

She was not long left alone ; in a moment Aunt Janet was in with her cup of tea, and sat on her couch while she drank it, looking at her niece with mournful, affectionate eyes.

‘You look very well pleased like, Annie,’ she said jokingly. ‘Have Uncle Archie and you had a by-ordinary nice crack?’

‘By-ordinary,’ laughed Annie. ‘Oh, that tea is nice! Will you look out, auntie, and see whether the boats are coming back. I hope the *Janet Rae* comes in before I sleep.’

‘There is no sign of her yet, though I see some far-away things sailing on the sea,’ said Miss Janet. ‘Are you wearying already to see father, bairn?’

Nobody resented or grudged the privileges the old man had, nor thought it strange that the young mistress of St. Veda’s should call the old skipper by such a dear name. No change of fortune could ever make any change between these two.

The messenger sent to Ayton brought Mr. Purves back with him in the trap, and before dinner that evening, Annie had made her will. She was not in the least excited or troubled about it; indeed, her placid demeanour amazed them all. Even the stern man of business was deeply moved.

She signed her name Annie Orr-Grant at the foot of the document, her own signature, for the first and last time.

After the lawyer was gone, she asked that her couch might be drawn nearer the window, so that she could watch the boats coming in. They came sailing along in the red-gold path made by the sunset, a goodly fleet, with the *Janet Rae* at their head; and when Annie saw father’s boat at the harbour mouth, and his flag waving in response to hers, she smiled, and lay back upon her pillow. She was tired, she said, and would go to sleep. After tea that night, as usual, the skipper, dressed in his best, came up to the Castle. He was so constant and welcome a visitor, that he came and went as he pleased. Sir Archie saw him coming up the avenue, and went to meet him at the door.

‘Come in here, skipper, and I’ll go up and see whether