

**AN OUTLINE OF *TRISTRAM SHANDY*** (Oxford World' Classics edition -to be used alongside your reading of the text.) Note down the page numbers as you encounter the episodes. The Volume pages are indicated.

**VOLUME I pp. 1-63**

**1. Conception and factual announcement of Tristram's birth,**  
pp.

**2. Backgrounds of the birth** – to prepare for the story of "how"  
Tristram was born, pp.

- a. Prologue: Tristram states his purposes: life and opinions, self-revelation, friendship, etc. pp.
- b. The midwife's story – ostensibly – but mostly digressions, pp.
  - i. Digression on **hobbyhorses**, pp.
  - ii. Mock dedication, pp.
  - iii. Long digression on the history of Parson Yorick (some missing pieces will be supplied later at the visitation dinner scene), pp.
    1. includes the **black page**, pp.
- c. Parents' marriage and marriage contract, pp.
- d. Mrs Shandy's false pregnancy of the previous year, which destines Tristram to be born in the country, pp.
- e. Parents debate whether to have a midwife or a man-midwife, finally agreeing to have Dr Slop in the house in case of emergency; otherwise, the midwife to be in charge, pp.
  - i. The first digression on Tristram's dear Jenny, pp.
- f. Walter's character as a man of hypotheses, which explains his interest in having a man-midwife present, pp.
  - i. Includes the reflection on **names**, pp.
  - ii. Digression on Madam, the inattentive reader, pp.
    1. Includes the memorandum by the doctors of the Sorbonne on the legitimacy of performing baptisms before birth, pp.

**3. Birth scenes, pp.**

- a. Walter and Toby in the parlour hear the commotion upstairs as Mrs Shandy's labour begins (the brothers remain together throughout the birth scenes), pp.
- b. Uncle Toby's character, part 1: his modesty (the first of three long descriptions of him), pp.
  - i. Includes the story of Aunt Dinah and the coachman, pp.
  - ii. A digression on **digressions**, pp.
  - iii. A reflection on different ways of depicting character, pp.
- c. Uncle Toby's character, part 2: his hobby, the explanation of which involves the history of his wound, his convalescence in Walter's house, where he begins his military studies in order to explain where and how he was wounded, pp.

## VOLUME II pp. 65-122

- d. Uncle Toby's character, continuation of part 2, his hobby: the story of how Trim suggests a move to Toby's cottage in Yorkshire next to his brother's estate, Shandy Hall, so that they can build model fortifications on the bowling green (this earliest of the campaigns on the bowling green, terminating with the retreat of Utrecht in 1713, will be taken up in more detail in volumes 6 and 8; it is not to be confused with the later campaigns being waged in 1718 when Tristram is born), pp.
- e. Mrs Shandy's waters break, the midwife is fetched, and Dr Slop arrives, pp.
- f. Symposium 1 (Walter, Toby, Slop, Trim), pp.
  - i. Includes Trim's reading of Sterne's sermon *The Abuses of Conscience, Considered*, terminating in an "advertisement" for a collection of Sterne's sermons, pp.
  - ii. Includes Walter's theories on the brain and birth, taken largely from the medical works of Dr John Burton, the model for Dr Slop, all of which explains why Walter has insisted on Slop's presence during the birth, pp.

## VOLUME III pp. 123-193

- iii. Includes Dr Slop's reading of the anathema of Bishop Ernulph in order to curse Obadiah for so tightly tying up Slop's bag that the doctor has cut his thumb when cutting the knot, pp.
- g. Dr Slop is called upstairs to deliver the child, pp.
- h. The Shandy brothers fall asleep; Tristram is born while they doze. Tristram the narrator makes use of the situation to present his "Author's Preface" (with his disquisition on wit and judgment), pp.
- i. A squeaking hinge awakens the brothers; they learn of the birth and then of the baby's crushed nose, pp.
  - i. Includes a digression about drawbridges, pp.
- j. Walter Shandy falls on his bed in pain; his brother comforts him; they talk, pp.
  - i. Includes a digression on noses in the Shandy family and on **misleading words**, pp.
  - ii. Includes a description of Walter Shandy's studies of **noses**, pp.
  - iii. Includes an apostrophe to Uncle Toby, pp.
  - iv. Includes a digression on learning and reading that concludes with the **marbled page**, pp.

## **VOLUME IV pp. 195-270**

- v. Includes the prize item in Walter's collection of nose lore – "Slawkenbergius's Tale", pp.
- k. The brothers rise, come downstairs, talking the while, pp.
  - i. Includes a digression on the **making of chapters**, pp.
- l. Tristram's dissertation on **time** in writing and living: he cannot catch himself, pp.

### **4. Baptism scenes, pp.**

- a. Susannah wakes Walter: the child in a fit (convulsions caused by pressure on the cerebellum during delivery) is rushed to the curate and by error baptized with what his father thinks is the worst of all Christian names – Tristram, pp.
  - i. A digression on **sleep and buttonholes**, pp.
- b. Walter learns of the error: his "Lamentation", pp.
  - i. A digression on **naming**: the story of Francis I, pp.
- c. Tristram's comment on the purpose of his book: wrote against spleen, pp.
- d. The **missing chapter** 24, and digression on the tearing out of chapters, pp.
- e. The vain attempt to change the child's name: gathering legal opinion at the visitation dinner / Phutatorius and the hot chestnut (the scene provides missing details in the history of Parson Yorick), pp.

### **5. The death of Brother Bobby, pp.**

- a. Walter ponders Bobby's education and its cost, pp. The death announced: Tristram becomes heir apparent, pp.
  - b. Tristram explains true Shandeism, pp.

## **VOLUME V pp. 271-325**

- c. Tristram on **writing** and borrowing, pp.
- d. The "Fragment upon Whiskers", offered as a comment on the **instability of words**, pp.
- e. Walter's oration – his response to the news of Bobby's death, pp.
- f. Mrs Shandy begins to listen to him from outside the door, pp.
- g. Trim's oration – the response of the servants in the kitchen, pp.
- h. Walter concludes his oration, Mrs Shandy accuses him and learns of her son's death, pp.
- i. Tristram on **writing**, which is like fiddling, pp.

**6. Rituals of initiation, puberty, education, pp.**

- a. Walter writes a book on how to educate his son, the *Tristrapaedia*, pp.
- b. The accidental circumcision of the boy and Walter's reaction, pp.
  - i. "lint and basilicon" p.
- c. The Symposium 2 (Walter, Toby, Yorick, Trim, Slop) on education, pp.
  - i. Includes Walter's strictures on rote learning occasioned by Trim's recitation of the catechism, pp.
  - ii. Walter's theory on the secret of health, and Trim's medical lecture pp.
  - iii. Includes Walter's theory that the auxiliary verbs are the Northwest Passage to the intellectual world, pp.

**VOLUME VI pp. 327-381**

- iv. Susannah and Dr Slop, having been fighting instead of bandaging Tristram's wound, accuse each other before Walter, pp.
- v. Includes the "Story of Le Fever", introduced because Le Fever's son has been mentioned as a possible tutor for Tristram, pp.
- vi. Yorick's funeral sermon for Le Fever and the history of Le Fever's son as Uncle Toby's protégé, pp.
- d. Gossip about the circumcision leads the parents to debate (in the "beds of justice") and then decide on putting Tristram into breeches – a sort of puberty rite, pp.

**7. Uncle Toby's campaigns on the bowling green** – a preparation for the story of his amours with the Widow Wadman (these are the original bowling green campaigns, chronologically earlier than those that were going on when Tristram was born), pp.

- a. The progress of the hobby, pp.
- b. Trim invents a canon that puffs, pp.
  - i. The Montero cap, pp. 316
  - ii. A flash-ahead to the deaths of Trim and Toby, pp.
- c. Uncle Toby's modesty, pp. cf. p.
- d. The retreat of Utrecht puts an end to the campaigns, pp.
- e. Uncle Toby's "Apologetical Oration" on military service, pp.
- f. Tristram tells us how to tell a story, pp.
- g. A prologue to the commencement of Mrs Wadman's campaign against Toby, which will be told in volume 8, pp.
  - i. Includes **the blank page** on which to sketch widow Wadman, p.
- h. Tristram draws **diagrams** of his narrative and its digressions, pp.

## **VOLUME VII pp. 383-432**

### **8. Tristram's flight from death, channel crossing, trip through France** – a narrative told chronologically but interspersed with satires on travellers and travel literature, and Tristram's musings on life, pp.

- a. Includes the story of the Abbess of Andoüillets and her novice, Margarita, pp.
- b. Includes the Auxerre scene in which four Tristrams are discoverable, pp.
- c. Includes the reverie in which Tristram implies that he is sexually impotent, pp.
- d. Includes the story of the ass and the commissary, pp.
- e. Includes the story of the lost remarks (i.e., notes), pp.
- f. Includes "plain stories" and the account of dancing with Nannette and the peasants, pp.

## **VOLUME VIII pp. 433-479**

### **9. Uncle Toby's amours, part 1: Mrs Wadman wins Uncle Toby,** pp.

- a. Tristram on love and on **writing**, pp.
- b. Mrs Wadman falls in love, pp.
- c. Tristram continues to talk about love, pp
- d. Mrs Wadman plans an attack, pp.
  - i. Contains a flashback (flash-ahead?) to Symposium 1 – Walter and Dr Slop talk about the blind gut, pp.
- e. Uncle Toby and Trim complete the destruction of Dunkirk in accordance with the Treaty of Utrecht and fall into a conversation, pp.
  - i. Contains the unfinished story "The King of Bohemia and His Seven Castles", the invention of gunpowder, on chronology and geography, pp.
  - ii. Contains Trim's story of the fair Beguine who nursed him, pp.
- f. Mrs Wadman makes her attack, pp.
- g. Uncle Toby in love; he and Trim prepare a counterattack, pp.
- h. Symposium 3 (Walter, Toby, Yorick, Slop, Mrs Shandy, Trim) on love, pp.
- i. Walter Shandy writes to his brother advising him about love, pp.
- j. Toby and Trim continue preparations for the counterattack, pp.

**VOLUME IX pp. 481-539**

**10. Uncle Toby's amours, part 2: Mrs Wadman loses Uncle Toby, pp.**

- a. The counterattack – on Mrs Wadman's house, pp.
  - i. Includes the story of Trim's brother Tom and the Jew's widow and that of the black girl, pp.
  - ii. Includes the digression on time, dear Jenny, and the swiftness with which life passes, pp.
- b. Tristram discourses on the need for a balance in fiction of wisdom and folly, pp.
- c. The courtship commences in Mrs Wadman's parlour, pp.
  - i. Includes **two blank chapters**, pp.
  - ii. Includes a digression on Uncle Toby's potency, pp.
  - iii. Includes an "Invocation" to the spirit of Cervantes, which becomes the story of Tristram's meeting mad Maria in France – an "advertisement" for *A Sentimental Journey*, pp.
  - iv. The two blank chapters now supplied, pp.
- d. Mrs Wadman makes inquiries about Toby's health, pp.
- e. Trim begins his own courtship of Bridget, Mrs Wadman's maid, and discovers how anxious Mrs Wadman is about Toby's potency, pp.
- f. Uncle Toby's eyes are opened: he goes to his brother for advice, pp.
- g. Symposium 4 (Walter, Toby, Yorick, Slop, Mrs Shandy, Trim), also on love pp.