



Ann Veronica

H.G. Wells , Sita Schut (Editor) , Margaret Drabble (Introduction)

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Twenty-one, passionate and headstrong, Ann Veronica Stanley is determined to live her own life. When her father forbids her attending a fashionable ball, she decides she has no choice but to leave her family home and make a fresh start in London. There, she finds a world of intellectuals, socialists and suffragettes — a place where, as a student in biology at Imperial College, she can be truly free. But when she meets the brilliant Capes, a married academic, and quickly falls in love, she soon finds that freedom comes at a price.

A fascinating description of the women's suffrage movement, *Ann Veronica* offers an optimistic depiction of one woman's sexual awakening and search for independence.

Ann Veronica Details

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Author : H.G. Wells , Sita Schutt (Editor) , Margaret Drabble (Introduction)

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From Reader Review Ann Veronica for online ebook

Cole Schoolland says

This book was a fun find. Incredible that one of the fathers of Science Fiction was also a pretty progressive radical. Though, I suppose that is the nature of most SciFi authors.

Ann Veronica is the story of the New Woman (new, that is to the Victorian era) who struggles to find her freedom and equality (feminism) while at the same time coming to terms with her own identity (femininity). The constraints of her family, pedigree, class, and sex are all under question as our heroine struggles to discover her own place in life.

I think I admired this book much more than I enjoyed it. Being over 100 years old, it is a bit dated and not the best thing I've ever read. Perhaps its considered wildly romantic by 19th century British Victorian standards, but the love story, while endearing, was... dispassionate. However, the spirit of the novel remains powerful and moving.

Wells does do a wonderful job of making his actors very human. Ann isn't the strong, pragmatic protagonist we hope she might aspire to be. That would be too easy. But she is a spirited, confused, conflicted girl of 22.

Initially being rejected for publication, the novel caused quite the uproar when it was came to print in 1907. The concepts of economic, social, and sexual freedom for woman are no stranger to our time. But, how much more were they 100 years ago?

I remember reading somewhere (though for the life of me I can't find it!) that it was inspired by his own relationship with a lively young woman. As a man who is also inspired by strong, independent, and progressive women... I tip my hat to you sir.

also, THIS BOOK IS FREE!!!! Find it at the link below.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/524/52...>

Mary Ronan Drew says

Ann Veronica caused quite a stir when it was published in 1909. The story is about a "New Woman," an independent girl who yearns to study science, leave her stultifying home and live alone in an apartment, vote, and take her place in the world beside men.

The heroine manages to achieve independence despite dangers from suitors who would crush her spirit as thoroughly as her father has tried to do, and a seemingly friendly man who wants to seduce her. She finally falls in love with a married man and runs off with him.

This would all be shocking enough in the first decade of the 20th century. But added to it was a strongly autobiographical theme alluding to H G Wells' affair with a young girl who bore his child out of wedlock. Even the name Ann Veronica was a bit too close to that of Wells' inamorata, Amber Reeves.

So how has the book held up over time? A hundred years later we are no longer shocked at the heroine's

leaving home to live alone, her insistence on studying, or her having an affair with a married man. We may disapprove of the affair but we aren't shocked by it. But Wells's having seduced an idealistic young girl and then written about it in such detail continues to be disturbing.

Wells was the son of a gardener and a domestic servant. One admires the grit with which he rose from that working class background to success in a middle-class world. Some of his writing, especially his science fiction, remains popular today (*The War of the Worlds*.) He was a socialist, a pacifist, and an atheist at a time when those were not popular isms. He married a cousin, left her for one of his students, and continued throughout his life to have frequent affairs, especially with women of note including Margaret Sanger, Elizabeth von Arnim, and Rebecca West. There were many others.

This is a wearying book, more a Fabian tract than a novel, and a lengthy fictional excuse for his behavior. I don't care for science fiction and I haven't read Wells' famous work in that genre so I am no judge of his skill, though his novels having lasted so long makes it likely he was rather better at sci fi than at quasi-political fiction. I did not like this novel and I don't think it has much lasting worth. And yes, I do recognize that I'm letting my distaste for his life affect my opinion of his work.

2011 No 79

Crystal says

Being one of the "New Woman" novels, I didn't know quite what to expect. This is the best, most realistic one I've read thus far. Vee's spunk is admirable and Wells took on the subject with a decent blend of traditional and non-traditional behavior. The ending was very appropriate for me at this time in my life. It wasn't edgy and yet it wasn't sentimental.

I would read this one again.

Ilona says

Two sides of H.G. Wells

Getting to know that Herbert Wells wrote not only fantastic novels appeared to be a great surprise for me. His *Time Machine* and *War of the Worlds* were quite familiar to me, but somehow I've never heard about his social novels. Preparing for my university English literature class I decided to read one of them and a good decision it was.

Herbert Wells himself claimed that his science fiction was just a stage in his literary career which enabled him to move further to the novels describing problems of modern society. And it is really so, for Ann Veronica doesn't feel like his science fiction at all. Character-drawing, narration, the mere style seems to be different. For me it was like discovering some new author and I enjoyed that.

Ann Veronica - Some associations

Reading this novel felt much like reading a textbook on XXth century literature. This statement may sound a bit startling so here are the reasons why:

1. Ann Veronica doesn't want to be treated by her father and aunt like a pretty doll which is beloved and taken care of but at the same time deprived of any personality. How can a doll have any opinions or emotions? Of course it can't. So, to really begin to live she escapes from A Doll's House.

2. Having escaped the heroine gets freedom but not money to live on. She can't possibly take money from her relatives, that is why she has to look for a job which turns out to be a pretty difficult task, the money she's saved for beginning a new life are coming to an end and at this moment Veronica, repeating the experience of Sister Carrie, decides to except the help of a 'friend', Mr. Ramage. Soon she understands that Mr. Ramage's intentions can hardly be denoted as friendship, her ex-fiancé Mr. Manning also isn't the best choice for her and, like Carrie she decides to move further on her own.

3. The chapter "*In the Mountains*" somehow reminded me of A Room with a View, not that Ann veronica resembles Lucy Honeychurch (though they really have something in common), but the very atmosphere of the chapter arouse in my memory an image of Lucy and George in the violet valley.

4. In the chapter "*Thoughts in Prison*" we find a long inner monologue of the heroine. It's evidently not stream of consciousness but definitely something very close to it.

Suffragists and other movements

Ann Veronica first of all is sharp critics on women's position in society. Wells supports the idea that women should have the same rights as men and be able to live how they wish, study what they wish, work where they wish and love whom they wish. Veronica fights for all these rights with all her strength and the way she acts in the novel was such a shock for the society of that time that after the novel was published, it was claimed as immoral and forbidden to be sold or given out in libraries.

It is an interesting fact, that being a huge supporter of women's rights Wells was against the suffragist movement which at that time was gaining its strength. He considered their ways of protesting ineffective and in most cases even ridiculous. The same attitude the author expresses towards all the other "fashionable" movements of the time through the thoughts of his heroine:

"She was with these movements—akin to them, she felt it at times intensely—and yet something eluded her. Morningside Park had been passive and defective; all this rushed about and was active, but it was still defective. It still failed in something. It did seem germane to the matter that so many of the people "in the van" were plain people, or faded people, or tired-looking people. It did affect the business that they all argued badly and were egotistical in their manners and inconsistent in their phrases. There were moments when she doubted whether the whole mass of movements and societies and gatherings and talks was not simply one coherent spectacle of failure protecting itself from abjection by the glamour of its own assertions".

As the author shows, all these movements, being aimed on great achievements often end speaking too much and doing too little. The changes in relations between the sexes and in women's rights, in his opinion, are to come soon, not through revolution, but through evolution, i.e. they should be a natural result of the social development.

"I want to be a Human being!"

The heroine exclaims this phrase meaning that she wants to be able to choose her own way in life. Still Veronica doesn't realize that she is a Human being and a Personality already. She is intelligent, brave and emotional. She is full of great ideas and can think logically. She has courage to fight for what seems right to her and blazes her trail. Of course, she can't fight forever, but when she stops she will realize there is a long

way behind her, a life full of impressions and victories. And she will always have those days in mountains.

"Even when we are old, when we are rich as we may be, we won't forget the tune when we cared nothing for anything but the joy of one another, when we risked everything for one another, when all the wrappings and coverings seemed to have fallen from life and left it light and fire. Stark and stark! Do you remember it all?... Say you will never forget! That these common things and secondary things sha'n't overwhelm us."

Tony says

ANN VERONICA. (1909). H. G. Wells. ****.

Both Wells and his good friend G. B. Shaw attempted to address social issues through their writings – Wells through his novels and essays, Shaw through his plays and prefaces. Both were effective in their efforts, and both had a profound effect on the shape of literature to come. Even in his 'science fiction' works, Wells managed to sneak in his views on the state of our society. In this novel, he addresses the social and political status of women in turn-of-the-century England. He does this through following the events in the life of Ms. Ann Veronica Stanley, a twenty-two-year old woman. She was the daughter of an attorney and was still living at home when we first meet her. She was the youngest of several children and was under the watchful eye of her father and his sister. Through her association with other young people in a family in the neighborhood, she discovered that she really had no social freedom, nor, as she further learned, any influence with which to control her life. Through a series of adventures, we learn of the limited rights of women of the time. Their education was minimal; they had no rights in the polling booths; their opportunity for employment – except in certain fields that were reserved for them – was limited; marriage was still, mostly, arranged by their parents in collusion with the parents of a suitable match. Ann Veronica has to face all of this in her desire to become a free person in society, and has to learn how to overcome all of these limits on her own. The story moves along pretty well until the very end, where it seems as if Mr. Wells lost interest and rushed to completion to get to other projects. It does present a valid picture of the strictures imposed on women at the time, and the results of women seeking to escape those reins to achieve a life of their own. Recommended.

James Foster says

Major social changes often seem to have been just "in the air," rather than launched by any single person or action. Even when there is a figurehead, as in Ghandi's India or Lincoln's America, the "leader" was actually riding a tsunami of changing opinion whose impulsive force proceeded from a critical mass of individuals who chose to live different lives than their parents did. History is biography writ small.

Ann Veronica is the tale of one of those individuals, surfing the initial tide of change that became the suffragette movement. Ann, or "V" as her father called her, with telling depersonalization, was an unexceptional young woman who stumbled into, and possibly out of, independence. V's father, and his generation, could not imagine, let alone understand, how a girl could become a woman unless someone older and wiser carried her over the threshold. As one wonderful line put it: females have two ages, when it is

permissible to pat them on the heads and when it is not.

Ann discovers she loves biology, when her father allows her to spend time in college. Among the other girls (one can hardly call them women yet), she meets some who are questioning their dependence, and one who has crossed the line into suffragette-ism. Her teacher, a man of course, tends to lecture down to her, but learns eventually to take her more seriously—to say how seriously would be a spoiler.

But along the way, V meets two other men, each of whom assumes she will fill a traditional role in their lives, without either the men or Ann really recognizing that they are roles. One wants her to be a mistress, and V ignorantly slips into the role by mistaking “kindness” of the man for generosity. The other man treats her as a pure, delicate flower that he is (paternalistically) obligated to protect, which she misreads as friendship. Either relationship could have effectively ended her biography, abruptly picking her up from childhood and stuffing her into a conventional box. Asserting her independence, rejecting both men, drops her into the suffragette movement, almost by accident. But the world she lives in is not yet one that accommodates independent women. We as readers know that the world will change, but not in time for Ann. Eventually, she finds her way into an unconventional conventionality, as the wife of a man who learns to learn with her. I can say no more.

I thought the story began very well. The characters were rich, the writing witty and lean. The male characters were very interesting, especially in that they embodied different male responses to changing times which were redefining the roles of women. It was never preachy or heavy-handed. Unfortunately, the book as a whole became tedious, as Ann goes through one predictable misadventure after another. In the end, Ann’s life seemed conventional, even boring. Dreiser’s “Sister Carrie” covered the same ground, but more effectively.

In short, this is Wells doing social commentary, without so much science in the fiction. “Ann Veronica” did capture the feel of the “new woman” at a critical time when the role of women was radically changing. It presents a clear small-scale biography to serve as a prelude to a major social revolution. And it had its moments as literature. But I was, sadly, relieved when it was over.

James says

A proto feminist novel written in 1909 by renowned male Edwardian Sci-Fi novelist H G Wells..? Who would have thought it?

Well – the prolific and hugely accomplished and influential Mr Well wrote in excess of 100 novels encompassing a wide range of literary genres.

This is a really good and comparatively revolutionary, modern novel – which at the time of publication was considered shocking and scandalous (questions and eyebrows were resolutely raised in the press and in the pulpit alike) exploring female politics, the life and psyche of a strong willed young woman confronting gender constraints and expectations of the era.

Whilst the suffragette and socialist movements are here, they form only a part of Ann Veronica’s life experiences and although undoubtedly influencing, enlightening and educating the young Ann Veronica – they are for the most part seem almost incidental and certainly not central or quintessential to AV’s development as a strong and independent woman.

Often the strength here is Wells ability to create and inhabit a character such as AV and to seemingly understand the constraints suffered and the frustration felt by a woman living under these circumstances.

At other times the novel, whilst modern in tone and construction, is very much a product of its time and its male author. Whilst AV finds strength amidst compromise, happiness at least for this strong woman still seems dependant on the approval and patronage of a man.

This is perhaps a flaw in the character of AV rather than the novel itself?? Alternatively, perhaps this situation and narrative are merely just realism within the confines of 1909 British society?? Either way – this is a very strong and compelling novel. The breadth and depth of Wells literary art seemingly knew no bounds.

The tempered and bitter-sweet denouement to the novel provides for a strong, well-pitched and perfectly appropriate end to the novel.

Anuradha says

So H. G. Wells writes science fiction, right? Right? WRONG!!!

From the man who penned such stories as The Time Machine, and The War of the Worlds comes Ann Veronica, a story of feminism, drama, and romance. And no element of science fiction in this book, no Sir. Sure, Vee (can I call her Vee? Everyone calls her Vee.) has a scientific temper, but that's all the science there is to this fiction. And you know what? I quite liked it. Not Time Machine liked it, but liked it all the same. Vee is a strong, albeit confused character, and while almost all the men are chauvinists, they weren't empty shells. They had depth to their characters, they did; even a complete asshole like Ramage. Vee looks at the world in the manner of either a small child, or a woman all old and wise, experienced in the journey of life, and that sometimes drove me crazy.

Another thing I liked about the book was the sort of openness that it so comfortably embraced while talking about issues that were then fairly controversial, like politics, economics, and let's not forget, sex. For a book written in the early 1900's, very forward I say. The romance in the book did not overpower the obvious themes that Wells wished to convey, and for that I am forever grateful. Ah, to find a writer today who thinks like this!

What I liked the most about this book? This.

"Of course a little daughter is a delightful thing enough. It runs about gayly, it romps, it is bright and pretty, it has enormous quantities of soft hair and more power of expressing affection than its brothers. It is a lovely little appendage to the mother who smiles over it, and it does things quaintly like her, gestures with her very gestures. It makes wonderful sentences that you can repeat in the City and are good enough for Punch. You call it a lot of nicknames—"Babs" and "Bibs" and "Viddles" and "Vee"; you whack at it playfully, and it whacks you back. It loves to sit on your knee. All that is jolly and as it should be."

All in all, I would say quite a pleasant start to 2016!

Rasma says

Maybe everyone else knows that H.G. Wells wrote non-science fiction romantic novels of biting social criticism from a feminist point of view, but I didn't. I recommend this book, despite its perhaps all too self-congratulatory conclusion. It captures the turn of the century England, exposing the inability of Victorian mores in a modernist, Darwinian dawn, and removes one by one the stays that constrict instead of uphold society. He tries to show that all dogma limits the human spirit, and even the suffragettes are not spared Wells' disarming pen. While being a feminist manifesto, it remains staunchly middle class in its resolution. It could not be written today, and that is what makes it so invaluable.

Noe says

H. G. Wells - that name makes most of us think of science fiction, so when I came across a love story by him, I had to read it. Not because I'm a big Wells fan, though. I have read the Time Machine and War of the Worlds and didn't like either one. The movies based on those two stories are much better, but still the idea of a science fiction guy writing romance was intriguing.

To be sure, he has a real knack for writing sweet words. I would say some of his expressions are downright beautiful. However, he had a tendency of having his words of romantic sentiment go toward the idea of religious devotion (meaning the men would say things like Ann was deserving of worship, etc) and for me that was distasteful.

As far as the story goes, it started out good. Twenty-one year old Ann Veronica began as an interesting character, a woman struggling with submission to her father or making her own decisions about her life. Wells makes a couple of references to Jane Austen in the context of whether Ann should be like a JA heroine or should she be a modern woman, which is the idea behind the title. I think if he wanted his book to be a counter to JA's books, though, he should have written a better story. I mean, seriously, don't mention one of the greatest romance writers of all time in that light without delivering something brilliant!

Unlike Austen he gives no real good reason why Ann Veronica falls in love with the person she ends up with, which is a big deal because the guy is married but separated from his wife. The truth is, all the men in the book are pretty lousy. Granted, one is more lousy than the others, so at best, her options are poor. Elizabeth Bennet would have stayed single with the options he gives in this book. Jane Austen understood, one key ingredient of a great love story is a great guy worth falling in love with.

The character Ann never grows more interesting, she just becomes a girl that makes choices that were hard for this reader to get behind. He created some interesting situations for her, but fails to make them interesting. It was a real challenge to finish the book; usually I don't bother to finish one that loses my interest like this one did, but I was hoping he would get back to the feel and rhythm of how the book started, yet it never did.

Lewis says

Anyone looking for a Positive Role Model is likely to be disappointed by Ann Veronica. If the novel had been written as a polemic, the heroine would have been level-headed, liberal and wholly consistent. But she

is a human. She rails against the lot of women, but she is really more interested in her own personal happiness rather than that of women in general. Some may dislike the way that in the end she gets over her youthful rebellion and becomes a dutiful wife who enjoys being told what to do; all she had been looking for was the right man to be her master. I too was disappointed that she went from being such a determined, free-spirited character to such a satisfied and conventional housewife, but let's not kid ourselves that such things don't happen in reality.

Wells also paints a humorous yet depressingly accurate picture of the fringes of the socialist movement, populated by fruitarians, theosophists, tee-totallers and Higher Thinkers. Miss Miniver, the abstemious, vegetarian, suffragette, who has a Tolstoyan hatred of the flesh and love of the spirit, is a fantastic comic caricature who is right in spite of the fact that she "states her case in a tangle, drags it through swamps of nonsense."

The one serious fault in the novel is the excessive wordiness, especially towards the end, with Ann Veronica and Capes pouring out their feelings like a pair of love-sick teenagers. The novel would have been greatly improved by some judicious pruning.

On the plus side it was very modern and represented a marked change from the Victorian novel, where a character may have been allowed rebellion against the social order and may have run off with a married (but separated) man, but would not have been allowed a happy outcome.

Dayla says

The story follows the heroine through all these stages of life.

- 1) Craving independence from an overbearing father
- 2) Making a plan to get away
- 3) Implements plan, but later finds she has been a bit reckless
- 4) Falls in love, but continues to crave independence
- 5) etc.

H. G. Wells doesn't quite know what to do with an extremely intelligent and curious female, but I still read every page. Great dialogue.

Laura says

Ann Veronica is the youngest of five children and the only one left at home. Finding a life of "calls, tennis, selected novels, walks and dusting" to be stifling, she has persuaded her father to let her attend college, although only the Tredgold Women's College, not the more prestigious "mixed" college that she wants to attend. In time the limited intellectual stimulation provided by Tredgold's "store of faded learning" isn't enough for her and she begins to want more out of her life. Having had no luck persuading her father to let her transfer to the Imperial College, she turns her attention to attending a fancy dress party at a local art school. Her father disapproves completely and his absolute refusal to let her go to the party pushes her into open rebellion. Against all sensible advice, she moves to London to live on her own and make her own way in the world.

Although it wears the fashionable dress of 1909, *Ann Veronica* is essentially a coming of age story that can speak on a basic level to young people of any generation. Longing for a different life and chafing against her father's rules, Ann Veronica shocks her father with the accusation that "you won't let me live...you won't let

me exist!" And, like any perplexed parent, Mr. Stanley replies that she does live, she does exist, in fact she has all the important things a respectable person could want: "friends, acquaintances, social standing,...every advantage." These things are important to him and, as he feels is his duty as a good parent, he has provided them for Ann Veronica. What more is it that she wants? He cannot understand that what is important to him is less so to his daughter, at least in part because she has been kept in ignorance of how much effort these things were to attain and to keep. Later in the novel, at one of her lowest moments, Ann Veronica thinks back over what she had taken for granted and comes to the conclusion that "the real texture of life" has been forgotten by "refined secure people" who "think if we just defy the friends we have and go out into the world everything will become easy and splendid. One doesn't realize that even the sort of civilization one has at [her suburban home:] is held together with difficulty."

I had some concern that Wells would feel the need to end the book on a "moral" note by showing the reader the error of Ann Veronica's rebellion, but that is not his goal and his ultimate message seems to be that "rules are for established things, like the pieces and positions of a game. Men and women are not established things; they're experiments, all the them. Every human being is a new thing..."

Although Wells is amazingly modern in his thinking about women's rights, he is enough a product of his time that his heroine's idea of freedom is "to be legally and economically free, so as not to be subject to the wrong man" while still believing that "only God, who made the world, can alter things to prevent her being slave to the right one." In the end, Ann Veronica finds love and Wells demonstrates that it is a true love by telling us that "one of the things that most surprised [him:] was her capacity for blind obedience. She loved to be told to do things." This statement is completely out of character for Ann Veronica, but is given to the reader as proof that her love is real and that she has found the "right" man.

All in all, this was a very enjoyable book and reminded me at times of Dreiser's Sister Carrie. I read it online at Google Books, but I liked it enough that I want to own a copy myself and have added it to my wishlist.

Vasilia says

I loved this! So well written, so real. The end was disgustingly soppy though, so minus a star.

Pat says

Ann Veronica by H. G. Wells

This book took me back to my adolescence. In the 1950s and 60s a good number of the attitudes in this book still held sway if you were a middle-class girl whose parents had moved up from the working-class into suburban middle class. This meant that you would have had a reasonable education which could fit you for professional life, but at the same time would be hemmed around by concerns about spoiling your reputation, appearing unfeminine and claiming an independence that would surely ruin your marriage prospects. Wells does a good job of opening up the issues facing Ann Veronica Stanley which stem not only from challenges of moving into a man's world but also doing so with a naivety brought about by her sheltered upbringing. Veronica's ignorance puts her at the mercy of Ramage who expects a physical return for his money and then sees her flight to safety with a near marriage to Manning. These are believable episodes though dealt with at interminable length. Wells also covers her political explorations in detail though her reaction against many women's issues seems surprising. Most disappointing in a book that is clearly aimed at dealing with issues of

feminism is the lack of any real detail about her attempts to gain employment. She is educated and presentable and employable even in the early twentieth century.

The relationship with Capes is easy to accept after her experiences with Ramage and Manning. However it is overly romanticized. I have read that this part of the book is to some degree based on Wells' second marriage to a student. The ending was very disappointing to me – a much too glib climb into middle-class respectability.

Despite its annoying ending it is worth reading this book because it was groundbreaking in 1909 because of its discussion of feminist issues in a way that highlighted the impact of male chauvinism and class attitudes on women's ability to thrive. Today, statistics about the low percentage of women in well paid high-tech jobs in Silicon Valley in relatively liberal California remind us that similar barriers to women's advancement still exist even if they are less obvious.

Wanda says

8 APR 2016 - available at Project Gutenberg - <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/524>

26 FEB 2017 - available at BBC Radio 4 - Episode 1 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08fdkd1>

26 FEB 2017 - I am listening to this. I absolutely adore Ann Veronica and her quest. Despite listening, I have already downloaded an eBooks version and will be reading Ann Veronica's journey into her own definition of "freedom."

26 FEB 2017 - Mr Stanley to Ann Veronica - "Cooped up!" he cried. "Did I stand in the way of your going to college? Have I ever prevented you going about at any reasonable hour? You've got a bicycle!"

27 FEB 2017 - I started this one early Sunday morning and read through the day (and past my bedtime, too). Finished today over lunch. I enjoyed reading of Ann Veronica's quest for the right to just be herself.

Eloise Mcallister says

It started off really interesting but I felt like Ann Veronica suppressed her desire for independence in the end simply because she found the man she loved loved her too. Beautiful chains are still chains! I'm very irritated by this. I wish it had ended 100 pages earlier.

Drew says

H.G. Wells is widely known for his speculative science fiction work, but he also published across a variety of topics, both fiction and nonfiction. I struggled through his expository style in his first novel, *The Time Machine* (1895). Instead of showing the reader, he told the reader, in long, drawn-out sequences. I liked the ideas he was exploring, but I didn't enjoy the execution.

By 1909, Wells absolutely excelled at storytelling while still keeping a penetrating eye on the larger issues of the day, especially social relationships. In *Ann Veronica*, he writes about a young woman who is breaking

out of old social norms by getting a postsecondary education and trying to live her life her own way. Her father, aunt and a suitor try to keep her "respectable," as they would define that term. To them, a respectable woman should be on a pedestal, kept unawares of the larger world about her and be worshiped until she is married and then she must fade back into the shadows. Bohemians, writers and theater people must be avoided at all costs.

Ann Veronica is strong-willed, intelligent and willing to take a stand. But Wells doesn't idealize or romanticize the situation. Her choices have consequences, both good and bad, throughout the story. She excels, she stumbles, but in the end, she is allowed to make those decisions for herself. She is allowed to become fully human, including having male friends who are not just relatives, suitors or husbands.

To read something like this in 1909 would have pushed so many people's boundaries. Interestingly, and sadly, you could change the 1 to a 2 (i.e. 1909 to 2009) and the story still works. Political and religious conservatives are still trying to push women back into the shadows and to demote them to living property, possessions not partners. Wells's words still ring true:

"She was never able to trace the changes her attitude had undergone, from the time when she believed herself to be the pampered Queen of Fortune, the crown of a good man's love..., to the time when she realized she was in fact just a mannequin for her lover's imagination, and that he cared no more for the realities of her being, for the things she felt and desired, for the passions and dreams that might move her, than a child cares for the sawdust in its doll. She was the actress his whim had chosen to play a passive part..." (p. 298)

I highly recommend this book.

I also enjoyed this book on a physical level. It is my second oldest book, clocking in at almost 96 years old when I read it (printing from September 1917). It's also the first time I read one of my Modern Library books that I've become addicted to and acquired over the last four months.

Laura says

Free download available at Project Gutenberg.

From BBC Radio 4 - Drama:

Ann Veronica by H.G. Wells 1/2

Dramatised by Ellen Dryden

Spirited and fiercely intelligent, Ann Veronica is a 21st Century woman in an Edwardian Hobble skirt. She runs away from her stiflingly conventional home and her domineering father to make a fresh start in London. A lively and surprising story; not least because it's created by H.G. Wells.

Produced and directed by Pauline Harris

Further information

N.B. EPISODE 2 is dramatized by Lavinia Murray. The storytelling is witty and ironic and Ann Veronica caused a scandal in its time because of the feminist sensibilities of the heroine and also because of the affair Wells was having with Amber Reeves, the woman who inspired the novel's eponymous character. This is a relatively unknown and unexpected novel by Wells. The Spectator described Ann Veronica as a "poisonous

book..." Although unlikely to offend modern listeners, this novel addresses many feminist versus femininity issues that are still relevant today.

Amy Hoggart who stars as Ann Veronica is a stand-up comedian and actress, best known for starring in Almost Royal, a faux-reality show on BBC America. She portrays a low-ranking heir to the British throne, Poppy Carlton. Other credits include Full Frontal with Samantha Bee (2016) and Crackanory (2013).

She is the daughter of renowned journalist Simon Hoggart, niece of Times television critic Paul Hoggart, and granddaughter of sociologist Richard Hoggart. Amy attended Cambridge University, and was a member of the Footlights, whilst reading English.

The novel deals with the early stages of what is arguably the most important social development of the 20th C. the education and financial and sexual liberation of women. And the fact is that, nearly a hundred years later, the problem of women who want to marry, have children and pursue a liberating career, is still not easy to solve. Wells makes a good case for freer sexual relationships, but Amber Reeves - and later Rebecca West - were the ones whose lives were changed - by bearing and bringing up a child by him.

Geoffrey Whitehead plays Ann's father, Mr. Stanley - most recent credits include Geoffrey in Not Going Out as Lee Mack's disapproving father-in-law, and Mr. Newbold in Still Open All Hours. His career spans decades and he has appeared in a huge range of television, film and radio roles. In the theatre, he has played at the Shakespeare Globe, St. Martin's Theatre and Bristol Old Vic.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08fdkd1>

Benjamin Stahl says

Having read only the quintessential *War of the Worlds*, this Wells book - an early feminist appeal for women's suffrage and social liberation - was surprising. While the whole third-wave thing of this century gets little sympathy from me, given that unlike Teddy Widget in this book (maybe one of the first male fucks) I am not inclined to hate myself for having white skin and a penis. Another surprise was how similar Wells's evocation of the blossoming suffragettes seemed to any modern bunch of Trump-bashing college students. They're overzealous, idealistic, filled with rhetorical rage ... not to conflate a woman's right to vote with a bunch of degenerate losers indoctrinated by the selective news of social media.

I am not one of those suckers for political correctness at all, but I feel it must surely rankle some to hear *Ann Veronica* called a feminist novel. When you consider the fact that not only was H.G. Wells a dude, but that he also married twice then eloped with younger, presumably sexier women. Just the kind of hypocrisy one could expect from the Left these days ... with Eminem (guy who wrote 'Kim' and 'Superman' among others), Jimmy Fallon and Kevin Spacey (well ...) becoming such sanctimonious heroes for the masses in light of the orange Nazi pussy grabber.

Anyway, how about the book?

It was fine. Parts of it were great. Wells writes very well. I am too lazy to elaborate more than that. I have to say I didn't like the protagonist all that much, nor many of the characters. There were some great parts, such as the awkward relationship between Ann Veronica and Ramage. But the final section - which I cannot spoil by saying anything - was in my opinion terrible.

