

# **Sharpe's Revenge: Richard Sharpe and the Peace of 1814 Study Guide**

**Sharpe's Revenge: Richard Sharpe and the Peace of 1814 by Bernard Cornwell**

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# Plot Summary

Major Richard Sharpe continues his military career during the invasion of France, participating in the siege of Toulouse, until Napoleon abdicates. Sharpe is then embroiled in legal troubles stemming from a plot hatched by his rival Pierre Ducos. Sharpe travels over much of France and to the Kingdom of Naples to hunt down Ducos, exact his revenge, and clear his good name. In the process, his marriage to Jane dissolves and his Friendship with William Frederickson is ruined.

The novel is divided into four Parts, each Part comprising several chapters. The various Parts serve to construct an overarching narrative that, in many respects, is episodic. Part I deals with Sharpe's military career and his decision to remain in France and fight against Napoleon's forces rather than resigning his commission and retiring to England with his wife Jane. As Jane returns home, Sharpe joins a newly-formed British group that marches on the French city of Toulouse. In an aggressive and costly assault, Toulouse is captured and hours later the news arrives that Napoleon had abdicated some days previous. The war over, the British forces begin reorganization and departure for home. Sharpe's visions of an idyllic retirement are quickly shattered, however—he has been accused of stealing Napoleon's treasure from the Teste de Buch, a fortress he captured prior to the opening of the current novel.

In Part II the charges are considered. They are entirely fabricated by Major Pierre Ducos, a French intelligence officer with a personal hatred for Sharpe. In fact, Ducos has stolen the money and framed Sharpe and Frederickson for the crime. The two men decide their only hope lies in finding Henri Lissan, the one-time commandant of the fortress, and securing his testimony in their behalf. To this end they escape and travel across France. Meanwhile, Ducos leads men to Lissan's estate and they brutally murder the man.

Back home in England, Jane becomes disillusioned with the life of a military wife and begins a scandalous affair with a penniless but somewhat influential lord. Sharpe and Frederickson finally arrive at Lissan's estate only to receive a surprising welcome—Lucille views them as brigands and shoots Sharpe, inflicting severe wounds. Part III sees Jane's affair become quite public even as first Frederickson and then Sharpe fall in love with Lucille Lissan, Henri's younger sister and now head of the family estate. Lucille rebuffs Frederickson's early marriage proposal causing him to leave the estate and travel to Paris where he searches the national archives and manages to locate Ducos' hiding place in the Kingdom of Naples. Sharpe continues to recuperate and begins a romantic love affair with Lucille, leaving her pregnant as he eventually travels to Paris to join Frederickson.

In Part IV, the two British soldiers travel to the Kingdom of Naples and join forces with General Calvet, a one-time opponent and Napoleon loyalist, who is seeking to recover Napoleon's fortune for the exiled tyrant. The small band besieges Ducos' estate, seize the treasure and Ducos, and make a daring escape from Neapolitan forces. Sharpe finally informs Frederickson of his love for Lucille and the two men part ways with

antipathy. Sharpe then returns to Lucille's estate to pursue the unlikely life of a French farmer.



# Part I

## Part I Summary

Major Richard Sharpe continues his military career during the invasion of France, participating in the siege of Toulouse, until Napoleon abdicates. Sharpe is then embroiled in legal troubles stemming from a plot hatched by his rival Pierre Ducos. Sharpe travels over much of France and to the Kingdom of Naples to hunt down Ducos, exact his revenge, and clear his good name. In the process, his marriage to Jane dissolves and his Friendship with William Frederickson is ruined.

Part I consists of a prologue and three enumerated chapters. The prologue serves to establish the novel's overall narrative arc and welds the current novel to events transpiring in a previous novel in the series of novels. Following a successful invasion into southwestern France, the British arm organizes to march on Toulouse. Jane demands Sharpe resign his commission and return to England with her but he refuses to leave his wartime companions and life. Instead he gives her a power of attorney, advises her to return to England and buy an estate, and claims he will shortly join her—she departs. Sharpe then fights a duel with Captain Bampfylde arising over situations summarized in the current novel and fully developed in a previous novel. Bampfylde's shot flies wide and Sharpe shoots the naval captain in the buttocks. Meanwhile, a nervous Napoleon seeks to hide treasure in the event of failure; a vast sum of gold is shipped to Major Pierre Ducos for concealment. Ducos, realizing that France must soon fall, instead decides to steal the money.

In Chapter 1, Sharpe's longtime friend Captain William Frederickson, along with his rifle company, is attached to Major-General Nairn's force. Sharpe joins Nairn as chief of staff, and Sergeant Patrick Harper joins Frederickson's company—thus the three soldiers remain together through a military reorganization. They discuss their immediate futures and Frederickson condemns Sharpe and Harper as fools for claiming happiness in marriage. They prepare to march into battle once again. Meanwhile, Ducos enlists the aid of Sergeant Challon and several other unscrupulous soldiers and executes his theft of Napoleon's the money. Ducos also evolves and executes a plan that eventually incriminates Sharpe for the theft.

In Chapter 2, the British forces close on Toulouse, a fortified and garrisoned city under the command of Marshall Soult, and then Nairn's troops participate in a major assault of a ridgeline forming the city's principle defense. In Chapter 3, the battle continues; after reaching their own objective, Nairn's forces voluntarily reposition and assault a central strong point in the line. Sharpe leads the men into combat and sees that the local company, largely green recruits, has been ably led by General Calvet who evades harm or capture. The assault is costly—Nairn and other officers die, and Nairn's troops suffer at least one-third of their number in casualties—but successful. After the ridge is captured, Soult abandons Toulouse and within a few days the British forces learn that Napoleon has abdicated—in fact, had abdicated before the costly assault on Toulouse.



Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper celebrate the news by getting drunk and wondering what a future of peace might hold for inveterate soldiers.

## Part I Analysis

In many respects, Part I of the novel acts as a self-contained novella, or an episode in Sharpe's life—this is particularly true of Chapters 1, 2, and 3. The Prologue functions as heavy foreshadowing and establishes two primary narrative arcs that will resolve during the remainder of the novel—first, Sharpe's eventual estrangement from his wife Jane, and second, Ducos' framing of Sharpe for theft. In an attempt to mollify Jane's anger, Sharpe gives her power of attorney over his considerable wealth and then sends her home to England. Given Sharpe's typical luck with women, it is not hard correctly to imagine how that situation will develop. The other narrative development concerns Ducos' decision to defraud Napoleon's empire by stealing state funds and his evolution of a plot to frame Sharpe for the theft. The three enumerated chapters provide further characterization for all of the novel's major characters and effectively wrap up the Peninsular War, wherein the British are ultimately victorious over the French. As typical for a Sharpe novel, Sharpe's involvement in the thick of combat is pivotal, exciting, and described in sharp, concise terms. In many ways, Part I of the novel is the most-typical writing for the series and is also the most exciting and well-executed.

The assault on the defenses of Toulouse is described in considerable technical detail; although no maps are provided, consultation of a detailed area map proves helpful to understanding the larger tactical deployments. The attempt is for a Spanish assault to execute simultaneously with a British assault, but as these things go the timing is wrong. Thus, after driving off the Spaniards the French have some few hours to redeploy against the British, advancing from another quarter. The French position high on the ridge is excellent for defense and they use it to maximum advantage. The battalion in which Sharpe fights suffers one-third casualties in obtaining its own objective and then after a brief pause is regroups and assaults a centrally-placed redoubt that has been captured—and lost—twice already by other forces. Final casualties must stand around an appalling fifty percent, and include several senior officers. Ironically, Napoleon had abdicated prior to the battle but the distance of communication required had prevented news from arriving and sparing many thousands of lives.



## Part II

### Part II Summary

Part II consists of Chapters 4 through 9. In Chapter 4, the British forces are realigned. Many desertions thin the ranks, while most soldiers—enlisted for life—and shipped away to various overseas garrison stations. Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper are ordered back to England where they expect to be folded into new units. As they travel to the debarkation port of Bordeaux Sharpe receives a letter from his financial agent, informing him that Jane, acting with her power of attorney, has withdrawn his entire account—some eighteen thousand guineas, a staggering sum. He wonders what Jane is about and speculates she has found some better investment opportunity. Harper speculates on methods to get out of the army. The scene in Bordeaux is chaotic, and the mingling of maimed French soldiers, widows, orphans, and cast-off army-wives is appalling. Just as Sharpe's group is about to board ships for England, Sharpe and Frederickson are detained for questioning—Harper joins them in the role as a servant. In Chapter 5, it develops that Sharpe and Frederickson are accused of stealing a vast fortune in gold from the Teste de Buch during their capture of the fortress, as detailed in a previous novel. The men flatly deny the charges as ludicrous but, while not arrested, they are nevertheless confined. Sharpe is flustered and argumentative—fortunately, Frederickson is level-headed and insightful. Of course, the charges are obviously false and have been carefully arranged by Ducos—but the British authorities are entirely ignorant of this.

Chapter 6 recounts the lengthy history of Henri Lassan's progenitors and their role in overseeing Château Lassan, in Normandy. The building and grounds are described in considerable detail because of their later significance to Sharpe. After the war ends, Lassan returns home and lives with his elderly mother and his sister, Lucille. Lucille, also known as the widow Castineau, is an attractive and vivacious, if not beautiful, woman on insight and grace. Lassan's mother demands that he marry and father male heirs but Lassan is much demoralized by his military failure at Teste de Buch and desires nothing so much as to become a priest. Lassan and Lucille spend much time trying to sort out their role in the future. Meanwhile, back in Bordeaux, Sharpe and Frederickson decide that escape is their best option. Harper succeeds in getting the guards falling-down drunk, and the men subsequently start a harmless diversionary fire and escape in the ensuing confusion. Bordeaux, however, is a walled city under military justice.

In Chapter 7 Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper flee Bordeaux. Their simple plan is to hope for the best and they attempt to leave the city by walking past a guard post, hoping that Sharpe's and Frederickson's officer ranks will prevent undue questioning. Instead, they encounter a guard post manned by old military friends and commanded by Captain Peter d'Alembord, a personal acquaintance and friend. D'Alembord escorts the men from the city and promises to send news home to Jane Sharpe. The men then proceed to Arcachon where they visit with town citizens and learn the location of Lassan's distant



private estate, for which they depart. For her own part, Jane in London begins to associate with a poor but titled widow and begins rapidly to squander Sharpe's considerable estate. Jane is later interrogated by government officials who openly suspect that the money she has withdrawn is the same money Sharpe has putatively stolen from Napoleon. Elsewhere, Lassan decides during Chapter 8 to forgo his dreams of being a priest and honor his mother's wish of having heirs. However, after a happy betrothal celebration, Lassan and his mother are brutally murdered by men who appear to be roving brigands. Lucille is shocked and immediately decides that the murderers must be the Englishmen of whom Lassan has so frequently spoken; in fact, she will later discover that the murderers were Ducos and his men, who killed Lassan to prevent him from countering their falsified incriminating evidence against Sharpe.

In Chapter 9, Lucille attempts to salvage something of her life but remains inconsolable in her grief. Soon after the murder she receives Monsier Roland as a visitor—Roland is following up on the prosecution of Sharpe's legal situation. Lucille reports to him Lassan's murder and blames English troops, even going so far as to name Sharpe as the particular murderer—Roland does not discover that Lucille has fabricated these charges from her imagination more than from the facts. Meanwhile, Ducos has traveled to the Kingdom of Naples where he secures lodging and protection at an exorbitant price. He spends even more money preparing his rented estate for an attack. As his men grow bored, Ducos grows paranoid. Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper finally complete their lengthy overland travel and arrive at Lassan's estate. Waiting until dusk, Sharpe and Frederickson approach the house and enter through a back door that leads into the kitchen. Lucille sees them as brigands and draws forth a hidden pistol, shooting Sharpe at close range.

## Part II Analysis

Chapters 4 and 5 are transitional segments of the novel and bridge Sharpe's military experiences at the siege of Toulouse and the commencement of his next series of adventures aimed at clearing his good name and restoring his honor. In much the same way, Part II of the novel begins the bridge of the military sequence of Part I with the revenge and 'happy ending' sequences of Part IV. Most of the Part II scenes in Bordeaux consist of post-war confusion. Spanish and other foreigners enlisted in the British army desert en masse—a practice which is illegal but tolerated. The English, Irish, and Scottish troops are realigned—some will remain in France but most will be sent to overseas stations on garrison duty. The British army will not allow soldier's wives and children to board the transport ships—thus many, many thousands of Spanish and French women and infants are simply cast adrift to walk back home or worse.

The novel presents one pimp actively recruiting women as whores amidst rampant poverty and imminent mass starvation. Thrown into this mix are many disabled French veterans and various displaced persons. The end of the war has not brought an end to the humanitarian crisis. In Chapter 4, the letter that Sharpe receives from his agents provides heavy-handed foreshadowing of later narrative developments in the novel—even the trustworthy Sharpe is confused and worried by the news that Jane has





withdrawn a veritable fortune from his agents: Frederickson estimates that Jane could buy about 180 "splendid" (p. 104) country estates with the sum! The court proceedings in Chapter 5 are a major turning point in the novel; at a stroke Sharpe ceases being a wealthy military hero and commences his life as a penniless fugitive from justice. The parallel development of Sharpe's and Frederickson's demeanors during the proceedings are interesting and the court scene is a fine example of the strong writing that has made the series of novels so popular. Chapter 6 is provided nearly entirely to introduce Lucille Lassan and establish her character and the setting of her estate.

For the remainder of Part II, Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper become essentially secondary characters. They travel overland for a great distance, moving from Bordeaux to Lassan's Normandy estate—upon their ultimate arrival the veterans are caught by surprise by Lucille and Sharpe is seriously wounded by her—quite an ignominious fate for such a distinguished soldier, the nadir of Sharpe's adventures, and a significant turning point in the narrative. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 then retool the plot to establish the full extent of Sharpe's victimization—not only has Ducos framed him, but at home Jane has become seriously disenchanted with Sharpe the man while becoming seriously enchanted with his money. She falls in with a bad sort of people and lacks the intelligence to realize how brutally she is being used. Meanwhile, Ducos murders Lassan—the one man that could easily exonerate Sharpe and Frederickson. And just as unhappily, Lucille independently but mistakenly corroborates Ducos' charges by erroneously naming Sharpe as the murderer of her brother. Note that the unsolicited advice frequently offered Lucille—to marry quickly—coupled with Frederickson's and Sharpe's endless discussions about the virtues of marriage heavily foreshadow the eventual love triangle that develops.



## Part III

### Part III Summary

In London, d'Alembord calls upon Jane and is astonished as the marked change she has undergone in just a few months. Jane is unconcerned about Sharpe and lives in an expensive but repellent house that is kept in squalor. He urges Jane to call upon Lord John Rossendale to intervene on Sharpe's behalf; Rossendale being an acquaintance with considerable connections at court. Jane states she has already spoken to Rossendale and curiously lets the matter drop; d'Alembord departs in much confusion. Later, Jane again calls on Rossendale and it become apparent that they are romantically involved and somewhat intimate—indeed, much of London admires Rossendale for his bravery in the matter as it is widely assumed that Sharpe will return and kill the man before discarding Jane. Yet Sharpe remains in France, hideously wounded and slowly recuperating. Lucille's gun, loaded with multiple projectiles, has wrecked Sharpe's shoulder and leg and though he survives he beings a lengthy and painful convalescence. Frederickson has intervned to set the record straight with Lucille. As the weeks pass by, Frederickson and Harper make extensive repairs around Lucille's estate. Lucille wonders how anyone could love a man like Sharpe while Sharpe admires the beautiful country and ancient house.

In Chapter 11, Harper travels to London, meets d'Alembord, and attempts to call on Jane. Although d'Alembord tries to warn him of the change, Harper refuses to believe it and is thus nearly trampled under by Rossendale's horses as Rossendale and Jane pull away from her house. Even as Jane realizes it is Harper who Rossendale has whipped out of the way, she squeals in pleasure at the excitement of it. Much reduced, Harper falls into a funk and the two old soldiers worry about Sharpe's reaction. In France, Sharpe continues to heal and waits for news from home. Meanwhile Frederickson develops unreciprocated feelings for Lucille and continues to rehabilitate her estate. On Sharpe's suggestion, Frederickson finally proposes marriage and is gently but firmly rebuffed. He thereafter departs to pursue Ducos on his own. Sharpe, still an invalid but recovering, remains behind and gradually picks up French. He spends much time with Lucille and the two characters grow fond of each other.

In Chapter 12 Frederickson travels to Paris and researches Ducos, eventually finding his address through an unlikely but fortunate visit to an optician. Frederickson then sends for Sharpe, and Sharpe leaves Lucille's estate to seek revenge. Lucille is wistful and saddened by his departure and, some days later, confesses to her doctor and friends that she is carrying Sharpe's child. She then writes a letter to Roland, retracting her earlier statements and presenting claims of Sharpe's innocence in the entire matter. For his own part, Ducos remains in his fortified estate in the Kingdom of Naples but becomes increasingly paranoid and eccentric. He hires many additional guards and takes to parading around in Napoleon's old uniforms; he has converted nearly all of the vast fortune into gemstones and lives among his bored men who daily grow more threatening.



## Part III Analysis

Part III serves as a bridge between Ducos' framing of Sharpe and Frederickson in Part II, and their ultimately successful revenge in Part IV. It also proves a major turning point in the narrative. Much of Part III deals with Jane's and Sharpe's changing relationships. The faithless Jane abandons her marriage to Sharpe in favor of a dalliance with Lord Rossendale while Sharpe gradually falls in love with Lucille. Ironically, each partner—Jane and Sharpe—pick a destitute but titled lover. Note particularly how Lucille and Sharpe transition from mutual antipathy to mutual affection and then romantic love over the course of the summer months and his recuperation. Sharpe's admiration for Lucille's house and estate, coupled with Jane's banal taste in a London home, foreshadows Sharpe's eventual return to Lucille's estate. Sharpe does not necessarily embark on his affair with abandon, as he has several reasons to believe all with Jane is not perhaps well—she has unilaterally withdrawn a vast fortune from his account; she has had ample time to write but has not; and she has not attempted to join him in France following the conclusion of the war. Sharpe has also asked Harper to check in on Jane as well as asking d'Alembord to do the same, and the lack of response from any source thus bodes ill. Harper's trip to London is intriguing and not entirely bereft of a certain humor.

Frederickson's gentle rebuff leads him to travel away from Lucille and engage in successful detective work in Paris. The rebuff also sets up the gradual development of the love triangle resulting, at the novel's end, in the break between Frederickson and Sharpe. Frederickson's proposal and failure is of course heavily, if ironically, foreshadowed throughout earlier parts of the novel by his incessant harping upon the futile state of matrimony. Meanwhile, in the Kingdom of Naples, Ducos gradually but surely becomes increasingly paranoid. No longer in the French intelligence service, his suspicious and petty nature begins to turn inward and he conjures up phantoms. His continuously escalating defensive preparations demonstrate how well he knows his enemy Sharpe, but they prove, ultimately, useless. Ducos has taken the expense to convert nearly all of the stolen booty into gems. Thus, the vast wealth is easily portable—which will have significant impact in the concluding scenes of the novel. Ducos also secures a small cannon, called a grasshopper, which will also be critical during Sharpe's escape.



## Part IV

### Part IV Summary

Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper travel to the Kingdom of Naples and scout out Ducos' estate. Meanwhile, Lucille's letter is received by Roland and he sends the information on to Napoleon in exile. Napoleon sends the loyal and trusted General Calvet to the Kingdom of Naples to recover the stolen funds. Calvet meets with local authorities including a Cardinal and realizes that extracting Ducos will not be done legally. The Cardinal protects Ducos because of Ducos' great wealth and frequent payments. Calvet moves to recover the money by force and the Cardinal plans to intercept Calvet and the money. Sharpe's group then moves to stealthily invade Ducos' estate but they are waylaid by Calvet. In Chapter 14, Calvet suggests a joint operation in the hostile land: Sharpe and Frederickson will recover their honorable names, and Calvet will recover Napoleon's fortune. After a brief conference, all realize cooperation is in their best interest. The small party of English and French veterans begins a stealthy assault on Ducos' ramshackle villa. The three English riflemen sneak into the perimeter and are detected by attack dogs. Killing the dogs, they penetrate deep into the building while the French soldiers exchange fire with Ducos' men. The English manage to flank Ducos' main group of men and with the assistance of the French gain the victory.

Meanwhile, Ducos and his remaining few men fall back. In Chapter 15, Ducos' group make a forlorn last stand in a sealed and reinforced room. Ducos plans to wait for assistance from the Cardinal. Calvet and Sharpe plan to escape down a steep cliff to a boat awaiting them below, thus avoiding the Cardinal's men. Ducos' defensive room is sturdy, however, and the Englishmen clamber into the attic and begin chopping through the roof. Ducos' men use a small cannon—a grasshopper—to fire into the attic. Harper responds with his seven-barreled gun. Eventually the brief but intense fight ends in favor of Sharpe. Ducos hides behind a curtain with his treasure, firing blinding through the veil as Sharpe approaches and captures him. Although victorious, the small group soon realizes they have not acted quickly enough—the Neapolitan forces of the Cardinal have surrounded the villa. The ingenious Sharpe responds by appealing to the enemy soldier's greed. He loads handfuls of gold coins into the grasshopper and fires rains of gold over the encircling army, each discharge being further and further inland. Unable to keep order, the Neapolitan officers watch as their men scramble away into the countryside, grabbing up Napoleon's gold. In the resulting confusion, Calvet gathers up the vast store of gems and the small band of men escapes down the precipice to the waiting boat. In the Epilogue, Ducos stands trial and is executed for treason, shot like a dog and buried in an unmarked grave. Rossendale spends many sleepless nights and many anxious days practicing his dueling skills while Jane frets. Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper return to England and are cleared of all wrongdoing. Harper departs to retrieve his wife and live in Ireland. Sharpe finally confesses to Frederickson that he loves Lucille, and the rupture ends their friendship. Sharpe then departs for France and Lucille.



## Part IV Analysis

The various threads of the narrative conclude nearly in tandem; the money is recovered, Sharpe's honor is restored, Ducos is killed, Jane and Rossendale are shamed, Frederickson and Sharpe break off their friendship, Harper returns to Ireland, and Sharpe returns to France and Lucille. It's a happy ending for the protagonists, less Frederickson, and a nervous ending for the antagonists. Much of the early portion of Part IV is used to set up the action in the final segments; in this respect it is episodic, similar to Part I of the novel. The reintroduction of Calvet as an ally is a brilliant narrative twist; the character was a primary antagonist in a prior novel in the series and came to share a begrudging mutual respect with Sharpe. Here the two men are thrown together by necessity and both conclude they can trust each other because they have both acted honorably during earlier confrontations. They proceed from operating together to open admiration as their military adventure unfolds. Likewise, the English riflemen come to view the French veterans with respect. The attack on the defended villa is developed in considerable detail; the military action is precise, exciting, and exacting—the hallmark of the series. The fight is won by individual initiative and excellent small squad action. The defenders demonstrate an unimaginative and ineffectual defense and are flanked and destroyed. The final redoubt appears strong, but the English riflemen quickly gain entrance through the exposed roof-and-ceiling, Harper's huge gun countering the grasshopper cannon.

Note Ducos' cowardly last stand, taken by firing blindly and ineffectually through a curtain: even Lucille shoots better than Ducos. Sharpe demonstrates a foolhardy bravery by approaching the curtain and taking his chances—but he proves lucky. Ducos has spent months trying to ensure his own safety but humorously and ironically he has arranged for his own defeat: the location of the villa allows for a seaside escape; the small cannon is used by Sharpe to confuse and distract those who might rescue Ducos; and the conversion of the treasure into easily portable gems allows Calvet to recover the bulk of Napoleon's wealth. Ducos' selection of the relatively insignificant Kingdom of Naples as his hideout simply means that there will be no international repercussions following Sharpe's revenge; Ducos' alignment with the greedy Cardinal means that his protector will sell him out at the first viable opportunity. While an obvious master of deception during time of war, Ducos is woefully unequipped to survive during time of peace.



# Characters

## Major Richard Sharpe

Major Richard Sharpe is the principle protagonist of the novel and is present in most—but not all—of the scenes in the narrative. Sharpe is described as a large man, six feet tall, with dark hair and a face disfigured by scarring. A combat veteran of numerous campaigns, Sharpe is in excellent physical condition, possesses superior tactical and strategic reasoning, and rarely makes substantial battlefield mistakes. Outside the sphere of infantry warfare, Sharpe is fairly normal in most respects. Recently married again, Sharpe spends most of his quiet moments fretting about the health of Jane, his distant wife. Throughout the military phases of the novel Sharpe demonstrates flawless command instincts, decisive leadership, and a solid grasp of the tactical situation. Possessed of an almost supernatural intuition regarding his opponent's tactics, Sharpe is always one step ahead in matters military. Sharpe also takes advantages of extant situations and is more of a pragmatist than an idealist.

Sharpe is the son of a prostitute, conceived during her course of business by an unknown father. Raised as a self-proclaimed guttersnipe, Sharpe joined the army at an early age and rose through the ranks due solely to merit. In conjunction with his military service Sharpe has traveled widely and married several times; he has at least one daughter, Antonia, who lives in Spain. At the time of the novel's open, Sharpe's nominal regimental rank is Major. Sharpe's rank's status is not of great importance in the remainder of the novel, except that Jane feels brevet Major to be insignificant.

## Sergeant Patrick Harper

Sergeant Patrick Harper is a long-time friend and fellow soldier of Sharpe, and the two men have fought together in many previous campaigns. Harper is described as a huge man, 6' 4" and heavily muscled. He is Irish and his battle cry is often "God Save Ireland;" nevertheless he is a loyal British subject. During the novel, Sharpe's and Harper's military status fluctuates with the tides of war. However, Harper is entirely dedicated to Sharpe and contrives to accompany Sharpe regardless of official unit assignments. Harper is possessed of great bravery. Harper owns a curious firearm described as a "seven-barreled gun;" it is apparently discharged through a single trigger-pull, acting like a miniature artillery piece. Slow to load and cumbersome, the weapon is wielded with much precision and is devastating in close quarters. Harper frequently uses the gun and always with much effect. Sharpe notes that Harper has a newborn child during the opening chapters of the novel. Unlike Sharpe, Harper is entirely un sentimental about his distant Spanish wife and child, though he is always planning on visiting them as soon as the war ends.



## Captain William Frederickson

Captain William Frederickson is a company commander of the Royal American Rifles. He has enjoyed a long association with the 60th Rifles and is well-liked—indeed, admired—by the men serving in his company who have given him the ironic nickname of Sweet William. He is missing his left eye, most of his right ear, and several of his front teeth. He wears a moldy patch and a few poorly-fitting false teeth, altogether having what is described as a villainous appearance. Indeed, in combat Frederickson removes his false teeth and eye-patch for an appearance that alone causes many an enemy to falter. Sharpe and Frederickson met just prior to the assault on the Teste de Buch, described in a previous novel in the series. Throughout the military phases of the novel, Frederickson executes his duty with diligence and performs flawlessly as a company commander. Frederickson's individual combat prowess probably is surpassed only by Patrick Harper. Frederickson is educated, fluent in at least English, French and Italian, and is an accomplished artist. He is adept at thinking on his feet and quickly sees the essential points of any argument.

## Captain William Bampfylde

Captain William Bampfylde is a British captain presented at the opening of the novel, and much considered in a previous novel of the series. Bampfylde is described as youngish, plump, very over-confident, pale, and possessed of glaucous eyes. Bampfylde appears early in the narrative when he participates in a duel with Sharpe—Bampfyle fires early and wildly and in exchange receives a ball across the buttocks. His conduct during a previous novel, coupled with his dueling loss, causes him to be held in ridicule by most naval officers and he is cashiered from the Navy and sent home to England in disgrace. During the early stages of Sharpe's legal difficulties, during Part II of the novel, Sharpe erroneously—and temporarily—assumes that Bampfylde is somehow behind the charges.

## Major Pierre Ducos

Major Pierre Ducos is a French intelligence officer of vitriolic temperament and wide ranging influence. He is widely said to have previously enjoyed easy and direct access to Napoleon. Ducos has encountered Sharpe several times before the present novel and the two men have a long history of antagonistic exchanges in which—at least morally—Sharpe has always been the victor. Ducos wears round glasses and is described as a puny man, though possessed of an exceptionally booming and deep voice. While Ducos is normally a fearsome opponent, his blind hatred of Sharpe makes his machinations rather clumsy.



## **Jane Sharpe née Gibbons**

Jane Sharpe is the wife of Major Richard Sharpe. She appears in the opening chapters of the book where she and Sharpe are described as newly married but past blush of happy romance. Sharpe describes her in positive terms and she is found to be attractive and well-bred by others who meet her. Jane has joined Sharpe in France and insists that he resign his commission and return to England with her. When he declines, Jane becomes furious and a prolonged fight ensues. Sharpe resolves the fight by giving Jane a power of attorney for his entire and considerable estate, and thereupon she returns to England.

## **Dragoon Sergeant Challon**

Dragoon Sergeant Challon is a relatively typical French soldier, hardened by years of combat. He likes typical things—food, drink, women—and enjoys ease and fine lodgings. He is capable enough as a soldier but prefers to leave the thinking to others. He is described as possessed of a scarred and fearsome face, looking something like sword-slashed saddlebags. He is usually heavily armed. Challon is enlisted by Ducos as a strongman and warrior, and the two men form a capable pair of criminals.

## **Marcos Hernandez**

Marcos Hernandez is a trooper in Frederickson's rifle company. Hernandez is apparently typical in most respects, but is widely held to be the best rifle shot in the company. During a few scenes of battle, Hernandez shoots and kills a specific enemy target at great range. On one occasion, he is ordered to kill a specific enemy officer and discharges his duty with a delighted gusto. Hernandez is a specific example of the type of British soldier so feared by French troops, combining English loyalty, dependability, and initiative. Hernandez is a memorable but minor character in the narrative.

## **Lucille Castineau née Lassan, the Vicomtesse de Seleglise**

Lucille, also known as the widow Castineau, is an attractive and vivacious, if not beautiful, woman on insight and grace. She is the younger sister of Henri Lassan, and is at least eight or ten years his junior; her age is given as "nearly thirty" (p. 176). Although she had a few offers of marriage from respectable men during the war years, Lucille turned them down out of a sense of familial duty to her mother and her mother's estate. Lucille has a competent head for business and is generally a hard and efficient worker. She is much beloved by the surrounding populace and is genuinely concerned for the well-being of her older brother.





## Monsieur Roland

Roland is a French attorney in the employ of the French government. He is described as fleshy but happy, bald but with whiskers. Sharpe believes Roland's appearance indicates he is a happy family man. Roland speaks fluent English and is the attorney in charge of prosecuting Sharpe and Frederickson for the charges fabricated by Ducos. Roland takes his job seriously and, after Sharpe and Frederickson escape, he travels to Normandy in an attempt to speak with Henri Lassan. There, Lucille erroneously blames the English—even naming Sharpe—for Henri's murder, a condemnation that significantly influences Roland's subsequent thinking.



# Objects/Places

## Canister

Canister is a type of ammunition used in field and naval guns instead of the more-traditional cannonball. Canister is composed of a thin metal or wire wrapping that holds together numerous smaller projectiles, usually lead balls similar to a musket ball. When fired, the wrapping disintegrates and the multiple balls begin to spread apart rapidly. Against hardened targets, canister is not effective. Against infantry, canister is far more deadly than roundshot. The French use canister shot against Nairn's troops during the assault on the ridge near Toulouse.

## Harper's Seven-barreled Gun

Patrick Harper carries and uses a so-called seven-barreled gun. The weapon is exceptionally effective at close range. Probably intended to fictionally represent the historic Nock's Volley Gun, the weapon discharges seven 13.2mm balls simultaneously—something akin to a gigantic shotgun. The weapon is heavy, cumbersome, and delivers fearsome recoil. It is much beloved of Harper. Historically, volley guns were withdrawn from service prior to the time of the novel suggesting that the gun is Harper's personal property, and he certainly treats it as such.

## Bayonet

A bayonet is a blade or spike that is designed to be attached to the end of a rifle or musket, converting the weapon into a type of spear. Some British troops used a long, fully-bladed sword bayonet while others used the more-common spike bayonet. In any event, bayonets are fearsome weapons used during close-quarters combat as they make a fired single-shot musket into a deadly weapon.

## Small Arms

Several types of small arms are discussed in the novel; indeed, the novel's accurate portrayal of small arms and their use is one of its most-enjoyable elements. During the historic period discussed in the narrative, small arms were nearly all smoothbore, muzzle-loading, single-shot weapons capable of receiving a bayonet. Most of the small arms described in the book are ignited by a flintlock, though Ducos has a percussion lock pistol that is erroneously said to use copper caps containing black powder—percussion caps actually contained a fulminating mercury compound during the period considered by the novel. Some troops, such as Frederickson's rifles, are armed with rifled weapons, giving them great accuracy and the capability of effective fire at great distances—all at the expense of slower loading. Other troops are armed with smoothbore muskets.



## Teste de Buch

Teste de Buch is a fortress located on the shore of the Bassin d'Arcachon. The fortress was captured by Sharpe and Frederickson during a previous novel in the series and, according to Ducos' false charges, is the place where Sharpe encountered and pilfered Napoleon's treasure.

## Sycorax

Sycorax is Sharpe's fine horse during the assault on the ridge near Toulouse. A gift from Jane, Sycorax is not used to war but proves controllable. During one particularly intense phase of the battle, Sycroax is killed by cannon and nearly pins Sharpe.

## Redoubt

A redoubt is a prepared and strengthened military defensive position. During the British assault on the ridge near Toulouse, Nairn's forces assault a central redoubt of considerable strength—essentially, it is a miniature fortress with wooden and earthen walls and embrasures through which cannon can be fired.

## Château Lissan

Château Lissan is the hereditary home of Henri and Lucille Lissan. The building and estate is extensively described in Chapter 6; the house consists of two wings built at different periods and at the time of the novel both wings are in poor repair. The estate is somewhat reduced from its ancient grandeur and during the time of the novel appears to predominantly consist of apple orchards and a cider press.

## The Grasshopper

Ducos obtains a small cannon to assist in the defense of his stronghold. The cannon is constructed with its own carriage of four legs. When the cannon is discharged the recoil makes it leap upwards and backwards, the motion informing the gun's nickname. After capturing the cannon, Sharpe loads it with golden coins and fires a rain of money upon opposing troops, causing confusion and allowing him to escape.

## Napoleon's Baggage

Fearing the collapse of his government, Napoleon sends a baggage train to Ducos for safe keeping. The baggage consists mostly of a truly vast sum of money along with various personal items such as uniforms and small furniture. Ducos decides to steal the baggage and arranges to have the theft blamed on Sharpe. Ducos then converts most

of the wealth into gems and absconds to the Kingdom of Naples. There, Sharpe ultimately finds him and retrieves the stolen wealth, clearing his own name and honor.



# Themes

## Combat

The book's early dominant theme is combat. The opening chapters present the setting of the military theater and develop the rationale for the ensuing combat activity. The British Empire marches on Toulouse—Napoleon's forces are unbalanced and undergoing strategic realignment as the empire crumbles. England prosecutes the war effort with hopes of complete conquest in France. Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper join forces led by Nairn that are directed to assault a particular section of defenses outside of Toulouse. Chapters 2 and 3, in particular, are extensively devoted to narratives of combat between British and French forces.

Although Sharpe's personal background is lightly developed, it is not the dominant theme of the novel. Likewise, the overarching political situation is described but only insofar as to present the rationale behind Sharpe's military actions—that is to say, no discussion of the greater strategic situation is offered, and political intrigues are not particularly considered. Even after Part I, the aftermath of large-scale combat influences most narrative developments and the theme of combat is carried on in a smaller scale. The early theme of combat is supported by a rich and descriptive narrative that lends excitement to the military action presented. Part IV returns somewhat to combat as Sharpe's tiny group attacks Ducos' estate and then escape from a much-larger Neapolitan force.

## Honor

Sharpe is much concerned with honorably discharging his duties and acting appropriately in all situations. He is not over-given to flamboyant notions of honor but instead relies upon a commonsense interpretation of honor that is appreciated by his men but often misunderstood by his superior officers. Sharpe's notions of honor are supported by other characters in the book—General Calvet, for example, is essentially an honorable, if otherwise amoral, man. The theme is supported in contrast by examples of men entirely lacking in honor—men such as Ducos. Early portions of the novel deal with purely military honor; for example, men such as Sharpe, Nairn, and Frederickson carry out their duties under trying and often lethal conditions.

The middle portions of the novel are concerned with personal honor and good conduct. Sharpe and Frederickson are impugned by Ducos. Known to be honorable men, they are supported in their escape by friends. In contrast, Ducos' small band of criminals turns upon itself and kills one of its own before sowing terror in the French countryside. Lucille behaves honorably toward her family and its heritage; in contrast, Jane abandons her marriage vows for excitement and wealth.



The end of the novel sees the cowardly and paranoid Ducos trying to salvage a semblance of grandeur from the wreck of his crimes; in contrast, Sharpe and Frederickson move to reclaim their honor. In this, they are joined by Calvet and the men are able to work together for common purpose because of the mutual trust that their essentially honorable conduct fosters.

## Love and Devotion

Sharpe is presented in the early novel as a doting and devoted husband—a portrayal fairly at odds with the man's previous career detailed in previous novels. Even so, in the heady love of marriage, Sharpe finds his thoughts often drifting to his wife Jane even as his friend Frederickson drubs marriage as an institution. The theme of love and devotion is developed in other ways throughout the novel, however. Patrick Harper has a new child by his Spanish wife Isabelle—Sharpe thinks of the infant more than Harper does, but Harper is absolutely committed to his family. Beside romantic love, the novel presents other types of devotion. Lassan is devoted to France with a strongly emotional component; he is even more devoted to God yet struggles with his love of family and his devotion to it. Ducos is wholly given over to personal greed, ambition, and Sharpe's destruction—a type of negative devotion. Romantic love, strong friendships, and devotion to duty all play a significant role in the novel and serve to heighten the stresses and emotions of combat. Indeed, the central pivot of the novel concerns Sharpe's romantic involvement with Lucille, following her rebuff of Frederickson. This not only hinges the narrative but is also a major turning point for all three characters involved. It contrasts markedly with the situation of Ducos' men who chase about after whores and pass the time by raping the occasional unfortunate villager.

# Style

## Point of View

The novel is presented in the third-person, omniscient viewpoint, traditional for fiction and particularly suited to the narrative structure presented. Major Richard Sharpe, the primary protagonist of the novel, is present in most scenes of the novel but occasionally the scene varies so that alternative viewpoints can be presented. The most-prevalent of these concerns Major Ducos and his nefarious plans. The narrator divulges frequent internal thoughts of the protagonist, and some of other characters. The majority of the story is told through action and dialogue; revealed thoughts are frequent but generally are used for characterization rather than plot development.

The third-person point of view allows Sharpe to be presented in a highly sympathetic manner. For example, the narrative structure portrays Sharpe's brooding introspection as personal concern rather than a failing. The narrative also allows portrayal of Sharpe's life situations as difficult but not pathetic. In this way, the choice of narrative view is appropriate and successful. Indeed, the structure of the novel and the method of plot development nearly require the use of a third-person point of view. Finally, the frequent appearance of minor characters is allowed through the point of view selected; it is carried throughout all of the novels of the series and is accessible and successful.

## Setting

The novel is set in southern France and the opening sentence dates the events quite precisely c. April, 1814. The novel's chronology spans a period of time of several months surrounding the abdication of Napoleon. The Napoleonic wars have ravaged Europe for a decade and more, and the British Empire has survived only because of its superior naval forces. Under Wellington, the British have invaded Spain and subjugated most of the Iberian Peninsula, formerly aligned with France. The British forces have pushed into southern France as far as Toulouse. British plans call for the capture of Toulouse while Prussian forces advance on Paris; the French Empire crumbles away day by day. The early chapters of the novel are devoted to the assault on Toulouse while later chapters briefly return to the area around the Bay of Arcachon, much described in a previous novel of the series. Other scenes are set in Paris and the Kingdom of Naples though these settings are not overly developed. The dominant setting throughout the central portions of the novel is the Château Lassan and environs. The house is a two-wing stone building in dilapidated condition. It is surrounded by a few rundown outbuildings. The estate is mostly devoted to apple orchards. All of the land is in need of considerable repair and maintenance.



## Language and Meaning

The novel is presented in standard British English, using British spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Such is familiar enough to any American reader that they should pose no special obstacle to comprehension. In general the writing is accessible to high-school level readers. Sentence and paragraph construction are typical and present a fairly even texture throughout. The language of the novel is generally informal and very readable—for example, Sharpe hears "the whiplash hiss" (p. 87) of a musket ball passing close by—and captures the exciting essence of close-quarters combat without placing undue stress on grammatical correctness. Language occasionally wanders into the technical aspects of early nineteenth century infantry combat. Defenses are described in technical terms, small arms are described in methods assuming passing familiarity, and field cannon are discussed in technical terms. However, such descriptions are not central to the narrative and form an exceptionally enjoyable aspect of the book's realistic and historic texture. Indeed, were such passages absent the book's tone of authenticity would suffer markedly.

Meaning within the book is derived through traditional means, and subtle interpretation of nearly the entire narrative is not required. The characters presented are largely simple men who hold concrete notions of things such as duty, honor, and valor. For example, when men are afraid they cower or run away; brave men act with great distinction and valor, and are highly valued for it. There is little posturing and men portray themselves honestly—excepting, of course, Ducos who is a regrettable example of the then-emerging modern man.

## Structure

The 348-page novel is divided into fifteen enumerated chapters, a prologue, an epilogue, and a historical note. Chapters are grouped in various Parts, or major divisions. While the prologue and epilogue are components of the fictive narrative, the historical note is an authorial explanation, or apology, of certain events described. The novel is written using standard British spelling and punctuation which may not be immediately familiar to American readers, but such should pose no special problems to reading. The novel is constructed in a typical and accessible fashion that aids materially with understanding the narrative plot and elements. Each enumerated chapter generally is presented in chronological order. Of course characters occasionally remember the past or speculate about the future but these events are obvious and clarified. Thus the construction follows a chronological presentation. Scenes occasionally shift between characters and locales, and occasionally scenes occur roughly simultaneously; for example, Chapter 6 describes events transpiring while Sharpe readies for and executes the assault on the ridge at Toulouse, described in Chapter 3. The construction makes such shifts obvious and presents no special obstacle to comprehension.





## Quotes

'Of course the Peer knew about it,' Major-General Nairn was speaking of the duel, 'but between you and me I don't think he was unhappy about it. The Navy's been rather irritating him lately.'

'I expected to be arrested,' Sharpe said.

'If you'd have killed the bugger, you would have been. Even Wellington can't absolutely ignore a deceased Naval Captain, but it was clever of you just to crease the man's bum.' Nairn gave a joyful bark of laughter at the thought of Bampfylde's wound.

'I was trying to kill him,' Sharpe confessed.

'It was much cleverer of you to give him a sore arse. And let me say how very good it is to see you, my dear Sharpe. I trust Jane is well?'

'Indeed, sir.' (p. 31)

'Good man!' Taplow said. 'Proud to know you! Sorry you didn't take communion, though. A fellow ought to square things with the Almighty before he kills the King's enemies. Only decent thing to do. Had you realized that your servant forgot to shave you this morning? Flog the fellow. Let me wish you well of the day now!' Taplow galloped southwards towards his men while Sharpe sighed. (pp. 57-58)

A crashing thunderous volley, a spew of acrid smoke, and no time to wonder what damage the bullets had done. 'Charge!'

'Take the boys home, Richard!' Nairn called. 'Take them home!'

'Charge!' Sharpe felt the rage rising, the unreasonable rage of battle, the anger that would only be slaked by victory. It was this same pride and rage that had made Taplow spur ahead of his men to certain death, and which had made Nairn lead his men into the cauldron that was the redoubt's killing ground. 'Charge!' A musket ball slapped past his face. Sharpe could see the faces of the French infantry now, and they looked desperately young and desperately frightened. (pp. 87-88)

The fort had been successfully captured, Wigram went on, though there was disagreement between Captain Bampfylde and Major Sharpe as to the exact manner in which that success had been achieved.

'Wrong,' Sharpe said, and his interruption so astonished the room that no one objected to it. 'Any disagreement between Captain Bampfylde and myself,' Sharpe said harshly, 'was ended by a duel. He lost.'

'I was about to point out,' Wigram said icily, 'that all the indications reveal that the predominant credit for the fort's capture must be given to you, Major Sharpe. Or is it that you wish this tribunal to investigate a clearly illegal occurrence of duelling?' (p. 117)

Thus it was that Lieutenant-Colonel Wigram's speech was interrupted by three deliriously drunken men who were as naked as the day on which they were born. The Provost Sergeant stared about him in blinking astonishment as he found himself in



the brilliantly lit banqueting hall. He hiccuped, bowed to the company, and tried to speak. 'Fire,' he at last managed to say, then he slid down a wall to fall asleep. Behind him smoke seeped through the open door.

Wigram stared, aghast.

'Fire!' (p. 149)

Frederickson sheltered his tinderbox inside his greatcoat and struck a flame for one of his few remaining cheroots. 'I astonish myself by positively enjoying this life. I think perhaps I could wander in darkness for the rest of my life.'

Sharpe smiled, 'I'd rather reach home.'

Frederickson uttered a scornful bark of laughter. 'I hear an echo of a married man's lust.' (p. 169)

Dust was everywhere and d'Alembord doubted whether the room had been cleaned for days, perhaps even weeks. The grate was piled with ashes, and the room smelt overwhelmingly of powder and stale perfume. A maid had curtseyed when d'Alembord had handed in his card at the door, but there was little evidence that the girl did any cleaning. D'Alembord could only suppose that Jane Sharpe was merely lodging in the house, for he could not believe that she would allow such slovenliness in her own home. (pp. 207-208)

'It must be nothing but gossip.' Harper's world was bounded by certainties, one of which was that a pledge of love was entirely unbreakable, which was why, though he was made very uncomfortable by these speculations about Jane Sharpe, he still refused to give them any credit. 'I expect they're just trying to help Mr Sharpe, sir, so it stands to reason that they have to spend a bit of time together. And you know how tongues start flapping when a man and woman spend time together. So why don't we just walk round there and I'll give her the Major's letter, and I'll warrant she'll be as happy as a hog in butter when she reads it. I'll just finish the pie first, if I might. Are you sure you wouldn't want a bit of it yourself?' (p. 231)

Sergeant Challon tried to ease Ducos's fears. No one would find them in the Villa Lupighi, he said, for the Cardinal was their friend. Ducos nodded agreement, but each day he would demand another loophole made in some exterior wall.

Sergeant Challon had other fears himself. 'The men are happy enough now,' he told Ducos, 'but it won't last. They can't wait here for ever. They'll get bored, sir, and you know how bored soldiers become troublemakers.'

'They've got their women.'

'That's their nights taken care of, sir, but what use is a woman in daylight?' (p. 260)

Sharpe was impressed by his friend's command of Italian invective, but his admiration only earned a short-tempered reproof. 'I am constantly irritated,' Frederickson said, 'by your naïve astonishment for the mediocre attainments of a very ordinary education. Of course I speak Italian. Not well, but passably. It is, after all, merely a bastard form of



dog-Latin, and even you should be able to master its crudities with a little study. I'm going to sleep. If that fool sees another pirate, don't trouble to wake me. (p. 274)

Harper found his seven-barreled gun, poked it under the raised timber, and fired blindly down. The noise was huge in the confined space, but even so the Riflemen could hear a scream from the room below as the seven bullets ricocheted wild from its stone walls and floor. Sharpe fired his rifle into the gap, then both men stepped back to reload. Frederickson crouched to fire Harper's rifle into Ducos's lair. 'Like shooting rats in a barrel,' he said grimly, then suddenly all of the Riflemen were deafened and Frederickson, the rifle still unfired, fell back. (p. 319)

He clicked his tongue and urged his horse into a trot. He felt dazed. There was no more war, no more soldiers, no more fear. No more Emperor, no more Harper, no more gunsmoke skeined above a field of blood. No more closing of ranks, no more miles of pain, no more skirmish chain. No more cavalry in the dawn and no more picquets in the dusk. There was only Lucille and what Sharpe thought was a love sufficient for both their lives. He rode on into France, his back turned on all he had fought for, for now it was all gone; the wars, a marriage, a friendship, and an enemy; all gone in Sharpe's revenge. (pp. 345-346)



## Topics for Discussion

The costly siege at Toulouse actually occurs needlessly; Napoleon has abdicated and a cease fire has been declared. However, news of these events does not reach Toulouse until after the battle. Does this situation make the sacrifices at Toulouse essentially meaningless? Sharpe, Frederickson, and Harper do not seem unduly angry about the situation. Why do you think they accept the news so calmly?

At the assault on the ridge at Toulouse, Sharpe and his companions are quite distressed to see the Spanish attack being launched much earlier than expected. Why was it so tactically disadvantageous to launch the Spanish attack long before the English attack? Explain.

Sharpe and Frederickson are jointly accused of stealing Napoleon's baggage. Sharpe reacts with flat denial and anger, while Frederickson is restrained. Of the two men, who do you think best realizes the significance of the charges after they are presented? Why?

Sharpe and Frederickson assume that Henri Lassan will help them prove their innocence, even though only months before they had defeated him in an embarrassing way during a prolonged military encounter. Given the portrayal of Lassan in the novel (prior to his murder), do you think he would indeed have helped Sharpe and Frederickson? Why or why not?

Jane easily abandons her relationship with Sharpe in favor of Lord Rosendale; Patrick Harper is flabbergasted at the development. What narrative elements foreshadow Jane's decision? What narrative elements make her behavior credible?

Frederickson discovers Ducos' whereabouts by a rather fortuitous series of events coupled with a natural talent for befriending people and observing the small details. Imagine a narrative revision in which Frederickson had been wounded and Sharpe had travelled to Paris to locate Ducos. Would the discovery of Ducos' whereabouts then be a credible narrative development? Why or why not?

Imagine that during the wars an enemy had fired gold coins toward Sharpe's troops in an attempt to break discipline and cause confusion. How do you imagine Sharpe might have reacted in such a situation?

In the middle of the novel Frederickson proposes marriage to Lucille and gently is rebuffed. Later, Lucille accepts Sharpe as a lover. Sharpe somehow never manages to tell Frederickson of this development until the very end of the novel. In your opinion, did Sharpe do Frederickson a disservice by withholding the information for so long? Discuss.