

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE FLIGHT TO LONDON

Part 1

Ann Veronica had an impression that she did not sleep at all that night, and at any rate she got through an immense amount of feverish feeling and thinking.

What was she going to do?

One main idea possessed her: she must get away from home, she must assert herself at once or perish. "Very well," she would say, "then I must go." To remain, she felt, was to concede everything. And she would have to go to-morrow. It was clear it must be to-morrow. If she delayed a day she would delay two days, if she delayed two days she would delay a week, and after a week things would be adjusted to submission forever. "I'll go," she vowed to the night, "or I'll die!" She made plans and estimated means and resources. These and her general preparations had perhaps a certain disproportion. She had a gold watch, a very good gold watch that had been her mother's, a pearl necklace that was also pretty good, some unpretending rings, some silver bangles and a few other such inferior trinkets, three pounds thirteen shillings unspent of her

dress and book allowance and a few good salable books. So equipped, she proposed to set up a separate establishment in the world.

And then she would find work.

For most of a long and fluctuating night she was fairly confident that she would find work; she knew herself to be strong, intelligent, and capable by the standards of most of the girls she knew. She was not quite clear how she should find it, but she felt she would. Then she would write and tell her father what she had done, and put their relationship on a new footing.

That was how she projected it, and in general terms it seemed plausible and possible. But in between these wider phases of comparative confidence were gaps of disconcerting doubt, when the universe was presented as making sinister and threatening faces at her, defying her to defy, preparing a humiliating and shameful overthrow. "I don't care," said Ann Veronica to the darkness; "I'll fight it."

She tried to plan her proceedings in detail. The only difficulties that presented themselves clearly to her were the difficulties of getting away from Morningside Park, and not the difficulties at the other end of the journey. These were so outside her experience that she found it possible to thrust them almost out of sight by saying they would be "all right" in confident tones to herself. But still she knew they were not right, and at times they became a horrible obsession as of something

waiting for her round the corner. She tried to imagine herself "getting something," to project herself as sitting down at a desk and writing, or as returning after her work to some pleasantly equipped and free and independent flat. For a time she furnished the flat. But even with that furniture it remained extremely vague, the possible good and the possible evil as well!

The possible evil! "I'll go," said Ann Veronica for the hundredth time. "I'll go. I don't care WHAT happens."

She awoke out of a doze, as though she had never been sleeping. It was time to get up.

She sat on the edge of her bed and looked about her, at her room, at the row of black-covered books and the pig's skull. "I must take them," she said, to help herself over her own incredulity. "How shall I get my luggage out of the house?..."

The figure of her aunt, a little distant, a little propitiatory, behind the coffee things, filled her with a sense of almost catastrophic adventure. Perhaps she might never come back to that breakfast-room again. Never! Perhaps some day, quite soon, she might regret that breakfast-room. She helped herself to the remainder of the slightly congealed bacon, and reverted to the problem of getting her luggage out of the house. She decided to call in the help of Teddy Widgeot, or, failing him, of one of his sisters.

Part 2

She found the younger generation of the Widgetts engaged in languid reminiscences, and all, as they expressed it, a "bit decayed." Every one became tremendously animated when they heard that Ann Veronica had failed them because she had been, as she expressed it, "locked in."

"My God!" said Teddy, more impressively than ever.

"But what are you going to do?" asked Hetty.

"What can one do?" asked Ann Veronica. "Would you stand it? I'm going to clear out."

"Clear out?" cried Hetty.

"Go to London," said Ann Veronica.

She had expected sympathetic admiration, but instead the whole Widgett family, except Teddy, expressed a common dismay. "But how can you?" asked Constance. "Who will you stop with?"

"I shall go on my own. Take a room!"

"I say!" said Constance. "But who's going to pay for the room?"

"I've got money," said Ann Veronica. "Anything is better than this--this stifled life down here." And seeing that Hetty and Constance were obviously developing objections, she plunged at once into a demand for help. "I've got nothing in the world to pack with except a toy size portmanteau. Can you lend me some stuff?"

"You ARE a chap!" said Constance, and warmed only slowly from the idea of dissuasion to the idea of help. But they did what they could for her. They agreed to lend her their hold-all and a large, formless bag which they called the communal trunk. And Teddy declared himself ready to go to the ends of the earth for her, and carry her luggage all the way.

Hetty, looking out of the window--she always smoked her after-breakfast cigarette at the window for the benefit of the less advanced section of Morningside Park society--and trying not to raise objections, saw Miss Stanley going down toward the shops.

"If you must go on with it," said Hetty, "now's your time." And Ann Veronica at once went back with the hold-all, trying not to hurry indecently but to keep up her dignified air of being a wronged person doing the right thing at a smart trot, to pack. Teddy went round by the garden backs and dropped the bag over the fence. All this was exciting

and entertaining. Her aunt returned before the packing was done, and Ann Veronica lunched with an uneasy sense of bag and hold-all packed up-stairs and inadequately hidden from chance intruders by the valance of the bed. She went down, flushed and light-hearted, to the Widgetts' after lunch to make some final arrangements and then, as soon as her aunt had retired to lie down for her usual digestive hour, took the risk of the servants having the enterprise to report her proceedings and carried her bag and hold-all to the garden gate, whence Teddy, in a state of ecstatic service, bore them to the railway station. Then she went up-stairs again, dressed herself carefully for town, put on her most businesslike-looking hat, and with a wave of emotion she found it hard to control, walked down to catch the 3.17 up-train.

Teddy handed her into the second-class compartment her season-ticket warranted, and declared she was "simply splendid." "If you want anything," he said, "or get into any trouble, wire me. I'd come back from the ends of the earth. I'd do anything, Vee. It's horrible to think of you!"

"You're an awful brick, Teddy!" she said.

"Who wouldn't be for you?"

The train began to move. "You're splendid!" said Teddy, with his hair wild in the wind. "Good luck! Good luck!"

She waved from the window until the bend hid him.

She found herself alone in the train asking herself what she must do next, and trying not to think of herself as cut off from home or any refuge whatever from the world she had resolved to face. She felt smaller and more adventurous even than she had expected to feel. "Let me see," she said to herself, trying to control a slight sinking of the heart, "I am going to take a room in a lodging-house because that is cheaper.... But perhaps I had better get a room in an hotel to-night and look round...."

"It's bound to be all right," she said.

But her heart kept on sinking. What hotel should she go to? If she told a cabman to drive to an hotel, any hotel, what would he do--or say? He might drive to something dreadfully expensive, and not at all the quiet sort of thing she required. Finally she decided that even for an hotel she must look round, and that meanwhile she would "book" her luggage at Waterloo. She told the porter to take it to the booking-office, and it was only after a disconcerting moment or so that she found she ought to have directed him to go to the cloak-room. But that was soon put right, and she walked out into London with a peculiar exaltation of mind, an exaltation that partook of panic and defiance, but was chiefly a sense of vast unexampled release.

She inhaled a deep breath of air--London air.

Part 3

She dismissed the first hotels she passed, she scarcely knew why, mainly perhaps from the mere dread of entering them, and crossed Waterloo Bridge at a leisurely pace. It was high afternoon, there was no great throng of foot-passengers, and many an eye from omnibus and pavement rested gratefully on her fresh, trim presence as she passed young and erect, with the light of determination shining through the quiet self-possession of her face. She was dressed as English girls do dress for town, without either coquetry or harshness: her collarless blouse confessed a pretty neck, her eyes were bright and steady, and her dark hair waved loosely and graciously over her ears....

It seemed at first the most beautiful afternoon of all time to her, and perhaps the thrill of her excitement did add a distinctive and culminating keenness to the day. The river, the big buildings on the north bank, Westminster, and St. Paul's, were rich and wonderful with the soft sunshine of London, the softest, the finest grained, the most penetrating and least emphatic sunshine in the world. The very carts and vans and cabs that Wellington Street poured out incessantly upon the bridge seemed ripe and good in her eyes. A traffic of copious barges slumbered over the face of the river-barges either altogether stagnant

or dreaming along in the wake of fussy tugs; and above circled, urbanely voracious, the London seagulls. She had never been there before at that hour, in that light, and it seemed to her as if she came to it all for the first time. And this great mellow place, this London, now was hers, to struggle with, to go where she pleased in, to overcome and live in.

"I am glad," she told herself, "I came."

She marked an hotel that seemed neither opulent nor odd in a little side street opening on the Embankment, made up her mind with an effort, and, returning by Hungerford Bridge to Waterloo, took a cab to this chosen refuge with her two pieces of luggage. There was just a minute's hesitation before they gave her a room.

The young lady in the bureau said she would inquire, and Ann Veronica, while she affected to read the appeal on a hospital collecting-box upon the bureau counter, had a disagreeable sense of being surveyed from behind by a small, whiskered gentleman in a frock-coat, who came out of the inner office and into the hall among a number of equally observant green porters to look at her and her bags. But the survey was satisfactory, and she found herself presently in Room No. 47, straightening her hat and waiting for her luggage to appear.

"All right so far," she said to herself....

Part 4

But presently, as she sat on the one antimacassared red silk chair and surveyed her hold-all and bag in that tidy, rather vacant, and dehumanized apartment, with its empty wardrobe and desert toilet-table and pictureless walls and stereotyped furnishings, a sudden blankness came upon her as though she didn't matter, and had been thrust away into this impersonal corner, she and her gear....

She decided to go out into the London afternoon again and get something to eat in an Aerated Bread shop or some such place, and perhaps find a cheap room for herself. Of course that was what she had to do; she had to find a cheap room for herself and work!

This Room No. 47 was no more than a sort of railway compartment on the way to that.

How does one get work?

She walked along the Strand and across Trafalgar Square, and by the Haymarket to Piccadilly, and so through dignified squares and palatial alleys to Oxford Street; and her mind was divided between a speculative treatment of employment on the one hand, and breezes--zephyr breezes--of the keenest appreciation for London, on the other. The jolly part of it was that for the first time in her life so far as London was concerned,

she was not going anywhere in particular; for the first time in her life it seemed to her she was taking London in.

She tried to think how people get work. Ought she to walk into some of these places and tell them what she could do? She hesitated at the window of a shipping-office in Cockspur Street and at the Army and Navy Stores, but decided that perhaps there would be some special and customary hour, and that it would be better for her to find this out before she made her attempt. And, besides, she didn't just immediately want to make her attempt.

She fell into a pleasant dream of positions and work. Behind every one of these myriad fronts she passed there must be a career or careers. Her ideas of women's employment and a modern woman's pose in life were based largely on the figure of Vivie Warren in Mrs. Warren's Profession. She had seen Mrs. Warren's Profession furtively with Hetty Widdett from the gallery of a Stage Society performance one Monday afternoon. Most of it had been incomprehensible to her, or comprehensible in a way that checked further curiosity, but the figure of Vivien, hard, capable, successful, and bullying, and ordering about a veritable Teddy in the person of Frank Gardner, appealed to her. She saw herself in very much Vivie's position--managing something.

Her thoughts were deflected from Vivie Warren by the peculiar behavior of a middle-aged gentleman in Piccadilly. He appeared suddenly from the infinite in the neighborhood of the Burlington Arcade, crossing

the pavement toward her and with his eyes upon her. He seemed to her indistinguishably about her father's age. He wore a silk hat a little tilted, and a morning coat buttoned round a tight, contained figure; and a white slip gave a finish to his costume and endorsed the quiet distinction of his tie. His face was a little flushed perhaps, and his small, brown eyes were bright. He stopped on the curb-stone, not facing her but as if he was on his way to cross the road, and spoke to her suddenly over his shoulder.

"Whither away?" he said, very distinctly in a curiously wheedling voice. Ann Veronica stared at his foolish, propitiatory smile, his hungry gaze, through one moment of amazement, then stepped aside and went on her way with a quickened step. But her mind was ruffled, and its mirror-like surface of satisfaction was not easily restored.

Queer old gentleman!

The art of ignoring is one of the accomplishments of every well-bred girl, so carefully instilled that at last she can even ignore her own thoughts and her own knowledge. Ann Veronica could at the same time ask herself what this queer old gentleman could have meant by speaking to her, and know--know in general terms, at least--what that accosting signified. About her, as she had gone day by day to and from the Tredgold College, she had seen and not seen many an incidental aspect of those sides of life about which girls are expected to know nothing, aspects that were extraordinarily relevant to her own position and

outlook on the world, and yet by convention ineffably remote. For all that she was of exceptional intellectual enterprise, she had never yet considered these things with unaverted eyes. She had viewed them askance, and without exchanging ideas with any one else in the world about them.

She went on her way now no longer dreaming and appreciative, but disturbed and unwillingly observant behind her mask of serene contentment.

That delightful sense of free, unembarrassed movement was gone.

As she neared the bottom of the dip in Piccadilly she saw a woman approaching her from the opposite direction--a tall woman who at the first glance seemed altogether beautiful and fine. She came along with the fluttering assurance of some tall ship. Then as she drew nearer paint showed upon her face, and a harsh purpose behind the quiet expression of her open countenance, and a sort of unreality in her splendor betrayed itself for which Ann Veronica could not recall the right word--a word, half understood, that lurked and hid in her mind, the word "meretricious." Behind this woman and a little to the side of her, walked a man smartly dressed, with desire and appraisal in his eyes. Something insisted that those two were mysteriously linked--that the woman knew the man was there.

It was a second reminder that against her claim to go free and

untrammelled there was a case to be made, that after all it was true that a girl does not go alone in the world unchallenged, nor ever has gone freely alone in the world, that evil walks abroad and dangers, and petty insults more irritating than dangers, lurk.

It was in the quiet streets and squares toward Oxford Street that it first came into her head disagreeably that she herself was being followed. She observed a man walking on the opposite side of the way and looking toward her.

"Bother it all!" she swore. "Bother!" and decided that this was not so, and would not look to right or left again.

Beyond the Circus Ann Veronica went into a British Tea-Table Company shop to get some tea. And as she was yet waiting for her tea to come she saw this man again. Either it was an unfortunate recovery of a trail, or he had followed her from Mayfair. There was no mistaking his intentions this time. He came down the shop looking for her quite obviously, and took up a position on the other side against a mirror in which he was able to regard her steadfastly.

Beneath the serene unconcern of Ann Veronica's face was a boiling tumult. She was furiously angry. She gazed with a quiet detachment toward the window and the Oxford Street traffic, and in her heart she was busy kicking this man to death. He HAD followed her! What had he followed her for? He must have followed her all the way from beyond

Grosvenor Square.

He was a tall man and fair, with bluish eyes that were rather protuberant, and long white hands of which he made a display. He had removed his silk hat, and now sat looking at Ann Veronica over an untouched cup of tea; he sat gloating upon her, trying to catch her eye. Once, when he thought he had done so, he smiled an ingratiating smile. He moved, after quiet intervals, with a quick little movement, and ever and again stroked his small mustache and coughed a self-conscious cough.

"That he should be in the same world with me!" said Ann Veronica, reduced to reading the list of good things the British Tea-Table Company had priced for its patrons.

Heaven knows what dim and tawdry conceptions of passion and desire were in that blond cranium, what romance-begotten dreams of intrigue and adventure! but they sufficed, when presently Ann Veronica went out into the darkling street again, to inspire a flitting, dogged pursuit, idiotic, exasperating, indecent.

She had no idea what she should do. If she spoke to a policeman she did not know what would ensue. Perhaps she would have to charge this man and appear in a police-court next day.

She became angry with herself. She would not be driven in by this persistent, sneaking aggression. She would ignore him. Surely she could

ignore him. She stopped abruptly, and looked in a flower-shop window. He passed, and came loitering back and stood beside her, silently looking into her face.

The afternoon had passed now into twilight. The shops were lighting up into gigantic lanterns of color, the street lamps were glowing into existence, and she had lost her way. She had lost her sense of direction, and was among unfamiliar streets. She went on from street to street, and all the glory of London had departed. Against the sinister, the threatening, monstrous inhumanity of the limitless city, there was nothing now but this supreme, ugly fact of a pursuit--the pursuit of the undesired, persistent male.

For a second time Ann Veronica wanted to swear at the universe.

There were moments when she thought of turning upon this man and talking to him. But there was something in his face at once stupid and invincible that told her he would go on forcing himself upon her, that he would esteem speech with her a great point gained. In the twilight he had ceased to be a person one could tackle and shame; he had become something more general, a something that crawled and sneaked toward her and would not let her alone....

Then, when the tension was getting unendurable, and she was on the verge of speaking to some casual passer-by and demanding help, her follower vanished. For a time she could scarcely believe he was gone. He had. The

night had swallowed him up, but his work on her was done. She had lost her nerve, and there was no more freedom in London for her that night. She was glad to join in the stream of hurrying homeward workers that was now welling out of a thousand places of employment, and to imitate their driven, preoccupied haste. She had followed a bobbing white hat and gray jacket until she reached the Euston Road corner of Tottenham Court Road, and there, by the name on a bus and the cries of a conductor, she made a guess of her way. And she did not merely affect to be driven--she felt driven. She was afraid people would follow her, she was afraid of the dark, open doorways she passed, and afraid of the blazes of light; she was afraid to be alone, and she knew not what it was she feared.

It was past seven when she got back to her hotel. She thought then that she had shaken off the man of the bulging blue eyes forever, but that night she found he followed her into her dreams. He stalked her, he stared at her, he craved her, he sidled slinking and propitiatory and yet relentlessly toward her, until at last she awoke from the suffocating nightmare nearness of his approach, and lay awake in fear and horror listening to the unaccustomed sounds of the hotel.

She came very near that night to resolving that she would return to her home next morning. But the morning brought courage again, and those first intimations of horror vanished completely from her mind.

Part 5

She had sent her father a telegram from the East Strand post-office worded thus:

All	is	well	with	me
and	quite	safe	Veronica	

and afterward she had dined a la carte upon a cutlet, and had then set herself to write an answer to Mr. Manning's proposal of marriage. But she had found it very difficult.

"DEAR MR. MANNING," she had begun. So far it had been plain sailing, and it had seemed fairly evident to go on: "I find it very difficult to answer your letter."

But after that neither ideas nor phrases had come and she had fallen thinking of the events of the day. She had decided that she would spend the next morning answering advertisements in the papers that abounded in the writing-room; and so, after half an hour's perusal of back numbers of the Sketch in the drawing-room, she had gone to bed.

She found next morning, when she came to this advertisement answering, that it was more difficult than she had supposed. In the first place there were not so many suitable advertisements as she had expected. She sat down by the paper-rack with a general feeling of resemblance to Vivie Warren, and looked through the Morning Post and Standard and Telegraph, and afterward the half-penny sheets. The Morning Post was hungry for governesses and nursery governesses, but held out no other hopes; the Daily Telegraph that morning seemed eager only for skirt hands. She went to a writing-desk and made some memoranda on a sheet of note-paper, and then remembered that she had no address as yet to which letters could be sent.

She decided to leave this matter until the morrow and devote the morning to settling up with Mr. Manning. At the cost of quite a number of torn drafts she succeeded in evolving this:

"DEAR MR. MANNING,--I find it very difficult to answer your letter. I hope you won't mind if I say first that I think it does me an extraordinary honor that you should think of any one like myself so highly and seriously, and, secondly, that I wish it had not been written."

She surveyed this sentence for some time before going on. "I wonder," she said, "why one writes him sentences like that? It'll have to go," she decided, "I've written too many already." She went on, with a desperate attempt to be easy and colloquial:

"You see, we were rather good friends, I thought, and now perhaps it will be difficult for us to get back to the old friendly footing. But if that can possibly be done I want it to be done. You see, the plain fact of the case is that I think I am too young and ignorant for marriage. I have been thinking these things over lately, and it seems to me that marriage for a girl is just the supremest thing in life. It isn't just one among a number of important things; for her it is the important thing, and until she knows far more than I know of the facts of life, how is she to undertake it? So please; if you will, forget that you wrote that letter, and forgive this answer. I want you to think of me just as if I was a man, and quite outside marriage altogether.

"I do hope you will be able to do this, because I value men friends. I shall be very sorry if I cannot have you for a friend. I think that there is no better friend for a girl than a man rather older than herself.

"Perhaps by this time you will have heard of the step I have taken in leaving my home. Very likely you will disapprove highly of what I have done--I wonder? You may, perhaps, think I have done it just in a fit of childish petulance because my father locked me in when I wanted to go to a ball of which he did not approve. But really it is much more than that. At Morningside Park I feel as though all my growing up was presently to stop, as though I was being shut in from the light of life, and, as they say in botany, etiolated. I was just like a sort of dummy

that does things as it is told--that is to say, as the strings are pulled. I want to be a person by myself, and to pull my own strings. I had rather have trouble and hardship like that than be taken care of by others. I want to be myself. I wonder if a man can quite understand that passionate feeling? It is quite a passionate feeling. So I am already no longer the girl you knew at Morningside Park. I am a young person seeking employment and freedom and self-development, just as in quite our first talk of all I said I wanted to be.

"I do hope you will see how things are, and not be offended with me or frightfully shocked and distressed by what I have done.

"Very sincerely yours,

"ANN VERONICA STANLEY."

Part 6

In the afternoon she resumed her search for apartments. The intoxicating sense of novelty had given place to a more business-like mood. She drifted northward from the Strand, and came on some queer and dingy quarters.

She had never imagined life was half so sinister as it looked to her in the beginning of these investigations. She found herself again in the presence of some element in life about which she had been trained not to think, about which she was perhaps instinctively indisposed to think; something which jarred, in spite of all her mental resistance, with all her preconceptions of a clean and courageous girl walking out from Morningside Park as one walks out of a cell into a free and spacious world. One or two landladies refused her with an air of conscious virtue that she found hard to explain. "We don't let to ladies," they said.

She drifted, via Theobald's Road, obliquely toward the region about Titchfield Street. Such apartments as she saw were either scandalously dirty or unaccountably dear, or both. And some were adorned with engravings that struck her as being more vulgar and undesirable than anything she had ever seen in her life. Ann Veronica loved beautiful things, and the beauty of undraped loveliness not least among them; but these were pictures that did but insist coarsely upon the roundness of women's bodies. The windows of these rooms were obscured with draperies, their floors a carpet patchwork; the china ornaments on their mantels were of a class apart. After the first onset several of the women who had apartments to let said she would not do for them, and in effect dismissed her. This also struck her as odd.

About many of these houses hung a mysterious taint as of something weakly and commonly and dustily evil; the women who negotiated the rooms looked out through a friendly manner as though it was a mask, with hard,

defiant eyes. Then one old crone, short-sighted and shaky-handed, called Ann Veronica "dearie," and made some remark, obscure and slangy, of which the spirit rather than the words penetrated to her understanding.

For a time she looked at no more apartments, and walked through gaunt and ill-cleaned streets, through the sordid under side of life, perplexed and troubled, ashamed of her previous obtuseness.

She had something of the feeling a Hindoo must experience who has been into surroundings or touched something that offends his caste. She passed people in the streets and regarded them with a quickening apprehension, once or twice came girls dressed in slatternly finery, going toward Regent Street from out these places. It did not occur to her that they at least had found a way of earning a living, and had that much economic superiority to herself. It did not occur to her that save for some accidents of education and character they had souls like her own.

For a time Ann Veronica went on her way gauging the quality of sordid streets. At last, a little way to the northward of Euston Road, the moral cloud seemed to lift, the moral atmosphere to change; clean blinds appeared in the windows, clean doorsteps before the doors, a different appeal in the neatly placed cards bearing the word

| APARTMENTS |

in the clear bright windows. At last in a street near the Hampstead Road she hit upon a room that had an exceptional quality of space and order, and a tall woman with a kindly face to show it. "You're a student, perhaps?" said the tall woman. "At the Tredgold Women's College," said Ann Veronica. She felt it would save explanations if she did not state she had left her home and was looking for employment. The room was papered with green, large-patterned paper that was at worst a trifle dingy, and the arm-chair and the seats of the other chairs were covered with the unusual brightness of a large-patterned chintz, which also supplied the window-curtain. There was a round table covered, not with the usual "tapestry" cover, but with a plain green cloth that went passably with the wall-paper. In the recess beside the fireplace were some open bookshelves. The carpet was a quiet drugget and not excessively worn, and the bed in the corner was covered by a white quilt. There were neither texts nor rubbish on the walls, but only a stirring version of Belshazzar's feast, a steel engraving in the early Victorian manner that had some satisfactory blacks. And the woman who showed this room was tall, with an understanding eye and the quiet manner of the well-trained servant.

Ann Veronica brought her luggage in a cab from the hotel; she tipped the hotel porter sixpence and overpaid the cabman eighteenpence, unpacked some of her books and possessions, and so made the room a little homelike, and then sat down in a by no means uncomfortable arm-chair

before the fire. She had arranged for a supper of tea, a boiled egg, and some tinned peaches. She had discussed the general question of supplies with the helpful landlady. "And now," said Ann Veronica surveying her apartment with an unprecedented sense of proprietorship, "what is the next step?"

She spent the evening in writing--it was a little difficult--to her father and--which was easier--to the Widgetts. She was greatly heartened by doing this. The necessity of defending herself and assuming a confident and secure tone did much to dispell the sense of being exposed and indefensible in a huge dingy world that abounded in sinister possibilities. She addressed her letters, meditated on them for a time, and then took them out and posted them. Afterward she wanted to get her letter to her father back in order to read it over again, and, if it tallied with her general impression of it, re-write it.

He would know her address to-morrow. She reflected upon that with a thrill of terror that was also, somehow, in some faint remote way, gleeful.

"Dear old Daddy," she said, "he'll make a fearful fuss. Well, it had to happen somewhen.... Somehow. I wonder what he'll say?"