



Eliza Fenwick

Woman in the Eighteenth-Century

Jordyn Pedersen

Who is She?



A picture of Eliza Fenwick...
Yes, you are seeing this right,
there are no photographs of
her existence

Born in London 1766 and died in Rhode Island 1840

Mother of two children: Eliza Anne, and Orlando who were born in 1789.
Has four grandchildren

Friends with Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin and Mary Hayes

She ended up leaving her husband, John Fenwick, due to alcoholism and prison debt leaving herself as a widow.

Writer, teacher, and eventually a school owner in Canada

Talented, compelling, and literate in reading and writing

Negotiated rapidly, shifting social and political contexts as she moved across the globe.

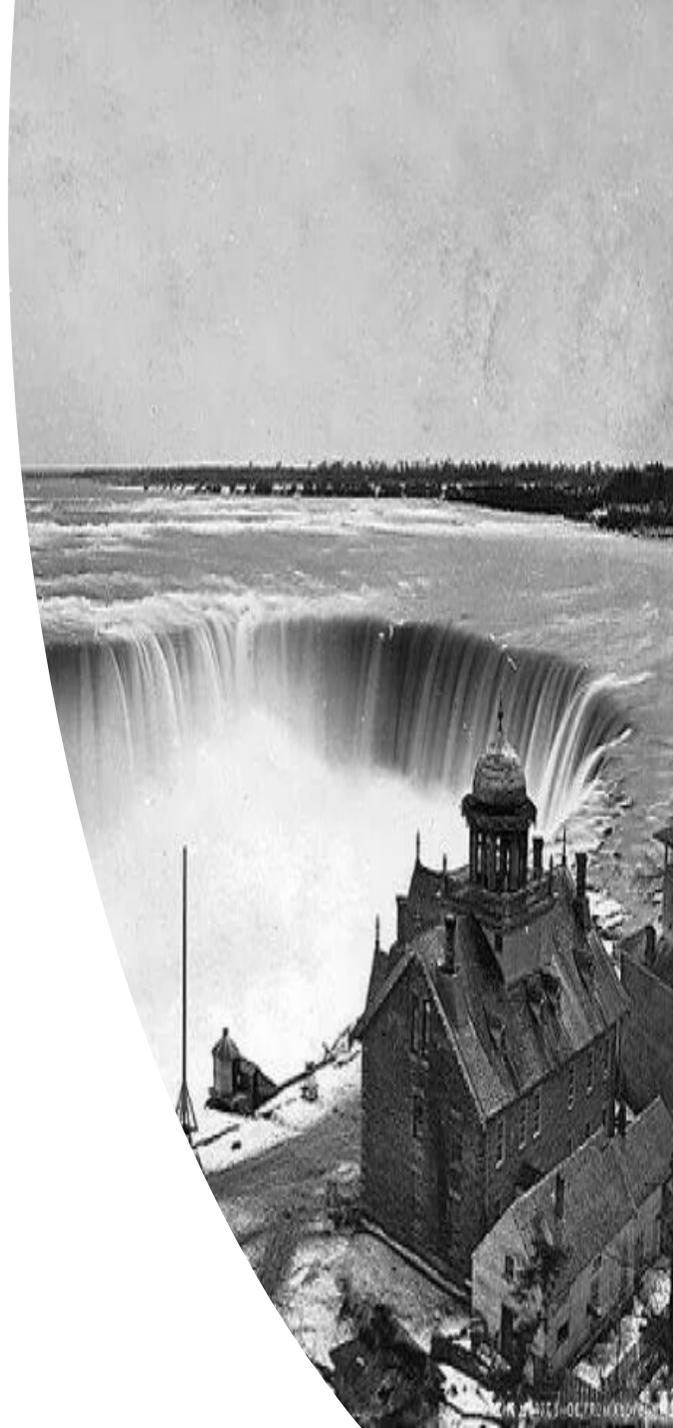
First Travel to Barbados- 1814

- Struggling to support herself and her children after her marriage fell apart, however It was her daughters acting career that helped fund the family to Barbados
- Had to learn how to work within the social norms of a slave-dependent culture while still holding her views
- Significance of buying her first slave- A male cook
- Her goal: start the idea of an all girls school—was not successful.
- Family tragedy: son died of yellow fever at 17 years old.



Canada, A place to Call Home

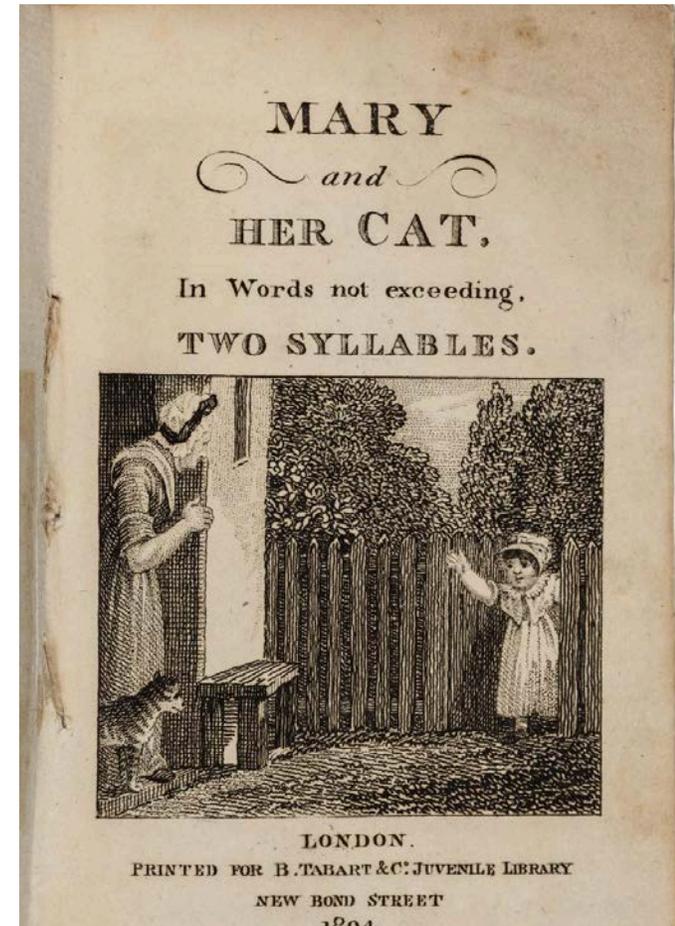
- Immigrated to Canada in 1829, more specific Niagara on the lake of Ontario, in which borders the American boarder of New York
- Successfully opened a school in the fall of 1829 : **Niagara Seminary Young Ladies**
- Gained financial and social security
- Daughter died from heart failure in 1828.



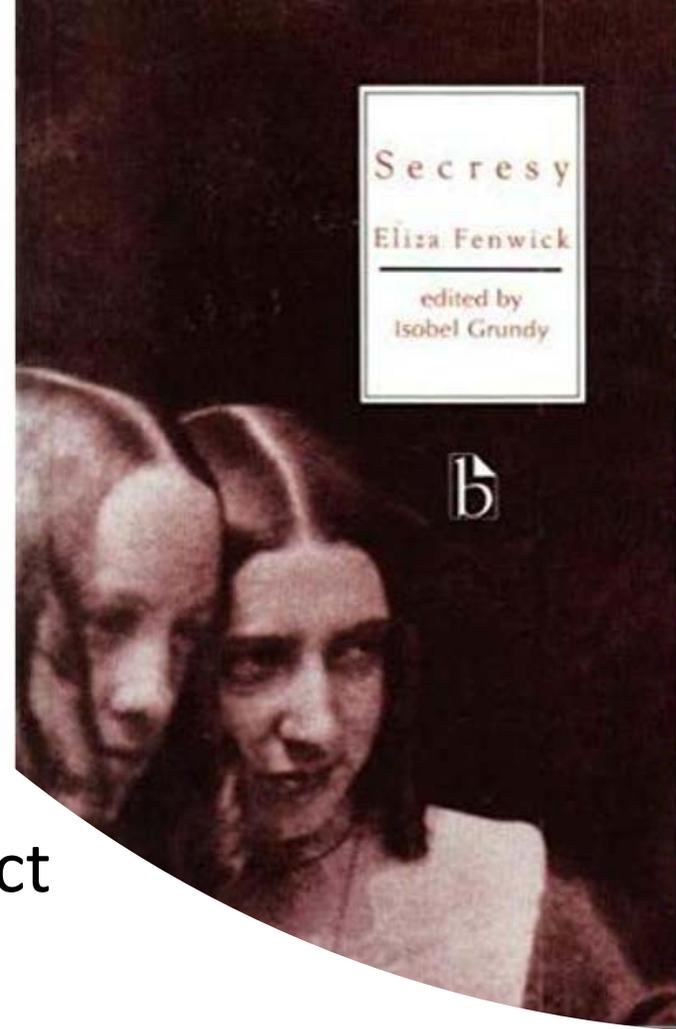
Fenwick's Publication of Children's Books

- *Mary and her Cat* (1804)
- *The Life of Carlo* (1804)
- *The Famous Dog of Drury Lane Theatre* (1804)
- *Rays from the Rainbow* (1812)

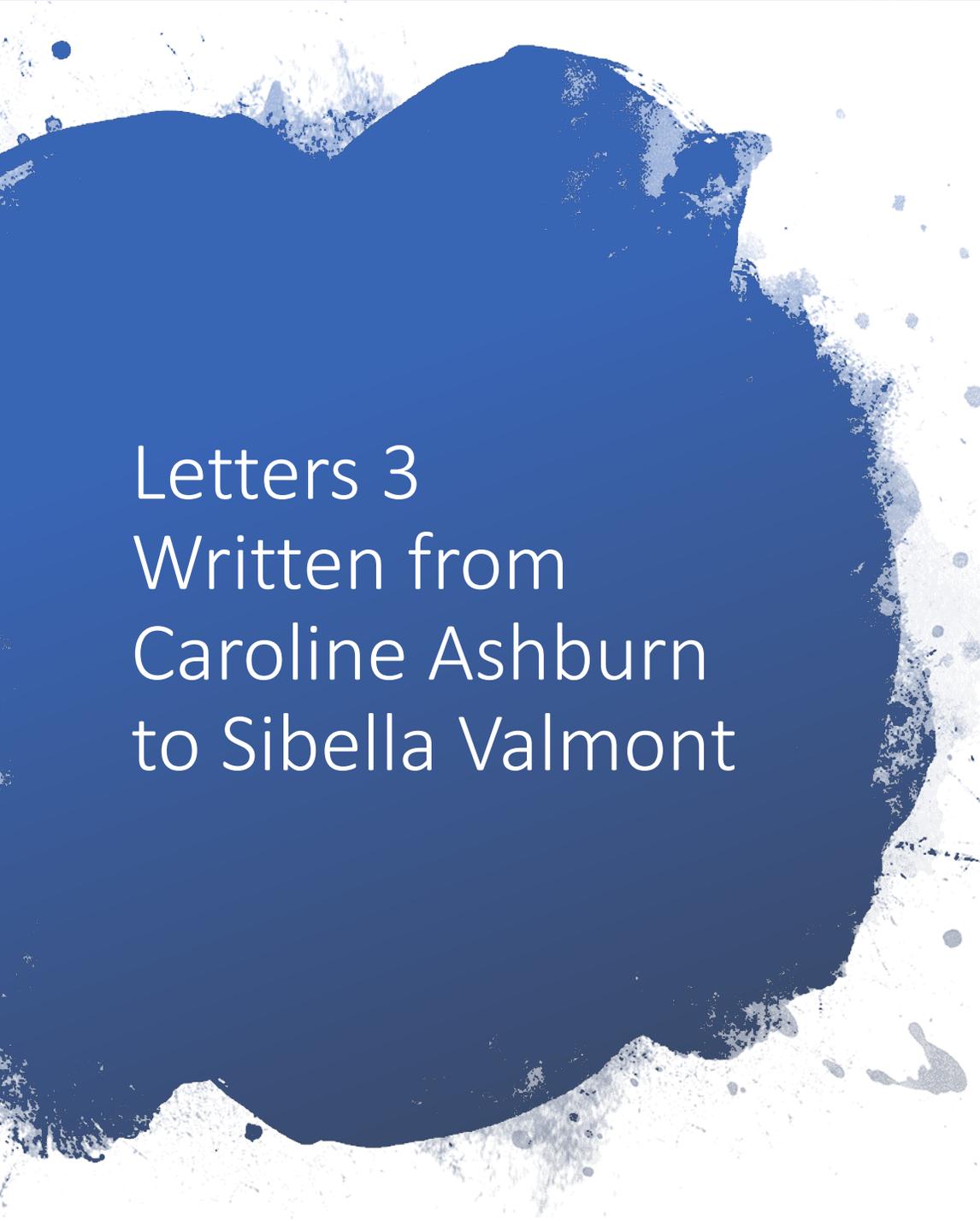
Through the morals of her stories, she encouraged children to be honest, obedient, hard-working and studious—all virtues of a middle-class, capitalist society.



Secresy



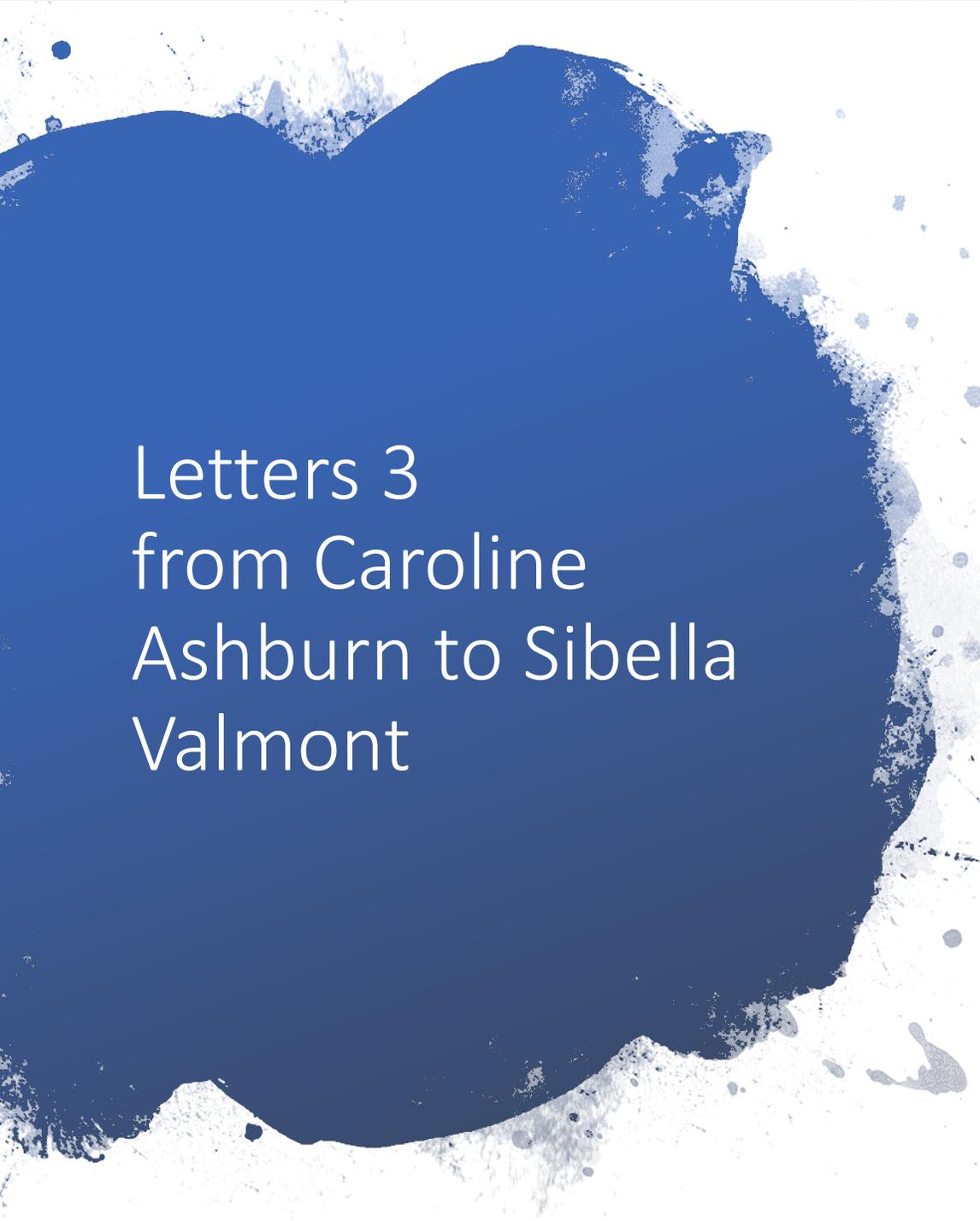
“I should make a sketch of my education, the incidents of my life, and their consequent effect upon my character. Yet I will continue to read with my avidity... people of superior class must have superior forms; and the endearing name of mother is banished for the cold title of ceremony” (Fenwick, 46).



Letters 3

Written from Caroline Ashburn to Sibella Valmont

“His proposal was abrupt and disgusting, but there was no alternative. He would equip her to go in search of a wealthy marriage among the luxurious inhabitants of India; or, with her other professing friends, he would leave her to the poverty which lay immediately before her. The offer, after little deliberation, was accepted. Rather than be poor, she humbled the pride of her birth and pretensions; she strengthened her nerve for the voyage; and, having safely arrived in India, her recommendations, but above all her personal charm, secured her the address of Mr. Ashburn, who, though he was neither young nor attractive, has gold and diamonds in abundance. A very short interval elapsed between the commencement of their acquaintance with each other, and the celebration of their marriage” (Fenwick, 46-47).



Letters 3
from Caroline
Ashburn to Sibella
Valmont

“He spoke mysteriously of his system, and his plans, of his authority, his wisdom, and your dependence, of his right of chusing for you, and your positive duty of obeying him with out reserve or discussion. At last, with tone and gesture by which I was to understand that he went to the extreme of condensation in my favor, he consented that, provided no other company came to visit him in that time, you should associate with us while we remain at Valmont Castle” (Fenwick, 55).

Letter 4: Written from Sibella Valmont to Caroline Ashburn

"Clement is my adopted son, Sibella," said my uncle. "He will henceforth live with you in the castle. Take him out child; and shew him where you find the prettiest flowers and the ripest fruit."

Ah! need I tell you how we advanced from shyness to familiarity, from familiarity to kindness, from kindness to love, all powerful, all potent! The castle then seemed no prison; the moat seemed no barrier. Sometimes my uncle carried Clement abroad to visit with him, but then I was sure of his return. Even the hours of instruction I shared with him. He had a good, an amiable tutor, who delighted in teaching to me also every science he taught to Clement; and if Mr. Valmont frowned upon me or checked my industry, Clement was still at my side and I smiled through my tears.

Thus passed away the years from six till sixteen. On the day that I became sixteen, we had run races with our little fawn; and, having wearied ourselves with exertion, we had lain down to rest in each other's arms, at the foot of that oak where you, Miss Ashburn, first beheld me. My uncle broke our happy slumbers. He came to the oak; and sternly commanded Clement to rise and follow him.

I followed too. My un-

him. For a time, I expostulated with vehemence and courage; but I could not repress my tears — and, while I was compelled to listen to my uncle, his tone, his words impressed me with my former awe of him and rendered my remonstrance timid and useless.

To Clement he said, "You are now to leave these boyish follies, and learn the duties of a man. You shall mix with society; but remember that you are not to be attracted by its specious appearances. Scrutinize into its follies and enormities, as I have done; and let my precepts and instructions be your guide and law. Remember, Clement, that I took you from poverty and obscurity. Remember too that, on your duty and gratitude depends your security. That child," he pointed to me, "mind me, sir, that child is in future to be considered only as your sister."

"As for you, Sibella," he said to me, "your duties in life are easily performed. I have chosen a part for you: and nothing is required of you but obedience.¹ You have heard me declare to Clement, and I now repeat it to you, that to Clement Montgomery you are to be no more than a sister. This day he quits us. When he shall return, I have not determined."

Yes, Caroline, my Clement went. Two years has he roamed in a world which I am forbidden to know. But, alike in viewing the palace or the cottage, the burning mountain² or the fertile plain, must the idea of Sibella accompany him. Our minds, our principles, our affections are the same; and, while I trace his never to be forgotten image within my breast, I know how fondly he cherishes the remembrance of mine.

Caroline, adieu! I go to the oak. On that consecrated spot, mountains, seas, continents dissolve, and my spirit unites with his!

SIBELLA VALMONT.

To conclude...

Eliza's life was a demonstration of her well-earned happy ending for her story about her ability to persevere through failure and loss. This is something worth honoring knowing mental fatigue can cause personal damage. Praising, recognizing, and remembering about Eliza's resilience, her willingness to pick herself up after each failure and start again, relies on her wit, entrepreneurship, and sociability to set a new course into an uncertain future.

Work Cited

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