

## CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

### ANN VERONICA PUTS THINGS IN ORDER

#### Part 1

Ann Veronica made a strenuous attempt to carry out her good resolutions. She meditated long and carefully upon her letter to her father before she wrote it, and gravely and deliberately again before she despatched it.

"MY DEAR FATHER," she wrote,--"I have been thinking hard about everything since I was sent to this prison. All these experiences have taught me a great deal about life and realities. I see that compromise is more necessary to life than I ignorantly supposed it to be, and I have been trying to get Lord Morley's book on that subject, but it does not appear to be available in the prison library, and the chaplain seems to regard him as an undesirable writer."

At this point she had perceived that she was drifting from her subject.

"I must read him when I come out. But I see very clearly that as things are a daughter is necessarily dependent on her father and bound while

she is in that position to live harmoniously with his ideals."

"Bit starchy," said Ann Veronica, and altered the key abruptly. Her concluding paragraph was, on the whole, perhaps, hardly starchy enough.

"Really, daddy, I am sorry for all I have done to put you out. May I come home and try to be a better daughter to you?"

"ANN VERONICA."

## Part 2

Her aunt came to meet her outside Canongate, and, being a little confused between what was official and what was merely a rebellious slight upon our national justice, found herself involved in a triumphal procession to the Vindicator Vegetarian Restaurant, and was specifically and personally cheered by a small, shabby crowd outside that rendezvous. They decided quite audibly, "She's an Old Dear, anyhow. Voting wouldn't do no 'arm to 'er." She was on the very verge of a vegetarian meal before she recovered her head again. Obeying some fine instinct, she had come to the prison in a dark veil, but she had pushed this up to kiss Ann Veronica and never drawn it down again. Eggs were procured for her, and she sat out the subsequent emotions and eloquence with the dignity

becoming an injured lady of good family. The quiet encounter and home-coming Ann Veronica and she had contemplated was entirely disorganized by this misadventure; there were no adequate explanations, and after they had settled things at Ann Veronica's lodgings, they reached home in the early afternoon estranged and depressed, with headaches and the trumpet voice of the indomitable Kitty Brett still ringing in their ears.

"Dreadful women, my dear!" said Miss Stanley. "And some of them quite pretty and well dressed. No need to do such things. We must never let your father know we went. Why ever did you let me get into that wagonette?"

"I thought we had to," said Ann Veronica, who had also been a little under the compulsion of the marshals of the occasion. "It was very tiring."

"We will have some tea in the drawing-room as soon as ever we can--and I will take my things off. I don't think I shall ever care for this bonnet again. We'll have some buttered toast. Your poor cheeks are quite sunken and hollow...."

Part 3

When Ann Veronica found herself in her father's study that evening it seemed to her for a moment as though all the events of the past six months had been a dream. The big gray spaces of London, the shop-lit, greasy, shining streets, had become very remote; the biological laboratory with its work and emotions, the meetings and discussions, the rides in hansoms with Ramage, were like things in a book read and closed. The study seemed absolutely unaltered, there was still the same lamp with a little chip out of the shade, still the same gas fire, still the same bundle of blue and white papers, it seemed, with the same pink tape about them, at the elbow of the arm-chair, still the same father. He sat in much the same attitude, and she stood just as she had stood when he told her she could not go to the Fadden Dance. Both had dropped the rather elaborate politeness of the dining-room, and in their faces an impartial observer would have discovered little lines of obstinate wilfulness in common; a certain hardness--sharp, indeed, in the father and softly rounded in the daughter--but hardness nevertheless, that made every compromise a bargain and every charity a discount.

"And so you have been thinking?" her father began, quoting her letter and looking over his slanting glasses at her. "Well, my girl, I wish you had thought about all these things before these bothers began."

Ann Veronica perceived that she must not forget to remain eminently reasonable.

"One has to live and learn," she remarked, with a passable imitation of her father's manner.

"So long as you learn," said Mr. Stanley.

Their conversation hung.

"I suppose, daddy, you've no objection to my going on with my work at the Imperial College?" she asked.

"If it will keep you busy," he said, with a faintly ironical smile.

"The fees are paid to the end of the session."

He nodded twice, with his eyes on the fire, as though that was a formal statement.

"You may go on with that work," he said, "so long as you keep in harmony with things at home. I'm convinced that much of Russell's investigations are on wrong lines, unsound lines. Still--you must learn for yourself. You're of age--you're of age."

"The work's almost essential for the B.Sc. exam."

"It's scandalous, but I suppose it is."

Their agreement so far seemed remarkable, and yet as a home-coming the thing was a little lacking in warmth. But Ann Veronica had still to get to her chief topic. They were silent for a time. "It's a period of crude views and crude work," said Mr. Stanley. "Still, these Mendelian fellows seem likely to give Mr. Russell trouble, a good lot of trouble. Some of their specimens--wonderfully selected, wonderfully got up."

"Daddy," said Ann Veronica, "these affairs--being away from home has--cost money."

"I thought you would find that out."

"As a matter of fact, I happen to have got a little into debt."

"NEVER!"

Her heart sank at the change in his expression.

"Well, lodgings and things! And I paid my fees at the College."

"Yes. But how could you get--Who gave you credit?"

"You see," said Ann Veronica, "my landlady kept on my room while I was in Holloway, and the fees for the College mounted up pretty considerably." She spoke rather quickly, because she found her father's question the most awkward she had ever had to answer in her life.

"Molly and you settled about the rooms. She said you HAD some money."

"I borrowed it," said Ann Veronica in a casual tone, with white despair in her heart.

"But who could have lent you money?"

"I pawned my pearl necklace. I got three pounds, and there's three on my watch."

"Six pounds. H'm. Got the tickets? Yes, but then--you said you borrowed?"

"I did, too," said Ann Veronica.

"Who from?"

She met his eye for a second and her heart failed her. The truth was impossible, indecent. If she mentioned Ramage he might have a fit--anything might happen. She lied. "The Widgetts," she said.

"Tut, tut!" he said. "Really, Vee, you seem to have advertised our relations pretty generally!"

"They--they knew, of course. Because of the Dance."

"How much do you owe them?"

She knew forty pounds was a quite impossible sum for their neighbors. She knew, too, she must not hesitate. "Eight pounds," she plunged, and added foolishly, "fifteen pounds will see me clear of everything." She muttered some unlady-like comment upon herself under her breath and engaged in secret additions.

Mr. Stanley determined to improve the occasion. He seemed to deliberate. "Well," he said at last slowly, "I'll pay it. I'll pay it. But I do hope, Vee, I do hope--this is the end of these adventures. I hope you have learned your lesson now and come to see--come to realize--how things are. People, nobody, can do as they like in this world. Everywhere there are limitations."

"I know," said Ann Veronica (fifteen pounds!). "I have learned that. I mean--I mean to do what I can." (Fifteen pounds. Fifteen from forty is twenty-five.)

He hesitated. She could think of nothing more to say.

"Well," she achieved at last. "Here goes for the new life!"

"Here goes for the new life," he echoed and stood up. Father and daughter regarded each other warily, each more than a little insecure



with the other. He made a movement toward her, and then recalled the circumstances of their last conversation in that study. She saw his purpose and his doubt hesitated also, and then went to him, took his coat lapels, and kissed him on the cheek.

"Ah, Vee," he said, "that's better!" and kissed her back rather clumsily.

"We're going to be sensible."

She disengaged herself from him and went out of the room with a grave, preoccupied expression. (Fifteen pounds! And she wanted forty!)

#### Part 4

It was, perhaps, the natural consequence of a long and tiring and exciting day that Ann Veronica should pass a broken and distressful night, a night in which the noble and self-subduing resolutions of Canongate displayed themselves for the first time in an atmosphere of almost lurid dismay. Her father's peculiar stiffness of soul presented itself now as something altogether left out of the calculations upon which her plans were based, and, in particular, she had not anticipated the difficulty she would find in borrowing the forty pounds she needed for Ramage. That had taken her by surprise, and her tired wits had

failed her. She was to have fifteen pounds, and no more. She knew that to expect more now was like anticipating a gold-mine in the garden. The chance had gone. It became suddenly glaringly apparent to her that it was impossible to return fifteen pounds or any sum less than twenty pounds to Ramage--absolutely impossible. She realized that with a pang of disgust and horror.

Already she had sent him twenty pounds, and never written to explain to him why it was she had not sent it back sharply directly he returned it. She ought to have written at once and told him exactly what had happened. Now if she sent fifteen pounds the suggestion that she had spent a five-pound note in the meanwhile would be irresistible. No! That was impossible. She would have just to keep the fifteen pounds until she could make it twenty. That might happen on her birthday--in August.

She turned about, and was persecuted by visions, half memories, half dreams, of Ramage. He became ugly and monstrous, dunning her, threatening her, assailing her.

"Confound sex from first to last!" said Ann Veronica. "Why can't we propagate by sexless spores, as the ferns do? We restrict each other, we badger each other, friendship is poisoned and buried under it!... I MUST pay off that forty pounds. I MUST."

For a time there seemed no comfort for her even in Capes. She was to see Capes to-morrow, but now, in this state of misery she had achieved, she

felt assured he would turn his back upon her, take no notice of her at all. And if he didn't, what was the good of seeing him?

"I wish he was a woman," she said, "then I could make him my friend. I want him as my friend. I want to talk to him and go about with him. Just go about with him."

She was silent for a time, with her nose on the pillow, and that brought her to: "What's the good of pretending?"

"I love him," she said aloud to the dim forms of her room, and repeated it, and went on to imagine herself doing acts of tragically dog-like devotion to the biologist, who, for the purposes of the drama, remained entirely unconscious of and indifferent to her proceedings.

At last some anodyne formed itself from these exercises, and, with eyelashes wet with such feeble tears as only three-o'clock-in-the-morning pathos can distil, she fell asleep.

Part 5

Pursuant to some altogether private calculations she did not go up to the Imperial College until after mid-day, and she found the laboratory

deserted, even as she desired. She went to the table under the end window at which she had been accustomed to work, and found it swept and garnished with full bottles of re-agents. Everything was very neat; it had evidently been straightened up and kept for her. She put down the sketch-books and apparatus she had brought with her, pulled out her stool, and sat down. As she did so the preparation-room door opened behind her. She heard it open, but as she felt unable to look round in a careless manner she pretended not to hear it. Then Capes' footsteps approached. She turned with an effort.

"I expected you this morning," he said. "I saw--they knocked off your fetters yesterday."

"I think it is very good of me to come this afternoon."

"I began to be afraid you might not come at all."

"Afraid!"

"Yes. I'm glad you're back for all sorts of reasons." He spoke a little nervously. "Among other things, you know, I didn't understand quite--I didn't understand that you were so keenly interested in this suffrage question. I have it on my conscience that I offended you--"

"Offended me when?"

"I've been haunted by the memory of you. I was rude and stupid. We were talking about the suffrage--and I rather scoffed."

"You weren't rude," she said.

"I didn't know you were so keen on this suffrage business."

"Nor I. You haven't had it on your mind all this time?"

"I have rather. I felt somehow I'd hurt you."

"You didn't. I--I hurt myself."

"I mean--"

"I behaved like an idiot, that's all. My nerves were in rags. I was worried. We're the hysterical animal, Mr. Capes. I got myself locked up to cool off. By a sort of instinct. As a dog eats grass. I'm right again now."

"Because your nerves were exposed, that was no excuse for my touching them. I ought to have seen--"

"It doesn't matter a rap--if you're not disposed to resent the--the way I behaved."

"I resent!"

"I was only sorry I'd been so stupid."

"Well, I take it we're straight again," said Capes with a note of relief, and assumed an easier position on the edge of her table. "But if you weren't keen on the suffrage business, why on earth did you go to prison?"

Ann Veronica reflected. "It was a phase," she said.

He smiled. "It's a new phase in the life history," he remarked.

"Everybody seems to have it now. Everybody who's going to develop into a woman."

"There's Miss Garvice."

"She's coming on," said Capes. "And, you know, you're altering us all. I'M shaken. The campaign's a success." He met her questioning eye, and repeated, "Oh! it IS a success. A man is so apt to--to take women a little too lightly. Unless they remind him now and then not to.... YOU did."

"Then I didn't waste my time in prison altogether?"

"It wasn't the prison impressed me. But I liked the things you said

here. I felt suddenly I understood you--as an intelligent person. If you'll forgive my saying that, and implying what goes with it. There's something--puppyish in a man's usual attitude to women. That is what I've had on my conscience.... I don't think we're altogether to blame if we don't take some of your lot seriously. Some of your sex, I mean. But we smirk a little, I'm afraid, habitually when we talk to you. We smirk, and we're a bit--furtive."

He paused, with his eyes studying her gravely. "You, anyhow, don't deserve it," he said.

Their colloquy was ended abruptly by the apparition of Miss Klegg at the further door. When she saw Ann Veronica she stood for a moment as if entranced, and then advanced with outstretched hands. "Veronique!" she cried with a rising intonation, though never before had she called Ann Veronica anything but Miss Stanley, and seized her and squeezed her and kissed her with profound emotion. "To think that you were going to do it--and never said a word! You are a little thin, but except for that you look--you look better than ever. Was it VERY horrible? I tried to get into the police-court, but the crowd was ever so much too big, push as I would....

"I mean to go to prison directly the session is over," said Miss Klegg.

"Wild horses--not if they have all the mounted police in London--shan't keep me out."

## Part 6

Capes lit things wonderfully for Ann Veronica all that afternoon, he was so friendly, so palpably interested in her, and glad to have her back with him. Tea in the laboratory was a sort of suffragette reception. Miss Garvice assumed a quality of neutrality, professed herself almost won over by Ann Veronica's example, and the Scotchman decided that if women had a distinctive sphere it was, at any rate, an enlarging sphere, and no one who believed in the doctrine of evolution could logically deny the vote to women "ultimately," however much they might be disposed to doubt the advisability of its immediate concession. It was a refusal of expediency, he said, and not an absolute refusal. The youth with his hair like Russell cleared his throat and said rather irrelevantly that he knew a man who knew Thomas Bayard Simmons, who had rioted in the Strangers' Gallery, and then Capes, finding them all distinctly pro-Ann Veronica, if not pro-feminist, ventured to be perverse, and started a vein of speculation upon the Scotchman's idea--that there were still hopes of women evolving into something higher.

He was unusually absurd and ready, and all the time it seemed to Ann Veronica as a delightful possibility, as a thing not indeed to be entertained seriously, but to be half furtively felt, that he was being so agreeable because she had come back again. She returned home through



a world that was as roseate as it had been gray overnight.

But as she got out of the train at Morningside Park Station she had a shock. She saw, twenty yards down the platform, the shiny hat and broad back and inimitable swagger of Ramage. She dived at once behind the cover of the lamp-room and affected serious trouble with her shoe-lace until he was out of the station, and then she followed slowly and with extreme discretion until the bifurcation of the Avenue from the field way insured her escape. Ramage went up the Avenue, and she hurried along the path with a beating heart and a disagreeable sense of unsolved problems in her mind.

"That thing's going on," she told herself. "Everything goes on, confound it! One doesn't change anything one has set going by making good resolutions."

And then ahead of her she saw the radiant and welcoming figure of Manning. He came as an agreeable diversion from an insoluble perplexity. She smiled at the sight of him, and thereat his radiation increased.

"I missed the hour of your release," he said, "but I was at the Vindicator Restaurant. You did not see me, I know. I was among the common herd in the place below, but I took good care to see you."

"Of course you're converted?" she said.

"To the view that all those Splendid Women in the movement ought to have votes. Rather! Who could help it?"

He towered up over her and smiled down at her in his fatherly way.

"To the view that all women ought to have votes whether they like it or not."

He shook his head, and his eyes and the mouth under the black mustache wrinkled with his smile. And as he walked by her side they began a wrangle that was none the less pleasant to Ann Veronica because it served to banish a disagreeable preoccupation. It seemed to her in her restored geniality that she liked Manning extremely. The brightness Capes had diffused over the world glorified even his rival.

## Part 7

The steps by which Ann Veronica determined to engage herself to marry Manning were never very clear to her. A medley of motives warred in her, and it was certainly not one of the least of these that she knew herself to be passionately in love with Capes; at moments she had a giddy intimation that he was beginning to feel keenly interested in her. She realized more and more the quality of the brink upon which she

stood--the dreadful readiness with which in certain moods she might plunge, the unmitigated wrongness and recklessness of such a self-abandonment. "He must never know," she would whisper to herself, "he must never know. Or else--Else it will be impossible that I can be his friend."

That simple statement of the case was by no means all that went on in Ann Veronica's mind. But it was the form of her ruling determination; it was the only form that she ever allowed to see daylight. What else was there lurked in shadows and deep places; if in some mood of reverie it came out into the light, it was presently overwhelmed and hustled back again into hiding. She would never look squarely at these dream forms that mocked the social order in which she lived, never admit she listened to the soft whisperings in her ear. But Manning seemed more and more clearly indicated as a refuge, as security. Certain simple purposes emerged from the disingenuous muddle of her feelings and desires. Seeing Capes from day to day made a bright eventfulness that hampered her in the course she had resolved to follow. She vanished from the laboratory for a week, a week of oddly interesting days....

When she renewed her attendance at the Imperial College the third finger of her left hand was adorned with a very fine old ring with dark blue sapphires that had once belonged to a great-aunt of Manning's.

That ring manifestly occupied her thoughts a great deal. She kept pausing in her work and regarding it, and when Capes came round to her,

she first put her hand in her lap and then rather awkwardly in front of him. But men are often blind to rings. He seemed to be.

In the afternoon she had considered certain doubts very carefully, and decided on a more emphatic course of action. "Are these ordinary sapphires?" she said. He bent to her hand, and she slipped off the ring and gave it to him to examine.

"Very good," he said. "Rather darker than most of them. But I'm generously ignorant of gems. Is it an old ring?" he asked, returning it.

"I believe it is. It's an engagement ring...." She slipped it on her finger, and added, in a voice she tried to make matter-of-fact: "It was given to me last week."

"Oh!" he said, in a colorless tone, and with his eyes on her face.

"Yes. Last week."

She glanced at him, and it was suddenly apparent for one instant of illumination that this ring upon her finger was the crowning blunder of her life. It was apparent, and then it faded into the quality of an inevitable necessity.

"Odd!" he remarked, rather surprisingly, after a little interval.

There was a brief pause, a crowded pause, between them.

She sat very still, and his eyes rested on that ornament for a moment, and then travelled slowly to her wrist and the soft lines of her forearm.

"I suppose I ought to congratulate you," he said. Their eyes met, and his expressed perplexity and curiosity. "The fact is--I don't know why--this takes me by surprise. Somehow I haven't connected the idea with you. You seemed complete--without that."

"Did I?" she said.

"I don't know why. But this is like--like walking round a house that looks square and complete and finding an unexpected long wing running out behind."

She looked up at him, and found he was watching her closely. For some seconds of voluminous thinking they looked at the ring between them, and neither spoke. Then Capes shifted his eyes to her microscope and the little trays of unmounted sections beside it. "How is that carmine working?" he asked, with a forced interest.

"Better," said Ann Veronica, with an unreal alacrity. "But it still misses the nucleolus."