

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST EVENING

When they had unpacked Mr Salteena and Ethel went downstairs to dinner. Mr Salteena had put on a compleat evening suit as he thought it was the correct idear and some ruby studs he had got at a sale. Ethel had on a dress of yellaw silk covered with tulle which was quite in the fashion and she had on a necklace which Mr Salteena gave her for a birthday present. She looked very becomeing and pretty and Bernard heaved a sigh as he gave her his arm to go into dinner. The butler Minnit was quite ready for the fray standing up very stiff and surrounded by two footmen in green plush and curly white wigs who were called Charles and Horace.

Well said Mr Salteena lapping up his turtle soup you have a very sumpshous house Bernard.

His friend gave a weary smile and swallowed a few drops of sherry wine. It is fairly decent he replied with a bashful glance at Ethel after our repast I will show you over the premissis.

Many thanks said Mr Salteena getting rarther flustered with his forks.

You ourght to give a ball remarked Ethel you have such large

compartments.

Yes there is room enough sighed Bernard we might try a few steps and meanwhile I might get to know a few people.

So you might responded Ethel giving him a speaking look.

Mr Salteena was growing a little peevish but he cheered up when the Port wine came on the table and the butler put round some costly finger bowls. He did not have any in his own house and he followed Bernard Clarks advice as to what to do with them. After dinner Ethel played some merry tunes on the piano and Bernard responded with a rrather loud song in a base voice and Ethel clapped him a good deal. Then Mr Salteena asked a few riddles as he was not musicle. Then Bernard said shall I show you over my domain and they strolled into the gloomy hall.

I see you have a lot of ancesters said Mr Salteena in a jelous tone, who are they.

Well said Bernard they are all quite correct. This is my aunt Caroline she was rrather exentrick and quite old.

So I see said Mr Salteena and he passed on to a lady with a very tight waist and quearly shaped. That is Mary Ann Fudge my grandmother I think said Bernard she was very well known in her day.

Why asked Ethel who was rather curious by nature.

Well I dont quite know said Bernard but she was and he moved away to the next picture. It was of a man with a fat smiley face and a red ribbon round him and a lot of medals. My great uncle Ambrose Fudge said Bernard carelessly.

He looks a thourough ancester said Ethel kindly.

Well he was said Bernard in a proud tone he was really the Sinister son of Queen Victoria.

Not really cried Ethel in excited tones but what does that mean.

Well I dont quite know said Bernard Clark it puzzles me very much but ancesters do turn quear at times.

Peraps it means god son said Mr Salteena in an inteligent voice.

Well I dont think so said Bernard but I mean to find out.

It is very grand anyhow said Ethel.

It is that replied her host geniully.

Who is this said Mr Salteena halting at a picture of a lady holding up some grapes and smiling a good deal.

Her name was called Minnie Pilato responded Bernard she was rather far back but a real relation and she was engaged to the earl of Tullywarden only it did not quite come off.

What a pity cried Ethel.

Yes it was rather replied Bernard but she married a Captain in the Navy and had seven children so she was quite alright.

Here Mr Salteena thought he had better go to bed as he had had a long journey. Bernard always had a few prayers in the hall and some whiskey afterwards as he was rather pious but Mr Salteena was not very addicted to prayers so he marched up to bed. Ethel stayed as she thought it would be a good thing. The butler came in as he was a very holy man and Bernard piously said the Our Father and a very good hymn called I will keep my anger down and a Decad of the Rosary. Ethel chimed in quietly and Francis Minnit was most devout and Ethel thought what a good holy family she was stopping with. So I will end my chapter.