

**AYALA'S ANGEL,
IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Ayala's angel, in three volumes, Vol. II by Anthony Trollope

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ANTHONY TROLLOPE

**AYALA'S ANGEL,
IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

AYALA'S ANGEL

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF "DOCTOR THORNE," "THE PRIME MINISTER," "ORLEY FARM,"
&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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AYALA'S ANGEL.

CHAPTER XXIII.

STALHAM PARK.

ON the day fixed Ayala went down to Stalham. A few days before she started there came to her a letter, or rather an envelope, from her uncle Sir Thomas, enclosing a cheque for £20. The Tringle women had heard that Ayala had been asked to Stalham, and had mentioned the visit disparagingly before Sir Thomas. "I think it very wrong of my poor brother," said Lady Tringle. "She can't have a shilling even to get herself gloves." This had an effect which had not been intended, and Sir Thomas sent the cheque for £20. Then Ayala felt not only that the heavens were opened to her but that the sweetest zephyrs were blowing her on upon her course. Thoughts as to gloves had disturbed her, and as to some shoes which were wanting, and especially as to a pretty hat for winter wear. Now she could get hat and shoes and gloves, and pay her fare, and go down to Stalham with money in her pocket. Before going she wrote a very pretty note to her Uncle Tom.

On her arrival she was made much of by everyone. Lady Albury called her the caged bird, and congratulated her on her escape from the bars. Sir Harry asked her whether she could ride to hounds. Nina gave her a thousand kisses. But perhaps her greatest delight was in finding that Jonathan Stubbs was at Albury. She had become so intimate with the Colonel that she regarded him quite like an old friend; and when a girl has a male friend, though he may be much less loved, or not loved at all, he is always more pleasant, or at any rate more piquant, than a female friend. As for love with Colonel Stubbs that was quite out of the question. She was sure that he would never fall in love with herself. His manner to her was altogether unlike that of a lover. A lover would be smooth, soft, poetic, and flattering. He was always a little rough to her,—sometimes almost scolding her. But then he scolded her as she liked to be scolded,—with a dash of fun and a greatly predominating admixture of good-nature. He was like a bear,—but a bear who would always behave himself pleasantly. She was delighted when Colonel Stubbs congratulated her on her escape from Kingsbury Crescent, and felt that he was justified by his intimacy when he called Mrs. Dossett a mollified she-Cerberus.

“Are you going to make one of my team?” said the Colonel to her on the morning after her arrival. It was a non-hunting morning, and the gentlemen were vacant about the house till they went out for a little shooting later on in the day.

“What team?” said Ayala, feeling that she had sud-

denly received a check to her happiness. She knew that the Colonel was alluding to those hunting joys which were to be prepared for Nina, and which were far beyond her own reach. That question of riding gear is terrible to young ladies who are not properly supplied. Even had time admitted she would not have dared to use her uncle's money for such a purpose, in the hope that a horse might be lent to her. She had told herself that it was out of the question, and had declared to herself that she was too thankful for her visit to allow any regret on such a matter to cross her mind. But when the Colonel spoke of his team there was something of a pang. How she would have liked to be one of such a team!

"My pony team. I mean to drive too. You mustn't think that I am taking a liberty when I say that they are to be called Nina and Ayala."

There was no liberty at all. Had he called her simply Ayala she would have felt it to be no more than pleasant friendship, coming from him. He was so big, and so red, and so ugly, and so friendly! Why should he not call her Ayala? But as to that team,—it could not be. "If it's riding," she said demurely, "I can't be one of the ponies."

"It is riding,—of course. Now the Marchesa is not here, we mean to call it hunting in a mild way."

"I can't," she said.

"But you've got to do it, Miss Dormer."

"I haven't got anything to do it with. Of course, I don't mind telling you."