

Text 1 *The story takes place around 1840 in a wealthy family's home with one daughter.*

I do not doubt that they loved her – no one ever could who saw the way they looked at her. But they were people for whom love was a complicated affair, very closely bound up with, and easily confused with, matters of proprietorship, duty and control. Being who they were, the public eye upon them as it was, the honour of their family so great... well – there were expectations. They wanted her well-mannered, modestly dressed, reserved and blushing, an immaculate prize for some wealthy noble with fine whiskers who could match or better the Vennaways' fortune and prestige.

They foresaw a future of stately grandeur for her – producing heirs, gracing society, decorating her husband's arm. Aurelia, however, had read too much and lived too little. Inspired by the vast libraries of Hatville, and with no wise guide to understand or check her, every wild daydream seemed possible to her. She wanted a life of travel and intrigue, romances of her own choosing (she was determined there should be several) and to use her fortune and privilege to do philanthropic works. She wanted to be a new kind of role model for rich young ladies. ('Subversive and scandalous!' spat her father). She wanted her name in the history books, never mind that no history book we had ever read recognised the opinions of women.

(...) She would come into her fortune in three short years, she argued; she had no need of a husband. She often pointed to the young queen as role model and exemplar. 'Victoria refused to marry unless for love. Victoria seriously considered remaining unmarried, like Queen Elizabeth before her. Victoria only married her Albert because they have a *true understanding*.'

'Her Majesty,' roared her father, 'is queen of our nation and in a somewhat different position from you! Your responsibility, Aurelia, is not to govern the country and your duty is not to the people. It is to family. It is to marry and continue the Vennaway line. I have not been granted a son and I will not have my daughter fail me as well. Her Majesty is not my concern. You seem to think you have a choice in this Aurelia. I assure you that you do not.'

Tracy Rees, Amy Snow, 2015