

Choose Your Own Victorian Adventure!

1 The miracle of birth is a beautiful and magnificent event for humans of any age and time. The Victorian Age is no different, or at least it would be if you were a boy. Unfortunately your father dropped the ball and gave you an X chromosome and you were born a girl. You spend your early years observing the world around you and constantly hearing yourself be referred to as “dead weight” or “God’s punishment”. To make matters worse your noble father died during childbirth due to mortal levels of shame. Your mother, being a properly educated woman, leaves you in the care of a brutal and sexually deviant governess.

If you obey your governess and assume the position, *go to 3*.

If you rebel against her, *go to 2*.

3 Your childhood is a joyous one, filled with dolls, pinafores, frilly locks and being silent for days at a time. You have lots of little curly-locked petticoat-ed friends and you all have lovely little tea parties in the garden. Oh bless! For teddy and dolly need more tea. Mr Smuttings will be joining us for biscuits! Just watch out for those smelly boys next door. But lo, the governess has come to fetch you for your daily spanking and prayer. As you age you fear entering the world of slates, slide-rules, canings and leather straps. What is to become of you? Lucky for you gallant Mr. Handsomman has just invited you out to be his personal companion with possibility of matrimony.

If you are wooed by Mr. Handsomman (he’s handsome), *go to 10*.

If you wish to attend finishing school, *go to 4*.

If you want to attend Finnish school, *go to 8*.

5 After priming for the better part of a fortnight, you attend the ball. There are samples of food from all over the world on display. You imagine they are delicious but remember that you ate last week and can’t afford the weight. As you discuss the laziness of the lesser races, your cousin, Lord Sado Machismo, complements you on your sallow skin. You would blush if constant leeching had left you with enough blood to do so. He invites you back to his manor where casual conversation quickly turns into a demonstration of a large wooden machination he describes only as “The Apparatus.” Several “executions” later you feel slightly violated but your cousin did offer to marry you.

If you marry your cousin, *go to 12*.

If you decline his offer, *go to 12*.

If you thought you had a choice, *go to 12*.

7 “Tea and crumpets,” you think, “Great! I love tea, and I’d love to find what in God’s name a crumpet is.” You have made two grievous errors. One: you are bad at spelling, and you did not realize that you were in fact going to t-e-e time. Two: you have taken the Lord’s name in vain, and His voice booms to you that that one day you shall die of consumption. Thinking nothing of this, you start your round of golf. Your first shot (a T-E-E shot, you idiot) careens off a tree, bounces off your bag, and plugs you square in the forehead. With a massive bleeding wound in your head, you feel somehow victorious because you have thwarted God and you are not going to die of consumption.

“My God,” you hear your companion say, “That ball was laced with tuberculosis.” *Go to 16*.

2 Disobeying your mistress encourages you to engage in other socially ostracized activities. You begin to consort with the peasantry. It appears that, despite everything your mistress has tried to teach you, the poor are people too. This is a hard idea for you to digest. Even harder for you to digest is the maggot-infested bread they eat. You idly wonder if it might be infected with something, maybe tuberculosis. In fact, you begin to wonder if everything related to the peasantry is infected. You think back to happier days, when you thought they were ugly and subhuman. You wonder if you should return to mainstream society.

If you throw shit at the poor and go back to your governess, *go to 3*.

If you continue to talk to filthy hunchbacked people, *go to 13*.



4 It’s the first day of finishing school, and you’re almost as nervous as when mother tried to sell you. Special care has been taken so that your appearance is perfect and your new “Almost Available” chastity belt doesn’t seem to have as much rust as your “Uncle Insurance” model! As you walk up the staircase towards the heavy oaken doors for class, the headmistress compliments you on your silence and then smacks you harshly as you speak up to thank her. Your next class is on learning how to behave at a debutante’s ball, and guess what? The best three girls in the class get to attend one later this year!

If you practice without rest to hide your shame at menstruation and are chosen to go the ball, *go to 5*.

If you see a note requesting your attendance at tee time, *go to 7*.

If you misbehave and play the “penis game” in the back of the class with Dolores, *go to 11*.

6 You’ve become Sea Queen! Your pirating skills have earned you the fame and allegiance of all of Cannibal Island. When the Acid Unicorns hear of your decision, they weave you 15 petticoats made out of live silkworms. Due to certain hallucinogenic properties of the silkworm petticoats, you find you can see inside the codpieces of all of the House of Lords. You are not impressed. Your army of cute and loveable animated marine life sings songs about you at all times. You have invented the personal soundtrack; long shall your name live. Everything from here on out is sure to rock, Victorianly!

You decide to invent the Internet, America, Instant Decaf Coffee, and free women from enslavement!

You dedicate your life to the study of diseases. One day, in the lab, there is an accident... *go to 16*.



8 Good idea! If lots of girls are going to finishing school, then going to Finnish school, with one more capital letter and an extra N, must be even better! Despite their lack of breeding, you find the Nordic peoples to be charming. It is a long journey, but some vikings and a penguin keep you company.

Arriving at Finland, you see a road sign. It says “SNOWDRIFT” and points to the right. Not seeing any sign towards a school, you figure

that maybe the snowdrift will be helpful and point you along the way. You are wrong. It is very cold and unhelpful. Afraid of dying of hypothermia, you run out of the snowdrift and into a nearby savusauna (that’s a Finnish smoke sauna for those of you idiots who didn’t go to finishing school). The smoke smells nice. “What’s in the smoke that gives it that nice smell?” you ask.

A naked man close to you responds, “Tuberculosis.” *Go to 16*.

More Victorian Adventures Of Your Choosing!

9 Literacy serves you well; you become a well-known proto-feminist poetess. Decades later, generations of young women will think of your verse as they have romantic fantasies of sado-masochistic sex.

Beyond this initial stir, though, you have trouble finding a market for your work. Thus you are left to a life of strained means, begging for food and tossing your scribblings at well-appointed passersby.

One day you meet an inventor offering a meal in exchange for your participation in an experiment. At his laboratory, he feeds you a gamey chicken. You ask, "With what did you flavor this foul, and when is the experiment?" He answers, "The experiment has already begun. The chicken was stewed in tuberculosis."

Go to 16.

11 You find yourself at reform school with an assemblage of society's loosest and most incorrigible young women. A small group of them smell of rubbish and bark when addressed.

You befriend Margaret, a portly lass from Edinburgh. Later, Margaret dies while birthing a child she conceived in your boarding house with the headmistress' North African man Friday. The loss of your friend jeopardizes the progress you've made and forces you to reconsider your life path.

If you use her death to fuel your creative angst and learn to write, go to 9. If you sleep with the man Friday and are expelled from school, go to 13. If crying injures your lungs, leaving them vulnerable to bacteria, go to 16.

13 In the pub, you overhear a few nice young girls discussing some tantalizingly forbidden topics, and pull your chair closer to them. Their language is mystifying but seems to involve lots of hot sex and cash and no responsibility at all ever. This sounds intriguing, so you manage via a combination of wide-eyed naïveté and sophisticated interrogation techniques to discover that they are in fact hookers. You chat up the madam, to whom they introduce you with some phrase that you don't quite catch about how they need someone to show the really "sullied" johns a good time. Congratulations, you're gainfully employed! Things are really looking up now!

If you decide to marry the barkeep to further complicate matters, go to 12. If one of those nice young boys gives you tuberculosis and you die, go to 16.

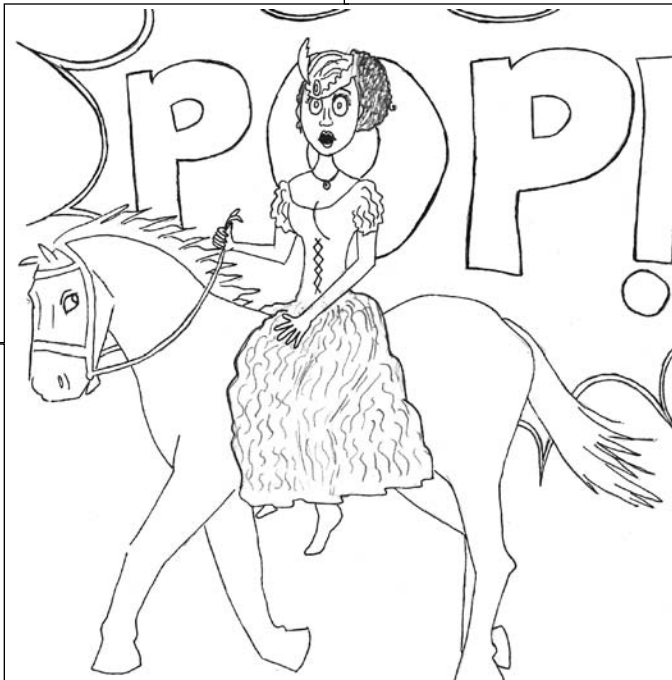
15 Congratulations! You've chosen to have un-lubricated, completely un-pleasurable Victorian sex with your husband. Your shame at participating in the act of genital congress consumes you and you wish for your naughty bits to fall off. Eventually you become pregnant and your subordination to your husband is sealed. Your pregnancy is fraught with problems and you spend most of your time languishing on various divans, settees, and davenport. Soon, the day of the birth arrives. Your labor is painful, but you manage to birth a sickly daughter who dies after several hours. Luckily, she will not be a burden to society and your husband is only vaguely disappointed.

In your grief, you contract tuberculosis, go to 16.

10 You decide to go horseback riding with your Mr. Handsomman. As you canter about the countryside, you think about your bright future and the prospect of marrying a rich lord, having his children, and developing an opium addiction. Suddenly, a squirrel runs in front of your horse, startling it. As it bucks, you feel a wrenching pain in your sinful lower areas. A loud pop is heard as blood soaks your undergarments and the horse's saddle. Congratulations, you have broken your hymen and are now worthless in Victorian society.

If you go to the pub and be a hooker, you useless strumpet, go to 13.

If you go to reform school to pull things (but not your hymen) back together, go to 11.



12 Wooed by the prospects of financial security and social acceptance, you decide to wed. But soon your husband's humorous quips about how the two of you should "make whoopee" begins to fade, and you force your husband to wear a masturbation proof codpiece. He, furious at your slow sandwich-making skills, begins to refer to you only as "Ham and Cheese." One night, you awaken

from tear-soaked slumber in your marital bed to find your husband, pants down, screaming at you for cock-blocking his attempts with your sister. Do you finally put out, or do you preserve your chaste treasure, fending your leering husband off with your knitting needles?

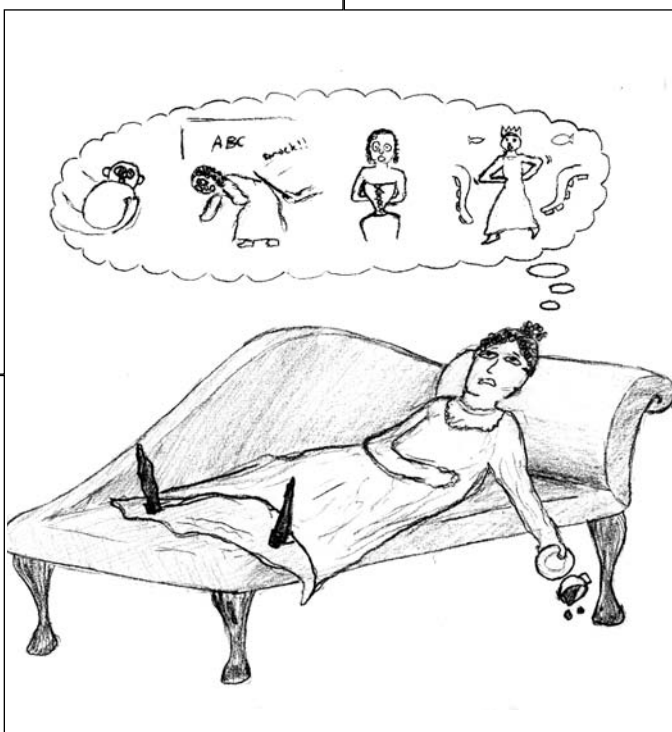
If you have sex, go to 15.

If you remain chaste, go to 14.

14 Despite your seething masses of charm, your dashing and dapper young husband seems to be growing distant. He locks himself in his office for long hours, and while you mope industriously on your divan, you sometimes hear strange sounds coming from within those mahogany walls. The exceedingly well-endowed maid and the cat have both been disappearing for ever-increasing periods of time, as well, and you begin to worry. Obviously, you should have started worrying long ago, because today you wake up to a horribly violated cat and a note explaining that he and Fifi have departed to start a new life together, somewhere with sturdier cats.

If you go to the pub to drown your sorrows, go to 13.

If you start publishing poems to capitalize on your tragedy, go to 9.



16 You are dying of consumption. You languish on the davenport daintily coughing up a bit of blood now and then. Through the haze of your disease, you can't quite recall if you ever lost your hymen. This troubles you greatly because the vicar always told you that Jesus checks for your hymen when he decides whether or not to let you in to heaven. Unfortunately, you are ravished by Lord Byron, who found your sickly figure irresistible. You accept your fate and find a clean divan upon which to languish.

Yes, life in the Victorian era was brutal and pointless, rife with pseudoscience, sexual repression, and pulmonary bacterial infections. Nevertheless, you go to your grave secure in the knowledge that you lived with dignity and purpose, fighting daily to preserve your honor in the face of inferior races, like the Italians.