susan Gee Heino*



