

YOURS
FROM
THE
TOWER

SALLY NICHOLLS



ANDERSEN PRESS

First published in 2023 by
Andersen Press Limited
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA, UK
Vijverlaan 48, 3062 HL Rotterdam, Nederland
www.andersenpress.co.uk

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

The right of Sally Nicholls to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

Copyright © Sally Nicholls, 2023

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data available.

ISBN 978 1 83913 319 0

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

Another one for Nicola,
Carolyn and Sarah.

Bannon House
Abyford
Perthshire
20th November 1896

Dear Polly and Sophia,

Girls, please write to me at once and tell me how you are. I am so lonely I could die. I have been at my grandmother's house for FOUR MONTHS now and absolutely NOTHING has happened. Grandmother sees nobody, visits nobody, goes nowhere. I am expected to wait upon her hand and foot – fetch her her smelling salts, take her letters to the post, read aloud to her, take dictation. I am absolutely wretched.

I know she does not intend for me to marry. She said to me, 'Nice to have a granddaughter to keep house. It has been so lonely since your aunt Lucy passed on.' I do not keep house, though. Her housekeeper, Sarah, does everything and always has done. I tried ordering food when I first came here – I got the big book of recipes down from the kitchen shelf and looked through it, trying to find interesting things to eat. But Sarah and Grandmother soon put me in my place. 'We have chop on Monday,' said Sarah. 'And mutton on Tuesday. And on Wednesdays, your grandmother is partial to Irish stew.' She went on like this through all the days of the

week. And that was that! I am not a housekeeper. I am basically a chattel.

I cannot quite believe I am saying this, but I would give anything to be back at school with you all. Even needlework class and gymnastics would be better than a small Scottish village in the middle of nowhere! Oh, to be walking down to the grocer's with Polly on one arm and Sophia on the other. Oh, to lie in our bedroom giggling together after Lights Out. Oh, to have someone to talk to who is not Grandmother or the servants! Sixteen years, my aunt Lucy lived here! I think I shall die of boredom.

Sophia, write and tell me *everything* about the Season. Have you met any handsome men yet? Are you in love? How I wish I had an aunt who was an aristocrat! Please, marry a baronet for my sake and tell him you cannot be parted from your beloved Tirzah. You could employ me as your hermit. I would be perfectly happy to sit in a grotto in the grounds of your castle, spouting riddles for the visiting gentry. I would see more life there than I do here. Polly, tell me about all your brothers and sisters. How is working life? Do you go to many dances in Liverpool?

My arm is tired with all this writing. I've been thinking – all this time, I've written you a letter apiece, and I've mostly written the same thing in each of them. But now you've gone to London, Sophia, I suppose you

won't have much time for letter writing. Why don't we just write each other one letter apiece? I am going to put this one in an envelope addressed to Sophia, and then Sophia, when you write back, write a letter to both of us and post it to Polly in an envelope with my letter inside. Do you see? That way we need only write one letter each. I cannot separate the two of you in my head anyway. I think of us always as a trio, all cuddled up together in our little dorm at school. Oh, I miss you both so much! Please, say you'll fall in with my scheme. It will make me feel like you're not so far away.

Your sister in misery and exile,

Tirzah

12 Wimpole Street
Mayfair
London
24th November 1896

Dear Polly and Tirzah,

Firstly – my aunt Eliza is not an aristocrat. She just married my uncle Simon, who is the younger son of a baron and therefore an Honourable – which means his father was an aristocrat, I suppose. My aunt Eliza is decidedly middle class, and she’s horribly aware of it. She is always talking about ‘darling Grandpapa’s house’, and poor Uncle Simon looks frightfully sick whenever she does so. He doesn’t like to tell her that it’s not the done thing to call your in-laws ‘Grandpapa’ or boast about your country houses. She is not very pleased about me being here in my homemade ballgowns, looking so obviously the poor relation. She keeps talking about her darling sister who made a rather *unfortunate* match to a drawing master. I do call it unkind. I would rather marry a pauper than Uncle Simon. And Daddy isn’t a drawing master anyway. He’s a painter. It’s not his fault his paintings aren’t the sort that sell.

I suppose I should be grateful to Aunt Eliza for paying my school fees and letting me come and stay with her for the Season (though my cousins Mariah and Isabelle

rather sneer at me for having gone to school – *they* had governesses, of course). And it *is* fun – all the balls and tea parties and so forth. The other girls are rather jolly, even if they *are* fearful snobs. Isabelle and Mariah certainly are. I think it's being brought up by Aunt Eliza that does it. They all treat me rather as a hired monkey – ‘Sophia, fetch me my slippers, would you?’ ‘Sophia, tell Langton to get the coach ready for seven.’ I think your grandmother and my aunt would get along, Tirzah!

Mariah and Isabelle are just jealous because the men like me more than them. I danced every dance at Lady Frances's ball on Saturday, and weren't they green? They cannot understand it – a plain little thing like me. But men like a girl who makes them laugh.

No, I have *not* fallen in love yet – though I certainly intend to be married before the end of the Season. I shall not get more than one Season, so I shall make the most of it.

Tell me, Polly – how are you coping in that orphanage of yours? Do you still like being a schoolmarm?

Your dear friend,

The not-yet-titled Sophia

45 Park Lane
Liverpool
27th November 1896

Dear Sophia and Tirzah,

It feels very strange to be writing to you both at once like this – it's so queer to be copying all my questions to Sophia onto your letter, Tirzah. But I do rather like it. I miss you both enormously, although I like being at home too. I love my home. It isn't as grand as Sophia's aunt's house in Mayfair. The carpet is flapping off the top of the stairs, and there are greasy fingerprints all along the walls, and it's draughty and shabby, and the windowpanes rattle in a high wind. But I love being here with Mother and Father and the little ones. Even Michael sometimes, when he comes home for the weekend. It's very funny to think of my big brother as a university student. 'We're growing up, little sister,' he says to me, although I don't feel grown-up in the slightest. Do you? I hardly recognise myself in the looking glass, with my hair up and my skirts down. I still feel like a little girl inside.

Working life is good. The orphanage is a wonderful institution. We take little children who would otherwise be sent to the workhouse or end up starving on the streets. It really is so sad – there are so many more children than we can ever help. We get so many women

in trouble coming to the doors, begging for our help. And most of them we have to send away. Sometimes it is women who are not married and have no way of supporting their children. And sometimes they simply cannot feed or house another child. Miss Jessop says very often the babies we cannot take are abandoned in the street or given to baby farmers to raise, and many of them die. It is so desperately sad.

The youngest children go out to foster families in the local area. They come back to us at five, which is when they start in my school. I am teaching the smallest children, and the little ones are so sweet. They are always wanting to climb onto my lap and put their arms around me. I wish I could take them all home! They leave us at fourteen, the girls mostly to domestic service, the boys to the navy.

Your industrious friend,
Polly

P.S. Do you think your grandmother would let you come and visit us, Tirzah? Could you come for Christmas again? You know we would love to have you. Mother still talks about that Christmas when you dressed up as Judith for the charades and chopped off Michael's head into the basket.

45 Park Lane

Liverpool

27th November 1896

Dear Sophia,

I know Tirzah said to write one letter to you both at once, and I have (I sent it to Tirzah, who I suppose will pass it on to you), but I felt I must add a few short lines just to you, Sophia. Do you think her grandmother really is as awful as she says, or is it just Tirzah being Tirzah? I showed Mother her letter, and she said that some women do very well as housekeepers for their relations, but Tirzah is a girl who needs a bit of life of her own. I think she's right. I can't imagine what her parents are thinking letting her stay with that awful woman. Couldn't she go out to India with them?

I hope your aunt and cousins aren't too hideous, and the men are perfectly charming,

Polly

Bannon House
Abyford
Perthshire
30th November 1896

Dear Polly and Sophia,

Oh, Lord! What wouldn't I give to be in your house again, Polly? Would your mother like a nursery governess for the little ones? I could feed them bread and milk and tell them stories and teach them to write. She wouldn't even have to pay me – just let me wear your cast-off dresses and go to dances with you. *Do you go to dances?* You didn't say. You cannot work every hour in an orphanage.

I asked my grandmother about coming to stay with you. I planned it all very carefully. I reminded her of those Christmases I spent with you – how respectable your father is (she likes doctors; our local doctor is practically the only person who ever visits – she is a fearful hypochondriac). I asked him if he thought she was seriously ill (I know it is very wicked of me, but I cannot help thinking that I shall only escape this prison when she dies). He laughed – hateful man! – and said, 'Don't worry, Miss Lewis, your grandmother is in excellent health. She might well live to be eighty!' Eighty! I shall be an old lady myself by then.

Anyway, I was so careful. I talked about your job in the orphanage and how virtuous you are. But to no avail. She pursed her lips at me and said, ‘Great heavens, girl! Do you forget your duties? You have had your fun at school; now you must settle down and work for your living.’

She had a paid companion before me, after Aunt Lucy died, a hateful woman called Miss Hamilton. I don’t know what’s happened to her now I’m here. I suppose Grandmother dismissed her. I wonder where she went? Do you think she’s in the workhouse?

I would rather live in a workhouse than here. At least there would be people to talk to in a workhouse. Grandmother does not so much make conversation as *lecture*. ‘Sit up, Tirzah!’ ‘Stop making that ghastly face, Tirzah!’ ‘Stop *sulking!*’

She wants the sort of granddaughter who just sits there and does as she’s told. Well, that’s not me. I don’t just want to sit. I want to do things.

‘Can I take the omnibus into town? I need a new trim for my hat.’

‘Can I call on the vicar?’ It is not the vicar I am interested in calling on, of course, but his curate, who is twenty-two. He looks deathly dull – pale, with straggly sideburns and a horrible Adam’s apple, which bobs about when he swallows. But he is at least young. I would rather marry a curate than live with Grandmother for the rest of her life.

‘Is there *no one* under forty in this village, Grandmother?’ There isn’t, I don’t think, apart from the curate. Not anyone Grandmother would let me talk to. There are some younger girls in the cottages, but they just stare as I walk past, and giggle. I wonder if I could pretend to be doing philanthropy – taking them soup or whatever. Do people actually do that outside of novels? But would anyone want to talk to an awful prig who brought them soup?

There are young men in the cottages too. I can see them drinking outside the Durham Ox on Saturday afternoons. They are not at all the sort of men Grandmother would approve of – they are working men, labourers – but goodness, they are so . . . so alive and *male*. NOT like the curate. Perhaps I shall run away with a blacksmith. It would be better than spending the next twenty years of my life fetching handkerchiefs for Grandmother.

Do you really like working in an orphanage, Polly? You sound as if you do. I wish there was something I loved like that. Do you remember how I was going to be a singer at school? It all seemed so easy back then. But I wouldn’t have the first idea how one even goes about becoming a singer. I suppose you can’t really walk up to the Royal Opera House with your music and ask to speak to the director, like you can in *Girl’s Own* stories.

I remember when I talked to Mr Wallasey about it at school. He was very gentle and sweet, and said that while

people do earn a living singing at concerts, they are generally professionally trained, in conservatoires and things. And you need a lot more than half an hour of singing lessons a week from the man who arranges the music for the church choir. I expect he was really telling me I would never be good enough, in the nicest possible way. Do they have singers at any of your balls, Sophia? Have you met any aristocracy? Is anyone in love with you yet? How many balls do you go to, and what do you wear, and what do you eat, and is there champagne, and how late is it that you come home?

I have never been so bored in all my life. Write back quickly before I expire.

Your friend,
Tirzah

12 Wimpole Street
London
2nd December 1896

Dear Polly and Tirzah,

What a lot of questions, Tirzah! My life is very busy. We go to balls three or four times a week. They start at ten and finish at four or five in the morning, sometimes later. We usually stay until the end, although my aunt is nodding in her chair by one. We come home by carriage and tumble into bed. We often do not wake until nearly noon. It is very decadent, and I wonder if Mummy and Daddy know what we are doing. I do not tell them, of course.

There's usually a buffet, and supper, and honestly the food is rather wonderful. Lobster, and little cakes, and ices and all sorts. Yes, there is champagne, and wine, though Aunt Eliza does not permit us girls to drink much. She said we must keep our wits about us if we are to catch husbands. We drink a little, though, just to show we are not prigs. It is all very careful. (I don't know if the real aristocracy behave like this or if it is just Aunt Eliza. She is so anxious that I will say or do something wrong. She insists on telling everyone that I am her poor niece from the country, who has not been much in society. I don't know what society we girls are supposed to have

been in – we are all just out of the schoolroom or finishing school. My cousins went to finishing school in Paris, of course. Lucky beasts. Imagine, Paris!)

There are singers sometimes, and bands. I don't know how one would get a job as a singer, though, and it doesn't look a bit respectable. Some of them sing in nightclubs too! Uncle Simon told me. Your grandmother would be horrified if you tried singing with men in nightclubs, in the sort of dresses those women wear. And honestly, Tirezah, I'm not sure you would be very safe. I know I'm sounding awfully middle-aged, but I think you might be better off at home.

It is unfair, isn't it? If we were men, there wouldn't be any of this bother about marrying well. We could go off to university and become lawyers or clergymen or go into business. You could run away and join the army – you'd like that. But what are my options if I do not find a husband? Staying at home with Mummy and Daddy. Teaching. Being a governess or a companion. Or a nurse. That's about it, honestly. And there's nothing wrong with any of those things – I'm so glad you like teaching, Polly. But somehow at school we seemed to have more options. We were always learning about Florence Nightingale, or the Brontë sisters, or Queen Victoria. It seemed quite likely that we would all grow up to be great women, probably without having to try very hard.

Real life, it turns out, isn't like that at all.

Remember how I wanted to be a journalist when I was at school? A girl reporter like Nellie Bly. It seemed so easy then. I did actually ask one of Daddy's friends about it, just in case the Season didn't work. He sucked his teeth and said maybe the knitting page or the problem page, unless I wanted to write for a women's publication. He sounded so sneery when he said it, I didn't want to pursue it somehow.

Anyway. Enough of school. Yes, of course I've met aristocrats. So many, it's getting rather boring. No, I am not in love, and I do not think I shall be.

There is one man who I think is interested in me, though. His name is Lord St John, and he is very old – about thirty-five, I think! He is not handsome, but he has a kind face. I think kindness is very important.

He's the youngest son, and he has three older brothers. But he's currently running the estate – two of his older brothers are in the army and the church, and the eldest lives in London and isn't interested in the country at all. But St John likes looking after the land. He keeps talking to me about horses and cows and prize pigs. I confess, I am not very interested in prize pigs! He is rather dull company. And he treads on my toes. But Aunt Eliza says he has come to London to find a wife, and he is more interested in me than in any other lady. So.

If I could get married to a man with money, my sisters could do the Season with me next year, and they would

not have the shame of being the poor relation. And if I do not marry, I shall be exiled back home to live with Mummy and Daddy. This is my one chance to make a good match, and I shan't throw it away.

I miss you all so much. Take care of yourselves. Tirzah, please don't do anything stupid.

Your socialite friend,
Sophia

P.S. Dear Polly, I know Tirzah likes to exaggerate, but it can't be very jolly for her, locked up in a dull house with an old woman and no fun. I think your mother is right. I wish I could invite her here – her grandmother might agree to Mayfair if not Liverpool – but since I'm only here on sufferance myself, I can't invite guests of my own. Maybe her grandmother will tire of having her around. She can't be much earthly good as a companion. I know I joke about my aunt and cousins, but it is hard work being everybody's runaround, and you need much good humour and self-assurance. I'm sure Tirzah spends her days sighing and complaining. Perhaps her grandmother will see sense eventually and . . . Well, I don't know what. Let her come to one of us for the holidays, at least. And then perhaps she could find herself a husband. If you are young and lively and not so picky about who you settle down with, it's very easy to end up with *somebody*. There are plenty of old men who aren't so choosy. They seem to think a poor relation is easy pickings.

P.P.S. Her parents aren't in India. They died of cholera when she was a baby. She told me so in confidence ages ago.

Best love – Sophia

45 Park Lane
Liverpool
5th December 1896

Dear Tirzah and Sophia,

I suppose I should be pleased about your lord, Sophia – goodness, you, married to a lord! It sounds like something out of a fairytale. But do you really want to be married to someone you don't love? Marriage is for the rest of your life. I know you feel like you ought to help your sisters, but really, is it worth spending your whole life with a bore for? It doesn't seem like it to me.

As for being sent home and never getting another chance at the Season – well, as someone who is living at home and has never even been to London, let alone *met* a member of the aristocracy, I don't think that's such a disaster. There is life in the provinces, you know! I'm a member of a tennis club, and I play bridge on Fridays, and Mother and I are going to a course of lectures in the city hall. They're frightfully interesting. Well, they vary. There was one on science, with a fellow who blew up lots of things – that was fun. The last experiment he said, 'You really have to be jolly careful with this one,' and then blew his eyebrows off! And last week there was a lady talking about Millicent Fawcett and what a good

idea it would be if women got the vote. Mother and I both thought she was ever so sensible and convincing.

There are dances too. Michael and Betsy and I went to one last Saturday. There was a big navy boat in the docks, and they put on a dance for the sailors. It is a good way to meet young men, as of course there are none working in the orphanage. We are a mostly female lot! I like it – it reminds me of school, a bit. Although of course there are boy orphans here. More boys than girls, if truth be told. It's much easier to persuade adopters to take on little girls. More fool them! The girls are just as rough as the boys when they want to be. And they are more bothered about being adopted, somehow. The boys just want someone to love them, but the girls notice that they're different to their parents, and they worry about it. We get more girls coming back to us than we do boys.

The only man you might possibly call eligible is Mr Thompson, who is the superintendent. Superintendents of orphanages are supposed to be penny-pinching villains, like Mr Bumble in *Oliver Twist*. But Mr Thompson is not a villain. He's nice and rather worn around the edges, like old leather, or a letter from an old friend that's lived in the bottom of your pocket for too long. He interviewed me when I came to work here and said, 'We're very glad to have you, Miss Anniston, and we hope you shall stay with us a good long time.' Wasn't that a nice thing to say? He cares about the children too;

you can see that. He lives in poky little rooms next to the refectory, and Miss Martin, who teaches the older infants, told me it was because he gave up his official apartments to make space for a proper playroom for the little ones and a sewing room for the big girls.

There is something the matter with him – I'm not sure what, exactly, but he walks with crutches, and his legs are all twisted, and he often looks tired and drawn. I think he's in quite a lot of pain, though he doesn't say so. It's funny, though. I had thought the children might laugh at him – you know what children are like – but they don't, at all. They treat him with the utmost seriousness and respect, listening quietly when he talks to them, which I can assure you doesn't always happen! The only time I ever saw a child say anything awful about him was a little boy who had just come to the home from a terribly rough family. He was doing an imitation of Mr Thompson, pretending to walk like he does. And these two older boys, very calmly, just went up to him and said, 'We don't do that here.' That was all. But he stopped – and I never saw him do it again.

Miss Jessop (she's the school headmistress – a very important person) told me that the superintendent they had before him kept the children on a starvation diet on principle, the way they do in workhouses. He said parents shouldn't expect charities to care for their children if they were reckless enough not to provide for

them themselves. I don't know what happened to the money he didn't spend on food, but I can guess.

Anyway, so then there was a cholera epidemic, and a lot of children died, and the trustees got suspicious and gave him the boot and appointed Mr Thompson instead. And a jolly good thing too.

The children are such dears. I can't understand how anyone could ever want to hurt them. You try not to have favourites, but you do, of course. There is a little boy in my class who I wish I could adopt. His name is Nicholas, and he is just five. He is ever so sweet and earnest. You can tell which children came from loving families and which were neglected and knocked about, and I would stake my life that somebody somewhere once loved Nicholas very much. I wonder what happened to them?

I am sorry this letter has ended so gloomily. I do not mean it to be. I do honestly love my job, but it *does* break my heart sometimes.

Yours,
Polly

P.S. I quite agree about the situations available for women. It is not much better for the working classes. Most of our girls go into service, you know – that or the mills and the factories. No matter how hard your life is, Tirzah, it would be worse living in a freezing attic somewhere, getting up at six a.m. to light the fires.

Do you know, there's a village near Oxford where the entire female population work as washerwomen for the students? Imagine a future where they could all go and be poets and scientists and politicians instead!

45 Park Lane
Liverpool
5th December 1896

Dear Sophia,

How funny about Tirzah's parents – she told me they were in India. She said her father was a colonel in the army and her mother was a socialite who danced at three different balls every week. She told *me* in confidence too, and said I wasn't to tell anyone because her grandmother thought dancing was immoral. It sounds crazy written down like that, but I believed it absolutely when I was eleven.

I wonder what the truth is. I wonder if Tirzah even knows. Do you think maybe she's the secret love child of her aunt Lucy, and that's why she was never allowed home in the holidays?

Have you ever met her grandmother? You've known Tirzah longer than I have – I was eleven when I came to school, but you were nine. And Tirzah has been there since she was seven, hasn't she?

Best love – Polly

Bannon House
Abyford
Perthshire
The Depths of Despair
Hell
8th December 1896

Dear girls,

I have been investigating all the male options in Grandmother's village. There are not many.

There is the curate. And if one married him, one would have to be a vicar's wife and spend all day being polite to old women at church. I cannot quite see it. Also, I don't think he likes me. He always looks appalled when I come too close, and he never knows quite what to say to me. So I do not think I will be marrying him, somehow.

There is Garth, the blacksmith's son. I like Garth. He is twenty-one and built like a horse, with a broad neck and real muscles. When I go into the village to buy toffees, I like to stop on the way back and watch him work. His arms and his neck are always covered in sweat from the furnace.

Garth is a flirt. He flirts with all the village girls and with me. I think I could do anything sinful I wanted with Garth, and he wouldn't care. I think he probably does sinful things every Saturday after he finishes work. Plenty

of the village girls would be sinful with him if he was willing.

I would rather not die a virgin if I can avoid it.

That's it, anyway. That's the whole possible male population of the entire village, unless I want to marry Old Joe, who is eighty-seven, or the butcher's boy, who is fourteen and has a horrible crush on me. He is an actual child, though. His voice hasn't broken yet. And really, I do have *some* self-respect. It's disappearing rapidly, though, the longer I stay here.

If I had the first idea how one got a job singing in a nightclub, I would run away tomorrow.

Yours, lusting after young men with muscular forearms,
Tirzah

Wimpole Street
London
10th December 1896

TIRZAH,

For God's sake, Tirzah, DO NOT do anything so stupid. I cannot tell from your letter if you are joking or not, but I am deadly serious. What if you were to have a child? Your grandmother would probably send you off to a nunnery. And worse, what if the local society got to hear of it? You would have *no* chance of ever marrying anyone. Just imagine how bad it would be for you if he boasted of this in the alehouses.

You will not die a virgin. I cannot imagine a world in which that would be possible. Polly and I will try to plan something for you, but please, this isn't the way out, please, darling. Do think better of it.

Sophia

The Slough of Despond
12th December 1896

Dear Sophia,

Do not worry. I'm not serious. Probably. Although I do wish *something* would happen. Sometimes at dinner I look at the table, all laid out with the best china, and wonder what they would do if I yanked the cloth off the tabletop and sent everything crashing to the floor. One day I'll be so miserable, I'll actually do it.

I've started thinking of new ways to annoy my grandmother. When I read to her, I change the story and see how long it is before she notices. I put in a whole speech about the cruelty of keeping young girls at home in the last novel I read her. She did not suspect a thing. But then I made the mistake of putting an attractive young blacksmith into one of the Waverley novels, which unfortunately she knows too well to be fooled by.

'WHAT did you say, young lady?' she cried. 'Give me that book!' The game was up. And wasn't she waxy? We're now working our way through the complete works of Scott, and she keeps glaring at me if I mention anything she doesn't remember.

I also make a point to get everything wrong. If she asks me to bring her pink gloves, I bring the green ones. If she asks for her handkerchief, I bring her smelling

salts. If she asks me to pick up comfits from the village, I bring peppermints. I am hoping she will realise what a hopeless companion I am and give up. So far she mostly just flies into rages. She hasn't punished me yet, but even that would at least be interesting. I wonder what she would do. Hit me? Lock me in the attic? Probably just take my allowance away, knowing her.

There is absolutely nothing to do here except be a body slave to Grandmother, go for walks, read books, and write you letters. Oh, and sew. I do all the plain stitching and mending, as Grandmother's arthritis is so bad. It is very dull. There is a screen I am supposed to be embroidering too, but you know how I hate embroidery. It never gets any closer to being finished. Sometimes I get to go into town to spend my dress allowance. The most exciting thing that happens is church on Sundays. I even asked Grandmother if I could find someone to continue my singing lessons, but she refused. Though she does like to hear me sing in the evenings sometimes. It is not the same without accompaniment, though.

Your desperate friend,

Tirzah

Lady Hortense's ball was attended by two hundred young people. The dashing young Sebastian Fowler was much in evidence and caused a stir by dancing eight dances with Miss Sophia Fanshaw. Is love in the air for the young couple, pictured here heading for the supper table? Let's hope so!

The Illustrated London News, 12th December 1896

45 Park Lane
Liverpool
12th December 1896

Sophia! Did you see this? You, in *The Illustrated London News*! Mother's friend Mrs Hinterfield brought the clipping around to show us – she was ever so excited because she met you when you came to stay at Easter. And who is the dashing Sebastian Fowler with whom you danced eight dances? Tell us everything! We demand to know!

Polly