

Vanity Fair (novel)

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Vanity Fair



Title-page to the first edition in book form of *Vanity Fair*, drawn by [Thackeray](#), who furnished the illustrations for many of his earlier editions

Author(s)	William Makepeace Thackeray
Illustrator	William Makepeace Thackeray
Country	United Kingdom
Language	English
Publisher	Punch magazine (serialized)
Publication date	January 1847 and July 1848 (serialized in 20 parts)
Media type	Print

Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero is a novel by [William Makepeace Thackeray](#), first published in 1847–48, [satirizing](#) society in early 19th-century [Britain](#). The book's title comes from [John Bunyan](#)'s [allegorical](#) story *The Pilgrim's Progress*, first published in 1678 and still widely read at the time of Thackeray's novel. Vanity fair refers to a stop along the pilgrim's progress: a never-ending fair held in a town called Vanity, which is meant to represent man's

sinful attachment to worldly things. The novel is now considered a classic, and has inspired several [film adaptations](#).

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[\[edit\]](#) Plot summary

The story opens at Miss Pinkerton's Academy for Young Ladies, where the [protagonists](#) Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley have just completed their studies and are preparing to depart for Amelia's house in [Russell Square](#). Becky is portrayed as a strong-willed and cunning young woman determined to make her way in society, and Amelia Sedley as a good-natured, lovable though simple-minded young girl.

At Russell Square, Miss Sharp is introduced to the dashing and self-obsessed Captain George Osborne (to whom Amelia has been betrothed from a very young age) and to Amelia's brother Joseph Sedley, a clumsy and vainglorious but rich civil servant fresh from the [East India Company](#). Becky entices Sedley, hoping to marry him, but she fails because of warnings from Captain Osborne, Sedley's own native shyness, and his embarrassment over some foolish drunken behaviour of his that Becky had seen.

With this, Becky Sharp says farewell to Sedley's family and enters the service of the crude and profligate [baronet](#) Sir Pitt Crawley, who has engaged her as a [governess](#) to his daughters. Her behaviour at Sir Pitt's house gains his favour, and after the premature death of his second

wife, he proposes marriage to her. Then he finds she is already secretly married to his second son, Rawdon Crawley.

Sir Pitt's elder half sister, the [spinster](#) Miss Crawley, is very rich, having inherited her mother's fortune of £70,000. How she will bequeath her great wealth is a source of constant conflict between the branches of the Crawley family who vie shamelessly for her affections; initially her favourite is Sir Pitt's younger son, Captain Rawdon Crawley. For some time, Becky acts as Miss Crawley's companion, supplanting the loyal Miss Briggs in an attempt to establish herself in favour before breaking the news of her elopement with Miss Crawley's nephew. However, the misalliance so enrages Miss Crawley that she disinherits her nephew in favour of his pompous and pedantic elder brother, who also bears the name Pitt Crawley. The married couple constantly attempts to reconcile with Miss Crawley, and she relents a little, but she will only see her nephew and refuses to change her will.

While Becky Sharp is rising in the world, Amelia's father, John Sedley, is bankrupted. The Sedleys and Osbornes were once close allies, but the relationship between the two families disintegrates after the Sedleys are financially ruined, and the marriage of Amelia and George is forbidden. George ultimately decides to marry Amelia against his father's will, pressured by his friend Dobbin, and George is consequently disinherited. While these personal events take place, the [Napoleonic Wars](#) have been ramping up. George Osborne and William Dobbin are suddenly deployed to [Brussels](#), but not before an encounter with Becky and Captain Crawley at Brighton. The holiday is interrupted by orders to march to Brussels. Already, the newly wedded Osborne is growing tired of Amelia, and he becomes increasingly attracted to Becky who encourages his advances.

At a ball in Brussels (based on the [Duchess of Richmond's famous ball](#) on the eve of the [Battle of Waterloo](#)) George gives Becky a note inviting her to run away with him. He regrets this shortly afterwards and reconciles with Amelia, who has been deeply hurt by his attentions towards her former friend. The morning after, he is sent to Waterloo with Captain Crawley and Dobbin, leaving Amelia distraught. Becky, on the other hand, is virtually indifferent to her husband's departure. She tries to console Amelia, but Amelia responds angrily, disgusted by Becky's flirtatious behaviour with George and her lack of concern about Captain Crawley. Becky resents this snub and a rift develops between the two women that lasts for years. Becky is not very concerned for the outcome of the war, either; should [Napoleon](#) win, she plans to become the mistress of one of his marshals. Meanwhile she makes a profit selling her carriage and horses at inflated prices to Amelia's panicking brother Joseph seeking to flee the city, where the Belgian population is openly pro-Napoleonic.

Captain Crawley survives, but George dies in the battle. Amelia bears him a [posthumous](#) son, who is also named George. She returns to live in genteel poverty with her parents. Meanwhile, since the death of George, Dobbin, who is young George's godfather, gradually begins to express his love for the widowed Amelia by small kindnesses toward her and her son. Most notable is the recovery of her old piano, which Dobbin picks up at an auction following the Sedleys' ruin. Amelia mistakenly assumes this was done by her late husband. She is too much in love with George's memory to return Dobbin's affections. Saddened, he goes to India for many years. Dobbin's infatuation with Amelia is a theme which unifies the novel and one which many have compared to Thackeray's unrequited love for a friend's wife ([Jane Brookfield](#)).^[1]

Meanwhile, Becky also has a son, also named after his father, but unlike Amelia, who dotes on and even spoils her child, Becky is a cold, distant mother. She continues her ascent first in post-war Paris and then in London where she is patronised by the great Marquis of Steyne, who covertly subsidises her and introduces her to [London](#) society. Her success is unstoppable despite her humble origins, and she is eventually presented at court to the [Prince Regent](#) himself.

Becky and Rawdon appear to be financially successful, but their wealth and high standard of living are mostly smoke and mirrors. Rawdon gambles heavily and earns money as a billiards shark. The book also suggests he cheats at cards. Becky accepts trinkets and money from her many admirers and sells some for cash. She also borrows heavily from the people around her and seldom pays bills. The couple lives mostly on credit, and while Rawdon seems to be too dim-witted to be aware of the effect of his borrowing on the people around him, Becky is fully aware that her heavy borrowing and her failure to pay bills bankrupts at least two innocent people: her servant, Briggs, whose life savings Becky borrows and fritters away, and her landlord Raggles, who was formerly a butler to the Crawley family and who invested his life savings in the townhouse that Becky and Rawdon rent (and fail to pay for). She also cheats [innkeepers](#), [milliners](#), [dress-makers](#), [grocers](#), and others who do business on credit. She and Rawdon obtain credit by tricking everyone around them into believing they are receiving money from others. Sometimes, Becky and Rawdon buy time from their creditors by suggesting Rawdon received money in Miss Crawley's will or are being paid a stipend by Sir Pitt. Ultimately Becky is suspected of carrying on an [extramarital affair](#) with the Marquis of Steyne, apparently encouraged by Rawdon to prostitute herself in exchange for money and promotion.

At the summit of her success, Becky's pecuniary relationship with the rich and powerful Marquis of Steyne is discovered by Rawdon after Rawdon is arrested for debt. Rawdon's brother's wife, Lady Jane, bails him out and Rawdon surprises Becky and Steyne in a compromising moment. Rawdon leaves his wife and through the offices of the Marquis of Steyne is made [Governor](#) of Coventry Island to get him out of the way, after Rawdon challenges the elderly marquis to a duel. Becky, having lost both husband and credibility, is warned by Steyne to leave the United Kingdom and wanders the continent. Rawdon and Becky's son is left in the care of Pitt Crawley and Lady Jane. However, wherever Becky goes, she is followed by the shadow of the Marquis of Steyne. No sooner does she establish herself in polite society than someone turns up who knows her disreputable history and spreads rumours; Steyne himself hounds her out of [Rome](#).

As Amelia's adored son George grows up, his grandfather relents and takes him from poor Amelia, who knows the rich and bitter old man will give him a much better start in life than she or her family could ever manage. After twelve years abroad, both Joseph Sedley and Dobbin return to the UK. Dobbin professes his unchanged love to Amelia, but although Amelia is affectionate she tells him she cannot forget the memory of her dead husband. Dobbin also becomes close to young George, and his kind, firm manner are a good influence on the spoiled child.

While in England, Dobbin mediates a reconciliation between Amelia and her father-in-law. The death of Amelia's father prevents their meeting, but following Osborne's death soon after, it is revealed that he had amended his will and bequeathed young George half his large fortune and Amelia a generous annuity. The rest is divided between his daughters, Miss

Osborne, and Mrs. Bullock, who begrudges Amelia and her son for the decrease in her annuity.

After the death of old Mr. Osborne, Amelia, Joseph, George and Dobbin go on a trip to [Germany](#), where they encounter the destitute Becky. She meets the young George at a card table and then enchants Jos Sedley all over again. Becky has unfortunately deteriorated as a character. She is drinking heavily, has lost her singing voice and much of her looks and spends time with card sharps and con artists. The book suggests that Becky has been involved in activities even more shady than her usual con games, but does not go into details.

Following Jos' entreaties, Amelia agrees to a reconciliation (when she hears that Becky's ties with her son have been severed), much to Dobbin's disapproval. Dobbin quarrels with Amelia and finally realizes that he is wasting his love on a woman too shallow to return it. However, Becky, in a moment of conscience, shows Amelia the note that George (Amelia's dead husband) had given her, asking her to run away with him. This destroys Amelia's idealized image of George, but not before Amelia has sent a note to Dobbin professing her love.

Becky resumes her seduction of Jos and gains control over him. He eventually dies of a suspicious ailment after signing a portion of his money to Becky as life insurance. In the original illustrations, which were done by Thackeray, Becky is shown behind a curtain with a vial in her hand; the picture is labelled "Becky's second appearance in the character of [Clytemnestra](#)" (she had played Clytemnestra during charades at a party earlier in the book). Jos' death appears to have made her fortune.

By a twist of fate Rawdon dies weeks before his older brother, whose son has already died; the baronetcy descends to Rawdon's son. Had he outlived his brother by even a day he would have become Sir Rawdon Crawley and Becky would have become Lady Crawley, a title she uses anyway in later life. The reader is informed at the end of the novel that although Dobbin married Amelia, and although he always treated her with great kindness, he never fully regained the love that he once had for her. There is also a final appearance for Becky, as cocky as ever, selling trinkets at a fair in aid of various charitable causes. She is now living well again as her son, the new baronet, has agreed to financially support her (in spite of her past neglect and indifference towards him).

[\[edit\]](#) Characters

[\[edit\]](#) Amelia Sedley

Amelia is considered the heroine: good natured but passive and naive. She has a round, rosy snub-nosed face and brown hair. Although she is not outstandingly beautiful, she is well liked by most men because of her sweet personality, a popularity which is often resented by other women. She marries George Osborne against the wishes of George's father, and is devoted to him despite his neglect of her and flirtation with Becky. When George dies at the battle of Waterloo, she brings up little George alone while living with her parents. She is completely dominated by her spendthrift father (who, it is revealed, sells the annuity Jos had provided in order "to prosecute his bootless schemes" ^[2]) and her increasingly peevish mother.

After George Osborne's death, Amelia is obsessed with her son and with the memory of her husband. She ignores William Dobbin, who courts her for years, and treats him shabbily until

eventually he leaves. It is only when Becky shows her George's letter to her that Amelia is able to move on; though she informs Becky that she has already written to Dobbin to ask him to come back. She eventually marries Dobbin.

[[edit](#)] Becky Sharp

Main article: [Becky Sharp \(character\)](#)

The [anti-heroine](#), and Amelia's opposite, is an intelligent young woman with a gift for satire. She is described as a petite sandy haired girl who has green eyes and a great deal of wit. Fluent in both French and English, Becky has a beautiful singing voice, plays the piano, and shows great talent as an actress. She is also completely amoral and without conscience. She does not seem to have the ability to get attached to other people, and lies easily and intelligently to get her way. She is extremely manipulative and, after the first few chapters and her failure to attract Jos Sedley, is not shown as being particularly sincere.

Never having known financial or social security even as a child, Becky desires it above all things. Nearly everything she does is with the intention of securing a stable position for herself, or herself and her husband after she and Rawdon are married. She advances Rawdon's interests tirelessly, flirting with men such as General Tufto and the Marquis of Steyne in order to get him promoted. She also uses her feminine wiles to distract men at card parties while Rawdon cheats them blind.

Marrying Rawdon Crawley in secret was a mistake, as was running off instead of begging Miss Crawley's forgiveness. She also fails to manipulate Miss Crawley through Rawdon so as to obtain an inheritance. Although Becky manipulates men very easily, she does not even try to cultivate the friendship of most women. Lady Jane, the Dobbin sisters, and Lady Steyne see right through her. Amelia and (initially) Miss Crawley are exceptions to the rule.

[[edit](#)] Rawdon Crawley

Rawdon, the younger of the two Crawley sons, is an empty-headed cavalry officer who is his wealthy aunt's favourite until he marries Becky Sharp, who is of a far lower class. He permanently alienates his aunt, who leaves her estate to Rawdon's elder brother Sir Pitt instead. Sir Pitt has by this time inherited their father's estate, leaving Rawdon destitute.

The well-meaning Rawdon does have a few talents in life, most of them having to do with gambling and duelling. He is very good at cards and pool, and although he does not always win he is able to earn cash by betting against less talented gamblers. He is heavily indebted throughout most of the book, not so much for his own expenses as for Becky's. Not particularly talented as a military officer, he is content to let Becky manage his career.

Although Rawdon knows Becky is attractive to men, he believes her reputation is spotless even though she is widely suspected of romantic intrigue with General Tufto and other powerful men. Nobody dares to suggest otherwise to Rawdon because of his temper and his reputation for duelling. Yet other people, particularly the Marquis of Steyne, find it impossible to believe that Crawley is unaware of Becky's tricks. Steyne in particular believes Rawdon is fully aware Becky is prostituting herself, and believes Rawdon is going along with the charade in the hope of financial gain.

After Rawdon finds out the truth and leaves Becky for an assignment overseas, he leaves his son to be brought up by his brother Sir Pitt and his wife Lady Jane.

[\[edit\]](#) **Sir Pitt Crawley, Baronet**

Rawdon Crawley's elder brother inherits the Crawley estate from his elderly father, and he also inherits from his wealthy aunt, Miss Crawley. Sir Pitt is very religious and has political aspirations, although not many people appreciate his intelligence or wisdom because there's not much there to appreciate. Somewhat pedantic and conservative, Sir Pitt does nothing to help Rawdon or Becky even when they fall on hard times. This is chiefly because Lady Jane cordially hates Becky who had repaid Lady Jane's earlier kindness by patronizing her and flirting with Sir Pitt.

[\[edit\]](#) **Miss Matilda Crawley**

The elderly Miss Crawley is everyone's favourite wealthy aunt. Sir Pitt and Rawdon both dote on her, although Rawdon is her favourite nephew and sole heir until he marries Becky. While Miss Crawley likes Becky and keeps her around to entertain her with sarcasm and wit, and while she loves scandal and particularly stories of unwise marriage, she does not want scandal or unwise marriage in her family.

A substantial part of the early section of the book deals with the efforts the Crawleys make to kowtow to Miss Crawley in the hope of receiving a big inheritance.

[\[edit\]](#) **George Osborne**

George Osborne, his father, and his two sisters are close to the Sedley family until Mr. Sedley (the father of Jos and Amelia) goes bankrupt following some ill-advised speculation. Since George and Amelia were raised in close company and were childhood sweethearts, George defies his father in order to marry Amelia. Before father and son can be reconciled, George is killed at the battle of Waterloo, leaving the pregnant Amelia to carry on as well as she can.

Raised to be a selfish, vain, profligate spender, George squanders the last of the money he receives from his father and sets nothing aside to help support Amelia. After marrying Amelia, he finds after a couple of weeks that he is bored. He flirts with Becky quite seriously and is reconciled to Amelia only a short time before he is killed in battle.

[\[edit\]](#) **William Dobbin**

The best friend of George Osborne, William Dobbin is tall, ungainly, and not particularly handsome. He is a few years older than George but has been friends with him since his school days even though Dobbin's father is a fig-merchant and the Osbornes belong to the genteel class and have become independently wealthy. He defends George and is blind to his faults in many ways although he tries to force George to do the right thing. He pushes George to keep his promise to marry Amelia even though Dobbin is in love with Amelia himself. After George is killed, Dobbin puts together an annuity to help support Amelia, ostensibly with the help of George's fellow officers.

Later, Dobbin discreetly does what he can to help support Amelia and also her son George. He allows Amelia to continue with her obsession over George and does not correct her erroneous beliefs about him. He hangs about for years, either pining away over her while serving in India or waiting on her in person, allowing her to take advantage of his good nature. After Amelia finally chooses Becky's friendship over his in Baden-Baden, Dobbin leaves in disgust. He returns when Amelia writes to him and admits her feelings for him, marries her (despite having lost much of his passion for her), and has a daughter whom he loves deeply.

[\[edit\]](#) Jos Sedley

Amelia's older brother, Joseph "Jos" Sedley, is a "[nabob](#)", who made a respectable fortune as a tax collector in India. Obese and self-important but very shy and insecure, he is attracted to Becky Sharp but circumstances prevent him from proposing. He never marries, but when he meets Becky again he is easily manipulated into falling in love with her. Jos is not a courageous or intelligent man, displaying his cowardice at the Battle of Waterloo by trying to flee and purchasing both of Becky's overpriced horses. Becky ensnares him again near the end of the book and, it hinted, murders him for his life insurance.

[\[edit\]](#) Publishing history

Like many novels of the time, *Vanity Fair* was published as a [serial](#) before being sold in book form; it was printed in 20 monthly parts between January 1847 and July 1848. (As was standard practice, the last part was a "double number" containing parts 19 and 20.)

No. 1 – Jan 1847 Ch. 1 – 4

No. 2 – Feb 1847 Ch. 5 – 7

No. 3 – Mar 1847 Ch. 8 – 11

No. 4 – Apr 1847 Ch. 12 – 14

No. 5 – May 1847 Ch. 15 – 18

No. 6 – Jun 1847 Ch. 19 – 22

No. 7 – Jul 1847 Ch. 23 – 25

No. 8 – Aug 1847 Ch. 26 – 29

No. 9 – Sep 1847 Ch. 30 – 32

No. 10 – Oct 1847 Ch. 33 – 35

No. 11 – Nov 1847 Ch. 36 – 38

No. 12 – Dec 1847 Ch. 39 – 42

No. 13 – Jan 1848 Ch. 43 – 46

No. 14 – Feb 1848 Ch. 47 – 50

No. 15 – Mar 1848 Ch. 51 – 53

No. 16 – Apr 1848 Ch. 54 – 56

No. 17 – May 1848 Ch. 57 – 60

No. 18 – Jun 1848 Ch. 61 – 63

No. 19/20 – Jul 1848 Ch. 64 – 67

The parts resembled pamphlets, and contained the text of several chapters between outer pages of steel-plate engravings and advertising. Woodcut engravings, which could be set along with normal moveable type, appeared within the text. The same engraved illustration appeared on the canary-yellow cover of each monthly part; this colour became Thackeray's signature (as a light blue-green was Dickens'), allowing passers-by to notice a new Thackeray number in a bookstall from a distance. *Vanity Fair* was the first work that Thackeray published under his own name, and was extremely well received at the time. The original monthly numbers and later bound version featured Thackeray's own illustrations, which at times provided plot hints or symbolically freighted images (a major character shown as a man-eating mermaid, for instance) to which the text does not explicitly refer. Most modern editions either do not reproduce all the illustrations, or reproduce them so badly that much detail is lost.

Thackeray meant the book to be not only entertaining but also instructive, an intention demonstrated through the book's narration and through Thackeray's private correspondence. The novel is considered a classic of English literature, though some critics claim that it has structural problems; Thackeray sometimes lost track of the huge scope of his work, mixing up characters' names and minor plot details. The number of allusions and references it contains can make it difficult for modern readers to follow.

[\[edit\]](#) Literary significance and criticism

[\[edit\]](#) Contemporary critics

Even before the last part of the serial was published, critics hailed the work as a literary treasure. Although the critics were superlative in their praise, they expressed disappointment at the unremittingly dark portrayal of human nature, fearing Thackeray had taken his dismal metaphor too far. In response to his critics, Thackeray explained that he saw people for the most part "abominably foolish and selfish".^[3] The unhappy ending was intended to inspire readers to look inward at their own shortcomings.

[\[edit\]](#) Theorists

The subtitle, *A Novel without a Hero*, is apt because the characters are all flawed to a greater or lesser degree; even the most sympathetic have weaknesses, for example Captain Dobbin,

who is prone to [vanity](#) and [melancholy](#). The human weaknesses Thackeray illustrates are mostly to do with [greed](#), [idleness](#), and [snobbery](#), and the scheming, [deceit](#) and [hypocrisy](#) which mask them. None of the characters are wholly evil, although Becky's psychopathic tendencies make her come pretty close. However, even Becky, who is amoral and cunning, is thrown on her own resources by poverty and its stigma. (She is the orphaned daughter of a poor artist.) Thackeray's tendency to highlight faults in all of his characters displays his desire for a greater level of [realism](#) in his fiction compared to the rather unlikely or idealised people in many contemporary novels.

The novel is a [satire](#) of society as a whole, characterised by hypocrisy and [opportunism](#), but it is not a reforming novel; there is no suggestion that social or political changes, or greater piety and [moral reformism](#) could improve the nature of society. It thus paints a fairly bleak view of the human condition. This bleak portrait is continued with Thackeray's own role as an [omniscient narrator](#), one of the writers best known for using the technique. He continually offers asides about his characters and compares them to actors and puppets, but his scorn goes even as far as his readers; accusing all who may be interested in such "Vanity Fairs" as being either "of a lazy, or a benevolent, or a sarcastic mood".

The work is often compared to the other great [historical novel](#) which covered the [Napoleonic wars](#): Tolstoy's [War and Peace](#). While Tolstoy's work has a greater emphasis on the historical detail and the effect the war has upon his protagonists, Thackeray instead uses the conflict as more of a backdrop to the lives of his characters. The momentous events on the continent do not always have an equally important influence on the behaviors of Thackeray's characters. Rather their faults tend to compound over time. This is in contrast to the redemptive power conflict has on the characters in *War and Peace*. For Thackeray, the Napoleonic wars as a whole can be thought of as one more of the vanities expressed in the title.

The suggestion, near the end of the work that Becky may have killed Jos is argued against by [John Sutherland](#) in his book *Is Heathcliff A Murderer? : Great Puzzles In Nineteenth-century Fiction*. Although Becky is portrayed as having a highly dubious moral sense, the idea that she would commit [premeditated murder](#) is quite a step forward for the character. Thackeray was a fierce critic of the crime fiction popular at the time, particularly that of [Edward Bulwer-Lytton](#). These lurid and sensationalist accounts—known as "[Newgate novels](#)"—took their inspiration, and sometimes entire stories, from the pages of [The Newgate Calendar](#). What Thackeray principally objected to was the glorification of a criminal's deeds; it therefore seems strange that he would have depicted Becky as such a villainess. His intent may have been to entrap the Victorian reader with their own prejudices and make them think the worst of Becky Sharp even when they have no proof of her actions. This interpretation is not helped by the trio of lawyers she gets to defend her from the claims, Burke, Thurtell, and Hayes, named after prominent murders of the time (although this may have been further commentary aimed at the legal profession).

Though Thackeray does not settle definitively whether Becky murders Jos, such a development is in keeping with the overall trend of character development in the novel. The tone of *Vanity Fair* seems to darken as the book goes on. At the novel's beginning, Becky Sharp is a bright girl with an eye to improving her lot through marrying up the social scale; though she is thoroughly unsentimental, she is nonetheless portrayed as being a good friend to Amelia. By novel's end she is (implied to have become) an adulteress and a murderess. Amelia begins as a warm-hearted and friendly girl, though sentimental and naive, but by story's end she is portrayed as vacuous and shallow. Dobbin appears first as loyal and

magnanimous, if unaware of his own worth; by the end of the story he is presented as a tragic fool, a prisoner of his own sense of duty who knows he is wasting his gifts on Amelia but is unable to live without her. Whether Thackeray intended this shift in tone when he began writing, or whether it developed over the course of the work's composition, is a question that cannot be settled. Regardless of its provenance, the novel's increasingly grim outlook can take readers aback, as characters whom Thackeray—and the reader—at first hold in sympathy are shown to be unworthy of such regard.

The character of Becky Sharp is based in part on Thackeray's maternal grandmother Harriet Becher. She abandoned her husband and children when she eloped with Captain Charles Christie. In 1806 shortly after the death of Christie and her husband she married Edward Butler, another army officer. Thackeray lived with his grandmother in Paris in the 1830s and again in the 1840s.

[\[edit\]](#) Film, television and radio adaptations

The book has inspired a number of adaptations:

[\[edit\]](#) Silent film versions

- 1911: *Vanity Fair*: directed by Charles Kent.
- 1915: *Vanity Fair*: directed by Charles Brabin.
- 1922: *Vanity Fair*: directed by W. Courtney Rowden.
- 1923: *Vanity Fair*: directed by [Hugo Ballin](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Sound film versions

- 1932: *Vanity Fair*: directed by Chester M. Franklin and starring [Myrna Loy](#).
- 1935: *Becky Sharp*: starring [Miriam Hopkins](#) and [Frances Dee](#), the first film shot in Technicolor.
- 2004: *Vanity Fair*: directed by [Mira Nair](#). Starring [Reese Witherspoon](#) as Becky Sharpe and [Natasha Little](#) from the television miniseries of 'Vanity Fair' as Lady Jane Sheepshanks. This work rewrites Becky as a likable person, whose faults are "understandable."^[4]

[\[edit\]](#) Television

- 1967: *Vanity Fair*: [BBC](#) miniseries adapted by [Rex Tucker](#) starring [Susan Hampshire](#) as [Becky Sharp](#), for which she received an [Emmy Award](#) in 1973. This version was also broadcast in 1972 in the US on [PBS](#) television as part of *Masterpiece Theatre*.
- 1987: *Vanity Fair*: [BBC](#) miniseries starring [Eve Matheson](#) as [Becky Sharp](#), [Rebecca Saire](#) as Amelia Sedley, [James Saxon](#) as Jos Sedley and [Simon Dormandy](#) as Dobbin.
- 1998: *Vanity Fair*: [BBC](#) miniseries starring [Natasha Little](#) as [Becky Sharp](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Radio

[Orson Welles](#)' radio series *Campbell Playhouse* broadcast a one-hour adaptation on January 7, 1940 featuring [Helen Hayes](#) and [Agnes Moorehead](#).

The NBC radio series *Favorite Story*, hosted by [Ronald Colman](#), broadcast a half-hour adaptation with [Joan Loring](#) as "Becky Sharp".

[BBC Radio](#) broadcast an adaptation of the novel by [Stephen Wyatt](#) in 2004 starring [Emma Fielding](#) as Becky, [Stephen Fry](#) as the Narrator, [Katy Cavanaugh](#) as Amelia, [David Calder](#), [Philip Fox](#), [Jon Glover](#), [Geoffrey Whitehead](#) as Mr. Osbourne, [Ian Marsters](#) as Mr. Sedley, [Alice Hart](#) as Maria Osbourne and [Margaret Tyzack](#) as Miss Crawley (subsequently re-broadcast on [BBC Radio 7](#), re-named [BBC Radio 4 Extra](#), in twenty fifteen-minute episodes).


[\[edit\]](#) Notes

- [^] [Taylor 2004](#).
- [^] Thackeray, William Makepeace. "[Vanity Fair](#)". Google Books. Retrieved 7 October 2011.
- [^] Gordon N. Ray, ed., *The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945–46), 2: 309.
- [^] [\[1\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#) References

- Taylor, D. J. (2004). "Brookfield , Jane Octavia (1821–1896)". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press. doi:[10.1093/ref:odnb/56277](#).
- Harden, Edgar F. (1995). *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero*. New York: Twayne Publishers. [ISBN 0-8057-4460-6](#)
- Vanity Fair*: [ISBN 0-19-283443-6](#) (Oxford World Classics edition, that has explanatory notes and original illustrations)

[\[edit\]](#) External links

 Wikimedia Commons has media related to: [Vanity Fair \(novel\)](#)

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