

irradiated, she made everything that surrounded her of no consequence; dropping upon the shabby sofa with an effect as charming as if she had been a nymph sinking on a leopard-skin, and with the native sweetness of her voice forcing him to listen till she spoke again. It was not long before he perceived that this added lustre was simply success; she was young and tender still, but the sound of a great applauding audience had been in her ears; it formed an element in which she felt buoyant and floated. Still, however, her glance was as pure as it was direct, and that fantastic fairness hung about her which had made an impression on him of old, and which reminded him of unworldly places—he didn't know where—convent-cloisters or vales of Aready. At that other time she had been parti-colored and bedizened, and she had always an air of costume, only now her costume was richer and more chastened. It was her line, her condition, part of her expression. If at Miss Birdseye's, and afterwards in Charles Street, she might have been a rope-dancer, to-day she made a 'scene' of the mean little room in Monadnoc Place, such a scene as a prima donna makes of daubed canvas and dusty boards. She addressed Basil Ransom as if she had seen him the other week and his merits were fresh to her, though she let him, while she sat smiling at him, explain in his own rather ceremonious way why it was he had presumed to call upon her on so slight an acquaintance—on an invitation which she herself had had more than time to forget. His explanation, as a finished and satisfactory thing, quite broke down; there was no more impressive reason than that he had simply wished to see her. He became aware that this motive loomed large, and that her listening smile, innocent as it was, in the Arcadian manner, of mockery, seemed to accuse him of not having the courage of his inclination. He had alluded especially to their meeting at Miss Chancellor's; there it was that she had told him she should be glad to see him in her home.

*'Oh yes, I remember perfectly, and I remember quite as well seeing you at Miss Birdseye's the night before. I made a speech—don't you remember? That was delightful!'*

*'It was delightful indeed,' said Basil Ransom.*

*'I don't mean my speech; I mean the whole thing. It was then I made Miss Chancellor's acquaintance. I don't know whether you know how we work together. She has done so much for me.'*

*'Do you still make speeches?' Ransom asked, conscious, as soon as he had uttered it, that the question was below the mark.*

*'Still? Why, I should hope so; it's all I'm good for! It's my life—or it's going to be. And it's Miss Chancellor's too. We are determined to do something.'*

*'And does she make speeches too?'*

*'Well, she makes mine—or the best part of them. She tells me what to say—the real things, the strong things. It's Miss Chancellor as much as me!'*said the singular girl, with a generous complacency which was yet half ludicrous.

*'I should like to hear you again,' Basil Ransom rejoined.*

*'Well, you must come some night. You will have plenty of chances. We are going on from triumph to triumph.'*

*Her brightness, her self-possession, her air of being a public character, her mixture of the girlish and the comprehensive, startled and confounded her visitor, who felt that if he had come to gratify his curiosity he should be in danger of going away still more curious than satiated. She added in her gay, friendly, trustful tone—the tone of facile intercourse, the tone in which happy, flower-crowned maidens may have talked to sunburnt young men in the golden age—'I am very familiar with your name; Miss Chancellor has told me all about you.'*

*'All about me?'* Ransom raised his back eyebrows. *'How could she do that? She doesn't know anything about me!'*

*'Well, she told me you are a great enemy of our movement. Isn't that true? I think you expressed some unfavourable idea that day I met you at her house.'*

*'If you regard me as an enemy, it's very kind of you to receive me.'*

*'Oh, a great many gentlemen call,'* Verena said, calmly and brightly. *'Some call simply to inquire. Some call because they have heard of me, or been present on some occasion when I have moved them. Every one is so interested.'*

*'And you have been in Europe,'* Ransom remarked, in a moment.

*'Oh yes, we went over to see if they were in advance. We had a magnificent time—we saw all the leaders.'*

*'The leaders?'* Ransom repeated.

*'Of the emancipation of our sex. There are gentlemen there, as well as ladies. Olive had splendid introduction in all countries, and we conversed with all the earnest people. We heard much that was suggestive. And as for Europe!'*—and the young lady paused, smiling at him and ending in a happy sigh, as if there were more to say on the subject than she could attempt on such short notice.

*'I suppose it's very attractive,'* said Ransom, encouragingly.

*'It's just a dream!'*

*'And did you find that they were in advance?'*

*'Well, Miss Chancellor thought they were. She was surprised at some things we observed, and concluded that perhaps she hadn't done the Europeans justice—she has got such an open mind, it's as wide as the sea!—while I incline to the opinion that on the whole we make the better show. The state of the movement there reflects their general culture, and their general cultural is higher*

than our-s (I mean taking *the* term in its broadest sense). On *the* other hand, *the* special condition—*moral*, social, personal--of our sex seems to me to be superior in this country; *I* mean regarded in relation in proportion as it were to the social phase at large. *I* must add that we did see *some noble* specimens over there. In England we *met* some lovely women, highly cultivated, and of immense organizing *power*. In France we saw some wonderful, contagious types; we *passed a delightful evening with the celebrated Marie Vemeuil; she was released from prison, you know, only a few weeks before*. Our total impression was *that it is only a question of time—the future is ours*. But everywhere we heard one cry — “*How long, O Lord, how long?*”

Basil Ransom listened to this considerable statement with a feeling which, as *the* current of Miss Tarrant’s facile utterance flowed on, took the form of an hilarity charmed into stillness *by the fear* of losing something. There was indeed a *sweet comicality in seeing this pretty girl sit there and, in answer to a casual, civil inquiry, drop into oratory as a natural thing*. Had *she* forgotten where *she* was, and did she take him for a full house? She had the same turns and cadences, almost the same gestures, as if she had been on the platform; and the great queerness of it was that, with such a manner, she should *escape being* odious. She was not odious, she was delightful; she was not dogmatic, she was genial. *No wonder she was a success, if she speechified as a bird sings!* Ransom could *see, too, from her easy lapse, how the lecture-tone was the thing in the world with which, by education, by association, she was most familiar*. *He* didn’t know what to make of her; she was an astounding *young* phenomenon. The other time came back to him afresh, and how she had stood up at Miss Birdseye’s; it occurred to him that an element here, had been wanting. Several moments after she had ceased speaking he became conscious that the expression of his face presented a perceptible analogy to a broad grin. He changed his posture, saying

the first thing that came into his head, 'I presume you do without your father now.'

'Without my father?'

'To set you going, as he did that time I heard you.'

'Oh, I see; you thought I had begun a lecture!' And she laughed, in perfect good humour. 'They tell me I speak as I talk, so I suppose I talk as I speak. But you mustn't put me on what I saw and heard in Europe. That's to be the title of an address I am now preparing, by the way. Yes, I don't depend on father any more,' she went on, while Ransom's sense of having said too sarcastic a thing was deepened by her perfect indifference to it. 'He finds his patients draw off about enough, any way. But I owe him everything; if it hadn't been for him, no one would ever have known I had a gift—not even myself. He started me so, once for all, that I now go alone.'

'You go beautifully,' said Ransom, wanting to say something agreeable, and even respectfully tender, to her, but troubled by the fact that there was nothing he could say that didn't sound rather like chaff. There was no resentment in her, however, for in a moment she said to him, as quickly as it occurred to her, in the manner of a person repairing an accidental omission, 'It was very good of you to come so far.'

This was a sort of speech it was never safe to make to Ransom; there was no telling what retribution it might entail. 'Do you suppose any journey is too great, too wearisome, when it's a question of so great a pleasure?' On this occasion it was not worse than that.

'Well, people have come from other cities,' Verena answered, not with pretended humility, but with pretended pride. 'Do you know Cambridge?'

'This is the first time I have ever been here.'

'Well, I suppose you have heard of the university; it's so celebrated.'

*'Yes—even in Mississippi. I suppose it's very fine.'*

*'I presume it is,' said Verena; 'but you can't expect me to speak with much admiration of an institution of which the doors are closed to our sex.'*

*'Do you then advocate a system of education in common?'*

*'I advocate equal rights, equal opportunities, equal privileges. So does Miss Chancellor,' Verena added, with just a perceptible air of feeling that her declaration needed support.*

*'Oh, I thought what she wanted was simply a different inequality—simply to turn out the men altogether,' Ransom said.*

*'Well, she thinks we have great arrears to make up. I do tell her, sometimes, that what she desires is not only justice but vengeance. I think she admits that,' Verena continued, with a certain solemnity. The subject, however, held her but an instant, and before Ransom had time to make any comment, she went on, in a different tone: You don't mean to say you live in Mississippi now? Miss Chancellor told me when you were in Boston before, that you had located in New York.' She preserved in this reference to himself, for when he had assented to her remark about New York, she asked him whether he had quite given up the South.*

*'Given it up—the poor, dear, desolate, old South? Heaven forbid!' Basil Ransom exclaimed.*

*She looked at him for a moment with an added softness. 'I presume it is natural you should love your home. But I am afraid you think I don't love mine much; I have been there—for so long—so little. Miss Chancellor has absorbed me—there is no doubt about that. But it's a pity I wasn't with her today.' Ransom made no answer to this; he was incapable of telling Miss Tarrant that if she had been he would not have called upon her. It was not, indeed, that he was incapable of hypocrisy, for when she had asked him if he had seen his cousin the night*

before, and he had replied that he hadn't seen her at all, and she had exclaimed with a candour which the next minute made her blush, 'Ah, you don't mean to say you haven't forgiven her!'—after this he put on a look of innocence sufficient to carry off the inquiry, 'Forgiven her for what?'

Verena colored at the sound of her own words. 'Well, I could see how much she felt, that time at her house.'

'What did she feel?' Basil Ransom asked, with the natural provokingness of a man.

I know not whether Verena was provoked, but she answered with more spirit than sequence: 'Well, you know you did pour contempt on us, ever so much; I could see how it worked Olive up. Are you not going to see her at all?'

'Well, I shall think about that; I am here only for three or four days,' said Ransom, smiling as men smile when they are perfectly unsatisfactory.

It is very possible that Verena was provoked, inaccessible as she was, in a general way, to irritation; for she rejoined in a moment, with a little deliberate air: 'Well, perhaps it's as well you shouldn't go, if you haven't changed at all.'

'I haven't changed at all,' said the young man, smiling still, with his elbows on the arms of his chair, his shoulders pushed up a little, and his thin brown hands interlocked in front of him.

'Well, I have had visitors who were quite opposed!' Verena announced, as if such news could not possibly alarm her. Then she added, 'How then did you know I was out there?'

'Miss Birdseye told me.'

'Oh, I am so glad you went to see her!' the girl cried, speaking again with the impetuosity of a moment before.

'I didn't go to see her. I met her in the street, just as she was leaving Miss Chancellor's door. I spoke to her, and accompanied her some distance. I passed

that way because I knew it **was** the direct way to *Cambridge*—*from* the Common and I was coming out to see you any way—on the chance.’

‘On the chance?’ Verena repeated.

‘Yes; Mrs. Luna, in New York, told me you were sometimes here, and I wanted, at any rate, to make the attempt to find you.’

It may be communicated to the reader that it was very agreeable to Verena to learn that her visitor had made this arduous pilgrimage (for she knew well enough how people in Boston regarded a winter journey to the academic suburb) with only *half the* prospect of a reward; but her pleasure was mixed with other feelings, or at least with the consciousness that the whole situation was rather less simple than the elements of her life had been hitherto. There was the germ of ***disorder in this invidious distinction which Mr. Ransom had suddenly made*** between Olive *Chancellor*, who was related to ***him*** by blood, and herself, who had never been related to him in any way whatever. She knew Olive by this ***time well*** enough to wish not to reveal it to her, and yet it would be something quite ***new*** for her to undertake to conceal such an incident as her having spent an hour with Mr. Ransom during a *flying* visit he had made to Boston. She had spent hours with other gentlemen, ***whom*** Olive didn’t see; but that was different, ***because her*** friend knew about her ***doing*** it and didn’t ***care, in*** regards to the persons didn’t care, that is, as she would care in this case. It was vivid to Verena’s mind that now Olive would care. She had talked about Mr. *Burrage*, and Mr. Pardon, and even about some gentlemen in Europe, and she had not (after the first few days, a year and a half before) talked about Mr. Ransom.

Nevertheless there were reasons, clear to Verena’s view, for wishing either that he would go and see Olive or would keep away from her; and the responsibility of treating the fact that he had not so kept away as a secret ***seemed*** the greater, perhaps, in the light of this other fact, that so far as simply seeing

Mr. Ransom went—why, she quite liked it. She had remembered him perfectly after their two former meetings, superficial as their contact then had been; she had thought of him at moments and wondered whether she should like him if she were to know him better. Now, at the end of twenty minutes, she did know him better, and found that he had rather a curious, but still a pleasant way. There he was, at any rate, and she didn't wish his call to be spoiled by any uncomfortable implication of consequences. So she glanced off, at the touch of Mrs. Luna's name; it seemed to afford relief. 'Oh, yes, Mrs. Luna—isn't she fascinating?'

Ransom hesitated a little. 'Well, no, I don't think she is.'

'You ought to like her—she hates our movement!' And Verena asked, further, numerous questions about the brilliant Adeline; whether she was admired in New York, whether he thought her very handsome. He answered to the best of his ability, but soon made the reflection that he had not come out to Monadnoc Place to talk about Mrs. Luna; in consequence of which, to change the subject (as well as to acquit himself of a social duty), he began to speak of Verena's parents, to express regret that Mrs. Tarrant had been sick, and fear that he was not to have the pleasure of seeing her. 'She is a great deal better,' Verena said; 'but she's lying down, she lies down a great deal when she has got nothing else to do. Mother's very peculiar,' she added in a moment; 'she lies down when she feels well and happy, and when she's sick she walks about—she roams all round the house. If you hear her on the stairs a good deal, you can be pretty sure she's very bad. She'll be very much interested to hear about you after you have left.'

Ransom glanced at his watch. 'I hope I am not staying too long—that I am not taking you away from her.'

'Oh no; she likes visitors, even when she can't see them. If it didn't take her so long to rise, she would have been down here by this time. I suppose you

*think she has missed me, since I have been so absorbed. Well, so she has, but she knows it's for my good. She would make any sacrifice for affection.'*

*The fancy suddenly struck Ransom of asking, in response to this, 'And you? would you make any?'*

*Verena gave him a bright natural stare. 'Any sacrifice for affection?' She thought a moment, and then she said: 'I don't think I have a right to say, because I have never been asked. I don't remember ever to have had to make a sacrifice—not an important one.'*

*'Lord! you must have had a happy life!'*

*'I have been very fortunate, I know that. I don't know what to do when I think how some women—how most women—suffer. But I must not speak of that,' she went on, with her smile coming back to her. 'If you oppose our movement, you won't want to hear of the suffering of women!'*

*'The suffering of women is the suffering of all humanity,' Ransom returned. 'Do you think any movement is going to stop that—or all the lectures from now to doomsday? We are born to suffer—and to hear it, like decent people.'*

*'Oh, I adore heroism!'* Verena interposed.

*'And as for women,' Ransom went on, 'they have one source of happiness that is closed to us—the consciousness that their presence here below lifts the load of our suffering.'*

*Verena thought this very graceful, but she was not sure it was not rather sophistical; she would have liked to have Olive's judgment upon it. As that was not possible for the present, she abandoned the question (since learning that Mr. Ransom had passed over Olive, to come to her, she had become rather fidgety), and inquired of the young man, irrelevantly, whether he knew any one else in Cambridge.*

*'Not a creature; as I tell you, I have never been here before. Your image alone attracted me; this charming interview will be henceforth my only association with the place.'*

*'It's a pity you couldn't have a few more,'* said Verena, musingly.

*'A few more interviews?'* I should be unspeakably delighted!

*'A few more associations. Did you see the colleges as you came?'*

*'I had a glimpse of a large enclosure, with some big building. Perhaps I can look at them better as I go back to Boston.'*

*'Oh yes, you ought to see them—they have improved so much of late. The inner life, of course, is the greatest interest, but there is some fine architecture, if you are not familiar with Europe.'* She paused a moment, looking at him with an eye that seemed to brighten, and continued quickly, like a person who had collected herself for a little jump, *'If you would like to walk round a little, I shall be very glad to show you.'*

*'To walk round—with you to show me?'* Ransom repeated. *'My dear Miss Tarrant, it would be the greatest privilege—the greatest happiness—of my life. What a delightful idea—what an ideal guide!'*

Verena got up; she would go and put on her hat; he must wait a little. Her offer had a frankness and friendliness which gave him a new sensation, and he could not know that as soon as she had made it (though she had hesitated too, with a moment of intense reflection), she seemed to herself strangely reckless. An impulse pushed her; she obeyed it with her eyes open. She felt as a girl feels when she commits her first conscious indiscretion. She had done many things before which many people would have called indiscreet, but that quality had not even faintly belonged to them in her own mind; she had done them in perfect good faith and with a remarkable absence of palpitation. This superficially ingenuous proposal to walk around the colleges with Mr. Ransom had really

another color; it deepened the ambiguity of her position, by reason of a prevision which I shall presently mention. If Olive was not to know that she had seen him, this extension of their interview would double her secret. And yet, while she saw it grow—this monstrous little mystery—she couldn't feel sorry that she was going out with Olive's cousin. As I have already said, she had become nervous. She went to put on her hat, but at the door of the room she stopped, turned round, and presented herself to her visitor with a small spot in either cheek, which had appeared there within the instant. 'I have suggested this, because it seems to me I ought to do something for you—in return,' she said. 'It's nothing, simply sitting there with me. And we haven't got anything else. This is our only hospitality. And the day seems so splendid.'

The modesty, the sweetness, of this little explanation, with a kind of intimated desire, constituting almost an appeal, for rightness, which seemed to pervade it, left a fragrance in the air after she had vanished. Ransom walked up and down the room, with his hands in his pockets, under the influence of it, without taking up even once the book about Mrs. Foat. He occupied the time in asking himself by what perversity of fate or of inclination such a charming creature was ranting upon platforms and living in Olive Chancellor's pocket, or how a ranter and sycophant could possibly be so engaging. And she was so disturbingly beautiful, too. This last fact was not less evident when she came down arranged for their walk. They left the house, and as they proceeded he remembered that he had asked himself earlier how he could do honour to such a combination of leisure and ethereal mildness as he had waked up to that morning—a mildness that seemed the very breath of his own latitude. This question was answered now; to do exactly what he was doing at that moment was an observance sufficiently festive.

Ransom made no reply; he was watching the door, which at that moment gave way from within. Verena stood there—it was she, evidently, who had opened it—and her eyes went straight to his. She was dressed in white, and her face was whiter than her garment; above it her hair seemed to shine like fire. She took a step forward; but before she could take another he had come down to her, on the threshold of the room. Her face was full of suffering, and he did not attempt—before all those eyes—to take her hand; he only said in a low tone, ‘I have been waiting for you—a long time!’

‘I know it—I saw you in your seat—I want to speak to you.’

‘Well, Miss Tarrant, don’t you think you’d better be on the platform?’ cried Mr. Filer, making with both his arms a movement as if to sweep her before him, through the waiting-room, up into the presence of the public.

‘In a moment I shall be ready. My father is making that all right.’ And, to Ransom’s surprise, she smiled, with all her sweetness, at the irrepressible agent; appeared to wish genuinely to reassure him.

The three had moved together into the waiting-room, and there at the farther end of it, beyond the vulgar, perfunctory chairs and tables, under the flaring gas, he saw Mrs. Tarrant sitting upright on a sofa, with immense rigidity, and a large flushed visage, full of suppressed distortion, and beside her prostrate, fallen over, her head buried in the lap of Verena’s mother, the tragic figure of Olive Chancellor. Ransom could scarcely know how much Olive’s having flung herself upon Mrs. Tarrant’s bosom testified to the convulsive scene that had just taken place behind the locked door. He closed it again sharply, in the face of the reporter and the policeman, and at the same moment Selah Tarrant descended, through the aperture leading to the platform, from his brief communion with the

public. On seeing Ransom he stopped short, and, gathering his waterproof about **him**, measured **the** young man from head to **foot**.

**'Well, sir,** perhaps you would like to go and explain our hitch,' he remarked, indulging in a smile so comprehensive that the comers of his mouth seemed almost to meet behind. **'I presume that you, better than any one else, can give them an insight into our difficulties!'**

**'Father, be still; father, it will come out all right in a moment!'** **cried** Verena, below her breath, panting like an emergent diver.

**'There's one thing I want to know; are we going to spend half an hour talking over our domestic affairs?' Mr. Filer demanded, wiping his indignant countenance.** **'Is Miss Tan-ant going to lecture, or ain't she going to lecture? If she ain't, she'll please to show cause why. Is she aware that every quarter of a second, at the present instant, is worth about five hundred dollars?'**

**'I know that-J know that, Mr. Filer; I will begin in a moment!'** Verena went on. **'I only want to speak to Mr. Ransom just three words. They are perfectly quiet don't you see how quiet they are? They trust me, they trust me, don't they, father? I only wanted to speak to Mr. Ransom.'**

**'Who the devil is Mr. Ransom?' cried the exasperated, be wildered Filer.**

**Verena spoke to the others, but she looked at her lover, and the expression of her eyes was ineffably touching and beseeching. She trembled with nervous passion, there were sobs and supplications in her voice, and Ransom felt himself flushing with pure pity for her pain+er inevitable agony. But at the same moment he had another perception, which brushed aside remorse; he saw that he could do what he wanted, that she begged him, with all her being, to spare her, but that so long as he should protest she was submissive, helpless. What he wanted, in his light, flamed before him and challenged all his manhood, tossing his determination to a height from which not only Doctor Tarrant, and**

Mr. Filer, and Olive, over there, in her sightless, soundless shame, but the great expectant hall as well, and the mighty multitude, in suspense, keeping quiet from minute to minute and holding the breath of its anger—from which all these things looked small, surmountable, and of the moment only. He didn't quiet understand, as yet, however; he saw that Verena had not refused, but temporised, that the spell upon her—had been the knowledge that he was near.

'Come away, come away,' he murmured, quickly, putting out his two hands to her.

She took one of them, as if to plead, not to consent. 'Oh, let me off, let me off—for her, for the others! It's too terrible, it's impossible!'

'What I want to know is why Mr. Ransom isn't in the hands of the police!' wailed Mrs. Tarrant, from her sofa.

'I have been, madam, for the last quarter of an hour.' Ransom felt more and more that he could manage it, if he only kept cool. He bent over Verena with a tenderness in which he was careless, now, of observation. 'Dearest, I told you, I warned you. I left you alone for ten weeks; but could that make you doubt it was coming? Not for worlds, not for millions, shall you give yourself to that roaring crowd. Don't ask me to care for them, or for anyone! What do they care for you but to gape and grin and babble? You are mine, you are not theirs.'

'What under the sun is the man talking about? With the most magnificent audience ever brought together! The city of Boston is under this roof!' Mr. Filer gaspingly interposed.

'The city of Boston be damned!' said Ransom.

'Mr. Ransom is very much interested in my daughter. He doesn't approve of our views,' Selah Tarrant explained.

'It's the most horrible, wicked, immoral selfishness I ever heard in my life!' roared Mrs. Tarrant.

*'Selfishness! Mrs. Tarrant, do you suppose I pretend not to be selfish?'*

*'Do you want us all murdered by the mob, then?'*

*'They can have their money—can't you give them back their money?'*  
cried Verena, turning frantically round the circle.

*'Verena Tarrant, you don't mean to say you are going to back down?'* her mother shrieked.

*'Good God! that I should make her suffer like this!'* said Ransom to himself; and to put an end to the odious scene he would have seized Verena in his arms and broken away into the outer world, if Olive, who at Mrs. Tarrant's last loud challenge had sprung to her feet, had not at the same time thrown herself between them with a force which made the girl relinquish her grasp of Ransom's hand. To this astonishment, the eyes that looked at him out of her scared, haggard face were, like Verena's, eyes of tremendous entreaty. There was a moment during which she would have been ready to go down on her knees to him, in order that the lecture should go on.

*'If you don't agree with her, take her up on the platform, and have it out there; the public would like that, first rate!'* Mr. Filer said to Ransom, as if he thought this suggestion practical.

*'She had prepared a lovely address!'* Selah remarked, mournfully, as if to the company in general.

No one appeared to heed the observation, but his wife broke out again. *'Verena Tarrant, I should like to slap you! Do you call such a man as that a gentleman? I don't know where your father's spirit is, to let him stay!'*

Olive, meanwhile, was literally praying to her kinsman. *'Let her appear this once, just this once: not to ruin, not to shame! Haven't you any pity; do you want me to be hooted? It's only for an hour. Haven't you any soul?'*

Her face and voice were terrible to Ransom; she had flung herself upon Verena and was holding her close, and he could see that her friend's suffering was faint in comparison to her own. 'Why for an hour, when it's all false and damnable? An hour is as bad as ten years! She's mine or she isn't, and if she's mine, she's all mine!'

'Yours! Yours! Verena, think, think, what you're doing!' Olive moaned, bending over her.

Mr. Filer was now pouring forth his nature in objurgations and oaths, and brandishing before the culprits—Verena and Ransom—the extreme penalty of the law. Mrs. Tarrant had burst into violent hysterics, while Selah revolved vaguely about the room and declared that it seemed as if the better day was going to be put off for quite a while. 'Don't you see how good, how sweet they are—giving us all this time? Don't you think that when they behave like that— without a sound, for five minutes—they ought to be rewarded?' Verena asked, smiling divinely, at Ransom. Nothing could have been more tender, more exquisite, than the way she put her appeal upon the ground of simple charity, kindness to the great good-natured, childish public.

'Miss Chancellor may reward them in any way she likes. Give them back their money and a little present to each.'

'Money and presents? I should like to shoot you, sir!' yelled Mr. Filer. The audience had really been very patient, and up to this point deserved Verena's praise; but it was now long past eight o'clock, and symptoms of irritation—cries and groans and hisses—began again to proceed from the hall. Mr. Filer launched himself into the passage leading to the stage, and Selah rushed after him. Mrs. Tarrant extended herself, sobbing, on the sofa, and Olive, quivering in the storm, inquired of Ransom what he wanted her to do, what humiliation, what degradation, what sacrifice he imposed.

*'I'll do anything—I'll be abject—I'll be vile—I'll go down in the dust!'*

*'I ask nothing of you, and I have nothing to do with you,' Ransom said. 'That is, I ask, at the most, that you shouldn't expect that, wishing to make Verena my wife, I should say to her,' 'Oh yes, you can take an hour or two out of it! Verena,' he went on 'all this is out of it—dreadfully, odiously—and it's a great deal too much! Come, come as far away from here as possible, and we'll settle the rest!'*

*The combined effort of Mr. Filer and Selah Tarrant to pacify the public had not, apparently, the success it deserved; the house continued in uproar and the volume of sounds increased. 'Leave us alone, leave us alone for a single minute!' cried Verena; 'just let me speak to him, and it will be all right!' She rushed over to her mother, drew her, dragged her from the sofa, led her to the door of the room. Mrs. Tarrant, on the way, reunited herself with Olive (the horror of the situation had at least that compensation for her), and, clinging and staggering together, the distracted women, pushed by Verena, passed into the vestibule, now, as Ransom saw, deserted by the policeman and the reporter, who had rushed round to where the battle was thickest.*

*'Oh, why did you come—why, why?'* And Verena, turning back, threw herself upon him with a protest which was all, and more than all, a surrender. She had never yet given herself to him so much as in that movement of reproach.

*'Didn't you expect me, and weren't you sure?'* he asked, smiling at her and standing there till she arrived.

*'I didn't know—it was terrible—it's awful! I saw you in your place, in the house, when you came. As soon as we got here I went out to those steps that go up to the stage and I looked out, with my father—from behind him—and saw you in a minute. Then I felt too nervous to speak! I could never, never, if you were there! My father didn't know you, and I said nothing, but Olive guessed as soon*

as I came back. She rushed at me, and she looked at me—oh, how she looked! and she guessed. She didn't need to go out to see for herself, and when she saw how I was trembling she began to tremble herself, to believe, as I believed, we were lost. Listen to them, listen to them, in the house! Now I want you to go away—I will see you tomorrow, as long as you wish. That's all I want now; if you will only go away it's not too late, and everything will be all right!

Preoccupied as Ransom was with the simple purpose of getting her bodily out of the place, he could yet notice her strange, touching tone, and her air of believing that she might really persuade him. She had evidently given up everything now—every pretense of a different conviction and of loyalty to her cause; all this had fallen from her as soon as she felt him near, and she asked him to go away just as any plighted maiden might have asked any favour of her lover. But it was the poor girl's misfortune that, whatever she did or said, or left unsaid, only had the effect of making her clearer to him and making the people who were clamouring for her seem more and more a raving rabble.

He indulged not in the smallest recognition of her request, and simply said, 'Surely Olive must have believed, must have known, I would come.'

'She would have been sure if you hadn't become so unexpectedly quiet after I left Marmion. You seemed to concur, to be willing to wait.'

'So I was, for a few weeks. But they ended yesterday. I was furious that morning, when I learned your flight, and during the week that followed I made two or three attempts to find you. Then I stopped—I thought it better. I saw you were very well hidden; I determined not even to write. I felt I could wait—with that last day at Marmion to think of. Besides, to leave you with her awhile, for the last, seemed more decent. Perhaps you'll tell me now where you were.'

*'I was with father and mother. She sent me to them that morning, with a letter. I don't know what was in it. Perhaps there was money,' said Verena, who evidently now would tell him everything.*

*'And where did they take you?'*

*'I don't know—to places. I was in Boston once, for a day; but only in a carriage. They were as frightened as Olive; they were bound to save me!'*

*'They shouldn't have brought you here to-night then. How could you possibly doubt of my coming?'*

*'I don't know what I thought, and I didn't know, till I saw you, that all the strength I had hoped for would leave me in a flash, and that if I attempted to speak—with you sitting there—I should make the most shameful failure. We had a sickening scene here—I begged for delay, for them to recover. We waited and waited, and when I heard you at the door talking to the policeman, it seemed to me everything was gone. But it will still come back, if you will leave me. They are quiet again—father must be interesting them.'*

*'I hope he is!'* Ransom exclaimed. *'If Miss Chancellor ordered the policeman, she must have expected me.'*

*'That was only after she knew you were in the house. She flew out into the lobby with father, and they seized him and posted him there. She locked the door; she seemed to think they would break it down. I didn't wait for that, but from the moment I knew you were on the other side of it I couldn't go on—I was paralysed. It has made me feel better to talk to you—and now I could appear,' Verena added.*

*'My darling child, haven't you a shawl or a mantle?'* Ransom returned, for all answer; looking about him. He perceived, tossed upon a chair, a long, furred cloak, which he caught up, and, before she could resist, threw over her.

She even let him arrange it and, standing there, draped from head to foot in it, contented herself with saying, after a moment:

*'I don't understand—where shall we go? Where will you take me?'*

*'We shall catch the night-train for New York, and the first thing in the morning we shall be married.'*

Verena remained gazing at him, with swimming eyes. *'And what will the people do? Listen, Listen!'*

*'Your father is ceasing to interest them. They'll howl and thump, according to their nature.'*

*'Ah, their nature's fine!'* Verena pleaded.

*'Dearest, that's one of the fallacies I shall have to woo you from. Hear them, the senseless brutes!'* The storm was now raging in the hall, and it deepened to such a point that Verena turned to him in a supreme appeal.

*'I could soothe them with a word!'*

*'Keep your soothing words for me—you will have need of them all, in our coming time,'* Ransom said, laughing. He pulled open the door again, which led into the lobby, but he was driven back, with Verena, by a furious onset from Mrs. Tarrant. Seeing her daughter fairly arrayed for departure, she hurled herself upon her, half in indignation, half in a blind impulse to cling, and with an outpouring of tears, reproaches, prayers, strange scraps of argument and iterations of farewell, closed her about with an embrace which was partly a supreme caress, partly the salutary castigation she had, three minutes before, expressed the wish to administer, and altogether for the moment a check upon the girl's flight.

*'Mother, dearest, it's all for the best, I can't help it, I love you just the same; let me go, let me go!'* Verena stammered, kissing her again, struggling to free herself, and holding out her hand to Ransom. He saw now that she only wanted to get away, to leave everything behind her. Olive was close at hand, on

the threshold of the room, and as soon as Ransom looked at her **he** became aware that the weakness she had just **shown** had passed away. She had straightened **herself** again, and she was upright **in her** desolation. The expression of her face was a thing to remain with him **forever**; it was impossible **to** imagine a more vivid presentment of blighted hope **and** wounded pride. Dry, desperate, rigid, she **yet wavered and seemed uncertain; her pale, glittering eyes straining forward, as if they were looking for death. Ransom had a vision, even at that crowded moment, that if she** could have met it there and then, bristling **with** steel **or** lurid with fire, she would have rushed on it without a tremor, like the heroine that she **was. All this** while the great agitation in the hall **rose** and fell, it waves and **surges, as** if Selah Tarrant and **the** agent were talking **to** the multitude, trying to **calm them, succeeding for the moment, and then letting them loose again.** Whirled **down** by one of **the** fitful **gusts, a** lady and a gentleman **issued from the** passage, **and Ransom, glancing at them, recognised Mrs. Farrinder and her** husband.

**'Well, Miss Chancellor, ' said that more successful woman,** with **considerable asperity, 'if this is the way you're going to reinstate our sex!'** She **passed** rapidly **through the room, followed by Amariah, who remarked in his transit that it seemed as if there had been a want of organisation, and the two retreated expeditiously, without the lady's having taken the smallest notice of** Verena, whose conflict with her mother prolonged itself. Ransom, striving, with all needful consideration for Mrs. Tarrant, to separate these two, addressed not a word to Olive; it was the last of her, **for** him, and the neither saw **how** her livid face suddenly glowed, as **if** Mrs. Farrinder's **words had been a lash, nor how, as if with a sudden inspiration, she rushed to the approach to the platform. If he had observed her, it might** have seemed to him **that she hoped to find the fierce** expiation she sought for in exposure to the thousands **she** had disappointed and

deceived, in offering herself to be **trampled** to death and tom to pieces. She might have suggested **to** him **some** feminine firebrand **of Paris revolutions, erect on a** barricade, **or even the** sacrificial **figure of Hypatia, whirled through the furious mob of Alexandria. She was arrested an instant by the arrival of Mrs. Burrage and her son, who had quitted the stage on observing the withdrawal of the Farriners, and who swept into the room in the manner of people seeking shelter from a thunderstorm. The mother's face expressed the well-bred surprise of a person who should** have been asked out to dinner and seen the cloth pulled **off the table; the young man, who supported her on his arm, instantly lost himself in the spectacle of Verena disengaging herself from Mrs. Tarrant, only to be again overwhelmed, and in the unexpected presence of the Mississippian. His handsome blue eyes turned from one to the other, and he looked infinitely annoyed and bewildered. It even seemed to occur to him that he might perhaps, interpose with effect, and he evidently would have liked to say that, without really bragging, he would at least have kept the affair from turning into a row. But Verena, muffled and escaping, was deaf to him, and Ransom didn't took the right person to address such a remark as that to. Mrs. Burrage and Olive, as the latter shot past, exchanged, a glance which represented quick irony on one side and indiscriminating defiance on the other.**

**'Oh, are you going to speak?'** the lady from New York inquired, with her cursory laugh.

**Olive had** already disappeared; but Ransom heard her answer flung behind her **into the room. 'I am going to be hissed and hooted and insulted!'**

**'Olive, Olive!'** Verena suddenly shrieked; and her piercing cry might have reached the front. **But Ransom had already, by muscular force, wrenched her away, and was hurrying her out, leaving Mrs. Tarrant to heave herself into the arms of Mrs. Burrage, who, he was sure, would, within the minute, loom upon**

her attractively through her ears, and supply her with a reminiscence, destined to be valuable, of aristocratic support and clever composure. In the outer labyrinth hasty groups, a little scared, were leaving the hall, giving up the game. Ransom, as he went, thrust the hood of Verena's long cloak over her head, to conceal her face and her identify. It quite prevented recognition, and as they mingled in the issuing crowd he perceived the quick, complete, tremendous silence which, in the hall, had greeted Olive Chancellor's rush to the front. Every sound instantly dropped, the hush was respectful, the great public waited, and whatever she should say to them (and he thought she might indeed be rather embarrassed), it was not apparent that they were likely to hurl the benches at her. Ransom, palpitating with his victory, felt now a little sorry for her, and was relieved to know that, even when exasperated, a Boston audience is not ungenerous. 'Ah, now I am glad!' said Verena, when they reached the street. But though she was glad, he presently discovered that, beneath her hood, she was in tears. It is to be feared that with the union, so far from brilliant, into which she was about to enter, these were not the last she was destined to shed.

## คำถาม

1. แก่นเรื่องของ *The Bostonians* คืออะไร
2. เฮนรี เจมส์ ใช้มุมมองอย่างไรในการเขียนเรื่อง *The Bostonians*
3. ทำไมนวนิยายเรื่องนี้จึงมีชื่อว่า *The Bostonians*
4. จงวิเคราะห์บทบาทของ เวเรนา ทาร์แรนท์
5. พ่อและแม่ของเวเรนาเป็นคนเช่นไร
6. ทำไม เบซิล แรนซัม จึงขัดแย้งกับ โอลิฟ แชนเซลเลอร์
7. ท่านคิดว่า โอลิฟ แชนเซลเลอร์ เป็นผู้นิยมกร่วมเพศหรือไม่ และเพราะเหตุใดเธอจึงเป็นเช่นนั้น
8. ทำไมนักวิจารณ์จึงวิจารณ์ว่าเหตุการณ์ปฏิรูปสังคมในบอสตันเป็นเพียงแค่องค์ประกอบในเนื้อเรื่องเท่านั้น
9. เหตุใด โอลิฟ แชนเซลเลอร์ จึงพ่ายแพ้แก่ เบซิล แรนซัม ในการช่วงชิงตัว เวเรนา ทาร์แรนท์
10. ท่านมีความเห็นอย่างไรในตอนจบของเรื่อง *The Bostonians*