

## 06. On Concluding My First Week in Hawkinge

**Saturday, June 17, 1865**

On Saturday, I rose very early, even earlier than was my custom. I quickly slipped into my plainest blue dress, and in a very short time I commenced my walk to Folkestone Manor.

The June day was quite glorious, and not atypical of the weather in Kent. The sun was bright, but as yet lent no untoward warmth to the day. The only clouds were a few white wisps, set rather far apart. Other days, I had learned, would feature early morning low fog which would dissipate by noon. Of course, summer was also the season for light rain showers.

I made a mental note to visit the harbor at Folkestone within the next month. My mental agenda included a trip to Canterbury with Jack Bates or possibly Betty Bourne, as well. Otherwise, I feared, I would learn very little of Kentish life by confining myself only to Hawkinge.

Barnhurst Lane, the road to the manor, was bordered by green meadows. To my left was a distant forest, and I knew that the bluffs above Folkestone were to be found there. To my right lay more meadows, with more distant forest, probably part of Folkestone Manor.

My reverie was broken by a sound that no longer surprised me, the rapid clip-clop of a pony cart on the road. I turned and saw Julia Prang, conscious of little beside herself, bustling to reach the manor. As she dashed past, I waved, but the wave was not returned. *Her head is probably filled with visions of duck à l'orange and foie gras*, I thought.

The fields were blooming. I do not know my plants as well as my mother, but the occurrence of quinancywort and small scabious, to the tune of thousands of small blossoms, was not lost on me. The sight continued until I reached the beeches at the manor.

I turned in, rather stimulated by my walk. I trod directly to the west end of the house, indeed, the pony cart was tethered near the barn, so Meg's assistant must be in the kitchen.

"Good morning, Meg. Good morning, Julia."

"Ah, welcome, Miz Pat. As you see, we're busy with the baking."

"I don't wish to intrude."

"No intrusion at all. I'll make tea, as I already have the water hot for you. And Julia will carry on just fine. She has the situation, and the dough, well in hand."

"What smells so good?"

"That would be me stock. I make a good deal of it every day. One just has to start early, and let it simmer. There's a bit of beef stock going now."

"Yes, but Mrs. Bates, for beef stock, you should roast the bones first. Brown stock (or *fond brun*) is one of the basic stocks in French cuisine. It's brown because of roasting bones and *mirepoix* before they go into the stockpot. The *mirepoix* is a combination of celery, onions, and carrots. Sometimes the chef paints the bones with tomato paste to help break down the connective tissue. That helps forming gelatin, and it adds color."

I said, "Thank you, young Julia. You are ever the master of food knowledge. And how did you come to learn this?"

"That's what Auguste Escoffier says. He works at Le Petit Moulin Rouge restaurant in Paris. He's just 19 years old, but he'll be famous someday, you wait and see."

Meg said: "You are quite a jawsy this morning, child. Now, *ferme ta bouche, s'il vous plait*. Shut yer yap and bake. I'm makin' *fond Meg* this morning, and let it rest."

We sat down for a cup of tea. I ate a scone, and we talked a bit about nothing at all.

"Meg, what about clothes for gardening?"

"Aye, yes! Let's get you fixed up, my lovely farm hand. Go to your room and I'll bring some items I found for you."

I went down the hall to my day room. Once inside, I removed my dress. Meg arrived.

"Here they are, Patricia. No, pull that corset off, too. It is of no use in a garden."

I did so.

"Good! Let your bubbies dangle a bit. I do with mine, and I don't get any complaints from Jack. 'Let them blow free in the wind,' he always says, although they're a bit too heavy to do that."

"But Meg, won't your breasts sag over time?"

"In time, yes. That comes to us all. How soon depends on the woman, dearie. And I tell Jack that if he rubs me nipples, me breasts will stay firm."

"Is that a country remedy?"

Meg laughed. "Oh, no, Miz Pat. There's not a bit of truth in it. I just like to have him rub me titties."

Meg produced a plain cotton dress in blue and white gingham. I slipped it on. "It's a little loose, so let's just bunch the excess at the sides. This apron will cover that up.

Meg produced a white cotton apron exactly like the one she was wearing. It covered the dress from neck to knees. I put it on, and when it was tied, I was, I thought, rather a presentable country girl.

"Meg, what about a head covering?"

"A bonnet? I never bother. That's for city women, and even then, they've long since dropped the poke bonnet for big hats. Now, I'll get back to the kitchen. Come on down when you're ready."

I took a minute to adjust my hair. I gave myself a quick appraisal in the mirror. It being just after 9:00 o'clock, I went to the library and knocked.

"Come in."

"How are you, Sir Reginald?"

“Why, Mrs. Goodman, I’m fine. I observe that it’s a lovely day.”

“Will you be going out?”

“Certainly not! We’ve had that discussion. So tell me, how are you?”

“I’m fine as well. It appears to me that your conservatory is much improved.”

“Yes, it is coming along. Jack tells me that new plantings will be installed on Monday. He assures me that it will be quite attractive—and useful by the end of next week.”

“Excellent, Sir Reg. The old saying is, ‘If Mohammed won’t come to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mohammed.’ So we’ll bring the outdoors inside.”

“Excuse me, but are you going to a masquerade? That is not your nursing uniform.”

“Am I...? Oh! Indeed not. I plan to spend some time working in your garden, and Meg Bates has outfitted me.”

“You must mean the vegetable garden, as I’ve never installed a formal garden.”

“And wise you are, in my opinion. You might have chosen one of those stiff, excessively formal French designs. Anyway, I have missed such activities as gardening. In London, it wasn’t possible. At the most, I would do a little at my mother’s house in Kew.”

“Mrs. Goodman, after less than one week with you, I seem to be learning not to dispute your choices of actions.”

“Your meals, I hope, are satisfactory?”

“Actually, they seem to be better than ever.”

“I’m delighted. Eating well is the basis for being well. If you need me, please ring. Your health is my main concern.”

“Very well, but I assure you that I’m quite all right, and I’ll keep until Monday.”

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I returned to Meg’s kitchen. Julia was taking loaves from the oven.

“Why Julia, the bread smells wonderful!”

“Thank you, Mrs. Goodman. I’m going to make tarts next.”

Meg and I went to the garden. It was located just a few steps north of the house. What I saw was a plot of land about eighty feet long and sixty feet wide. The garden was surrounded by a low fence, more for decoration than to keep animals out. Most of the fence was bordered with flowers.

“What you see here, Miz Pat, is the row crops. At the far right, there are beds of herbs, and of course, flowers are planted everywhere.”

“What do we need to do?”

“First, we pick what’s needed for dinner and tea. Then we pull weeds. Now the season’s changing, so there’s some digging to be done as well.”

I went into the rows to pick vegetables as Meg directed. I gathered radishes, spring onions, peas, and leaf lettuce. From the herbs, I picked parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme.

“Meg, why are there flowers and herbs interplanted with the vegetables?”

“That’s easy to answer, honey. They all help keep away bugs. Marigolds are a wonder, to knock out squash bugs, tomato worms, whiteflies, and the like. Peppermint is good for ants, cabbage moths, aphids, and beetles. Then there’s garlic, chives, basil, borage, and nasturtium, too. Every farm girl knows this.”

We proceeded from picking vegetables to weeding. This was harder work, and I spent a lot of time on my knees. Mercifully, Meg kept the garden relatively free of weeds, as she had laid down a good mulch between the plants.

“I think I’ve handled the weeds, Meg. Please take a look.”

“Yes, dearie, I see. Them rows look mighty fine. Now there’s just one task left, and we both can take it on. Follow me.”

We went to a small shed, some steps away. It contained all sorts of gardening tools, and a potting bench as well. “Have a spade. I’ll take one, too. You’re blessed or cursed to work on the day when I must add about eight feet to the various rows.”

“What for?”

It’s not too early to prepare for fall and winter vegetables. This being Kent and all, fall and winter come earlier than I’d like. We won’t plant winter squash or tatties until much later in the summer; for now, I’ll lay in more green vegetables.”

With that, we set to work like two navies laboring to build the London Bridge. Fortunately, the ground had been worked in the past, so the digging wasn’t all that difficult, even for a woman like me, accustomed only to indoor work. Still, I wondered if I would have blisters to show for my troubles.

“Meg, do you think there’s anything else to life beside food and sex?”

“Well, Patricia, the Book of Genesis says right off that God made green vegetables and fruit. He made chickens and fish, and I suppose he made oxen and pigs, too. And he tells ‘em all to be fruitful and multiply. Then He tells Adam and Eve, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.’ Sounds to me like eating is important to God.”

“Well, that certainly accounts for food, but what of sex?”

“The Bible encourages us Adam and Eve to go ‘be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it,’ and so forth and so on. There’s a bunch of ‘begats’ in Chapter 5, too, so they couldn’t have been prayin’ all the time.”

“Why, Meg! I had no idea you were such a Bible scholar.”

“I’m not. Genesis is the only book of the Bible I’ve ever read.”

“Now you’ve covered both food and sex.”

“And we shouldn’t forget God. Or love.”

“I was in love... with my husband.”

“Oh Patricia, I’m sure he was an excellent man. But I’ll wager ye he’s in heaven hopin’ that you’ll fall in love again.”

I stayed silent. I needed to think a bit about Meg’s statement. Anyway, she announced that the spading was done.

“This is good. Now let’s hoe a bit and rake things smooth.”

And so we did. When we were done, it was a pleasure to look over a very nice piece of well-prepared ground.

Meg took the tools and put them away. When she returned she had garden shears and a basket. “Now, let’s tiptoe through the tulips, except that we don’t have tulips, as that’s the province of the accursed Dutch. You spot the best flowers, and I’ll cut them.”

I found marigolds in abundance, as well as some perfectly-formed dahlias and several tea roses that were just starting to bloom. We picked enough for the kitchen, for Sir Reg’s library, and for me to take to Betty Bourne.

“Oh Meg, these roses are beautiful! What do you call them?”

“Oh they have no name. The bushes were given to me by Mrs. Miniver when she lived in the village, so I guess ‘Mrs. Miniver’s Rose’ is as good a name as any.”

“I meant to ask, do you water by hand or do you wait for rain?”

“Well, God’s good for many things, but I know He’s no farmer. If I waited for rain, everything you see here would be as dry as a bone. I used to water by hand, but now there’s a cistern. My Jack built it out of a wine tun. It holds 210 Imperial gallons, so he tells me, so I turn a valve and the water flows into the garden plot.”

“But how does the water get into the tun?”

“Ah, you hain’t toured the grounds yet. The water comes through a pipe that Jack laid. It starts at the old Pent Stream, about a hundred yards to the west of this house. The stream feeds our lake and then travels on to the sea. Cuts right through the cliffs and flows down to Folkestone. The cliffs are beautiful and you can see the rotunda amusement park from them. The cliffs are where my Jack proposed to me.”

“No!”

“Yes, indeed! I remember it well. He wrote me a poem, and I can guarantee that it was very unusual for Sergeant Major John Bates, then a young private, to be writing poetry.

Down by the old Pent Stream, where I first met you,

With your eyes of blue, dressed in gingham too,  
It was there I knew, that you loved me true,  
You were sixteen, my village queen, by the old Pent Stream.

“Actually, he met me at our harvest faire, but the idea’s the same. Now, dearie, I suspect it’s coming on half eleven. Let’s go into the house. I must attend to dinner.”

So back to the kitchen we went. I tried to be a help with the cooking, and Meg was quite tolerant of my inexperience. Dear me! I hadn’t cooked anything since my Michael was alive.

“All right! This meal’s better-most for a Saturday dinner. We’ve got the taters boiled and mashed. The bread is sliced. We have cole slaw. There’s butter in abundance and some fresh greens from the garden. Now, I’ll get the main dish.

Meg was gone a few minutes, and returned with a very cold saucepan, judging by the frost on its exterior.

“What’s in there, Meg?”

“As you are about to see, these are jellied eels, cold and tasty!”

Meg filled a trolley with dishes for Sir Reg’s dinner. She was about to roll it into the dining room, when I had an impish thought. I intervened.

“Please, Meg, let me take dinner into Sir Reg.”

Meg laughed. “Ho! That’s rich, dearie! The nurse acting like a common kitchen maid. Yes, you go right ahead!”

I carefully pushed the trolley down the hall to the dining room. I knocked.

“Come in, Meg.”

I opened the door. In my best coquettish voice I said, “Oh no, M’lord. It ain’t Meg, M’lord. Just the help from the kitchen, M’Lord.”

I had caught Sir Reg completely off guard. It did my heart good to hear him give out a hearty laugh! “Oh! Well, bring it in, colleen.”

“Shall I serve ye, sir?”

“No, best you simply set the dishes on the table. Otherwise, when you turn I way, I might be tempted to slap you on the bum.”

“Yes, Meg warned me about that, sir.”

“Well, please tell Meg that I was intoxicated. Tell her to blame my nurse.”

“But M’Lord, I’ve heard that your nurse is a fine woman.”

“That may be, but she can’t win a footrace.”

“Very well, sir. I’ll inform both Mrs. Bates and Mrs. Goodman.”

“Good. By the way, what’s your name, girl?”

“Ah... Patty O’Furniture. You can just call me Patty.”

“Very good, Patty. Well, please leave me, and when you walk away, don’t wiggle too much. Nurse Goodman knows I can overtake a woman in an instant.”

“Yes, sir. Very good, sir.”

I backed away several steps. When I reached the door, however, I turned to show my hips and gave Sir Reg two very provocative swings.

He laughed, and I laughed as well as I left the room.

When I returned to the kitchen, Jack was seated.

“What’s so funny, Miz Pat?”

I brought Jack and Meg up to date about my innocent flirtation.

“Sit down my dear, and let me serve you. You’ve worked far too hard today as a farm hand and as a serving girl. And as a flirtatious tart-in-training.”

“What do you have, dear wife?”

“Ah, Jack. One of your favorites, and a favorite of Sir Reg, too. Jellied eels.

“These are lovely, Meg! And I understand that they are very good for a person.”

“In Japan, missy, they believe that eels make you want to, er... you know.”

“Why then, Jack, from what I hear from Meg, you have no need of eels.”

“Well, they taste good, as well.”

“Meg, how do you make these?”

“I use the same recipe as comes from M. Manze’s eel and pie house in Peckham. And that place has been around since forever. I cut the eels into rounds, and boil ‘em in vinegar. There’s peppercorns, bay leaf, salt, and butter, too. Them’s the main ingredients. I may add nutmeg and lemon juice. When they’re boiled up, I let them cool. That’s when the gelatin in the eels sets the dish.”

“But how to you get them so cold?”

“That’s easy. I put them in the icehouse overnight.”

“You have an icehouse?”

“Certainly! What manor doesn’t? You’ll see it when you get a tour of the estate. Anyway, the icehouse is just behind the barn, half dug into the ground. We fill it up every winter.”

“Where does the ice come from?”

“Well, you see, Miz Patricia, like everyone else in Hawkinge, we used to import it from Scandinavia, right into the Folkestone harbor. Now we get ice from our own pond. We fill the icehouse up every winter. That nice Italian man, Signore Zamboni, does the work.”

“Not you, Jack?”

“No, I don’t have the skill or the inclination.”

“What does Signore Zamboni do?”

“It starts in the fall, well before the winter freeze. He comes to visit and says, ‘You gotta watcha you assa.’ I must say, the first time I heard that, I had a wrong-take. Then I came to understand that he was talking about me ice, not me arse.

“When the pond freezes, he comes out with a wagonload of sawdust. Then he and his men cut blocks of ice from our pond. Into the icehouse the blocks go, and he covers them with sawdust. They are so protected by the sawdust that they last us until damned near the end of the following fall.

“There’s a bonus, too! Zamboni taught me all about Italian ice cream, he did. ‘Gelato,’ he calls it. I’ve yet to make up any, but I do believe I can do it, given the simple ingredients, if I have ice and salt.”

“If I may, I’d like to bring up something important. Do you know Simon Shepherd?”

“The village idiot? I’ve seen him but I’ve never met him.”

“Yes, Jack. That Simon Shepherd, but he’s not an idiot. If anything, the idiots are the politicians who started the Crimean war and the generals who got my husband killed, Sir Reginald injured, and Simon Shepherd to be wounded.”

I told Meg and Jack about the boys abusing Simon, and about our conversation afterward.

“Well, about those boys, that’s a vile thing, to be sure.”

“Indeed. And Simon’s speeches are odd, but hardly a reason to torment the man. Especially when you consider that he’s a war hero.”

“How so, Miz Pat?”

“He was in 4th Queen’s Own Hussars, part of the charge of the Light Brigade.” Jack and Meg nodded. I then quickly recounted Simon’s story of the charge, and events occurring thereafter.

“The key thing, Jack, is that I need your help on Monday. There are three things I should like you to do, if you’re willing to help.”

“Well, I shall try. What are they, missy?”

“First, we must find some new clothes for him. Second, you must talk with him privately about the war. His regiment has abandoned him and will have nothing to do with him.”



Jack sputtered.

Meg said, "You've got him fanteeged, for sure."

"'Od Rabbit It! That's unforgivable! A regiment never abandons its men! Well tell me. What's the third thing?"

"I want you and Sir Reg to spend some time with him in the morning."

"The first two are easy, Patricia. The third thing won't be so easy. You know Sir Reg doesn't like to see anybody."

"You can persuade him, Jack. And I submit to you that you've worked with the men in the ranks your whole career. And, Sir Reg is an officer, and has responsibilities. Remind him of the saber that hangs over the fireplace. Besides, Sir Reg needs to be socialized as much as Simon does. Another thing is that I actually think Simon's odd remarks about the future will intrigue Sir Reginald. And another thing..."

"Stop, stop! I'm convinced. Well, the best I can do is try. And I don't think I'll bring up your name if I can avoid it. Sir Reg is aware of your many influences, and we don't want to drive him half-mad with another."

Meg said, "You know, dearie, if you was Lady Pleydell, the earl wouldn't think twice about being so well-managed. That's what wives are for."

"Oh, Meg! That's rich! Imagine me, the wife of an earl."

We concluded dinner, and I went to my room to change clothes. I hung up my new gardening outfit, and anticipated wearing it again soon. I put on my blue dress, and immediately walked back to Hawkinge.

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I arrived at my boarding house just after half two. Of course, I had missed dinner, but I had a lovely cup of tea with Betty in the dining room. She brought out a small plate of Cadbury fingers, and I gave her the flowers from Meg's garden.

"Oh, these are lovely! Thank you, and please thank Meg Bates for me. Now, I see you aren't wearing your nurse's habit. Good. Would you like to go to a concert in the park?"

"That's a wonderful idea, but who plays?"

"The Hawkinge village band. Quite an impressive ensemble, in its own way."

"Betty, that would be wonderful."

"Good, you go get ready, to the extent you need to. I'll get a bucket of ale."

My labors of the morning had energized me more than fatigued me, so I required only a few minutes to refresh myself, and I was ready to go to the park with Betty.

We crossed Oak Lane, and moved east to the band shell. I saw a small group of boys and they saw me. I was very pleased to see them give me a wide berth. At the band shell, Betty spread a blanket on the grass and we

seated ourselves. There were perhaps one hundred people there. At last, I had a chance to see merchants, farmers, oasters, and school children.

The band mounted the stage, wearing straw boaters and blazers with stripes. What sartorial wonders they were! There were eight players in the band, all men, and I noted that I had met two of them.

“Oh, Betty! I recognize two of the players. That seems to be Constable Dover with a clarinet and there’s Sam Fowler with a flugelhorn. But who are the others?”

“Well, that robust fellow with the tuba is Bill Black, the blacksmith. The flute is played by Stanley Shards, the schoolmaster. That leaves Reverend Pritchett playing saxophone, Addison Miller, the miller, playing bass drum and cymbals, and Jedediah Green, the greengrocer, playing snare drum.”

“Who’s the eighth man, the conductor?”

“That would be Dr. Prang.”

“I don’t see the Bowles brothers at this concert.”

“No, each is in his public house, serving up ale. I have no doubt that soon you’ll see them passing among the crowd to sell a few pints.” With that, Betty poured us pints of ale from the bucket she had brought.

Dr. Prang stepped in front of the band and turned to the onlookers. He made a slight bow and turned to address the musicians. He tapped his music stand with his baton, and raised it to begin. We were treated to a rousing rendition of “Rule, Britannia!”

“Betty, that tune is well done.”

“It should be. It’s the only one they know well. But they’ll try hard to play all the others.

For the next one and one half hours, we were regaled with both lively music and somber airs. Surprisingly, a good deal of music was from the America, including, “Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair” and “Beautiful Dreamer,” by that Stephen Foster fellow. The band also played, “The Camptown Races,” and “When Johnny Comes Marching Home.” From the British music hall they played “Pop! Goes the Weasel” and “The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze.” There were traditional dances and reels, too.

“Why are there so many American songs?”

“Frankly, I surmise that it’s because the melodies are simple and so the band finds them easy to master.”

Dr. Prang turned toward his audience and bowed. Again, he turned to the band and signaled them. They played, “God Save the Queen,” intended to close the concert. As might be expected, all the seated people in the park rose to sing along. At the song’s conclusion, we gave the band a long round of well-deserved applause, and folded our blanket.

“I must head straight for my kitchen. There’s high tea to be made up.”

When we arrived, I followed Betty into the kitchen. I helped her, as well as I could, to prepare. The meal was quite simple.

“What’s that you’re heating in this pot, Betty?”

"A simple consommé. I started earlier today with beef scraps with cartilage and mirepoix. Usually, I add tomatoes, if there are any to be had. And there are egg whites.

"Egg whites?"

"Simmering brings impurities to the surface of the liquid. The egg whites help the solids to congeal at the surface. When I take the solids out, I get a very clear liquid. As a last step, I pass the broth through cheesecloth."

Betty uncovered two plates of ingredients and brought them to the work table in the kitchen. "Now, be a dear and help with the rollmops."

"Rollmops?"

"You've had herring, haven't you?"

"Yes, of course. Sometimes I think England lives on herring."

"Well, rollmops are popular in Germany. They're just pickled herring fillets, rolled into a cylindrical shape. In each roll, we'll put a bit of onion, a gherkin, and a pimento."

Betty showed me how to make one, and then I tried. I laid out a herring and placed the stuffing on it. "Yes, that's it. Now roll it up and fasten it with two of these little wooden skewers."

I did so. Then I did more, until we had a dozen rollmops on a platter. While I was busy, Betty produced a Stilton cheese from the larder, and then proceeded to slice the bread. "There. We're ready, except for one thing. Wait a moment."

She made one more trip to the pantry. "Here we are. Fresh strawberries and clotted cream."

"Strawberries? Where did you get them?"

"From my kitchen garden behind the house. It's too soon for cherries or plums from my little orchard."

"Oh, they're chilled!"

"Yes, I have an icebox. Once a week, a man comes and drops off a block of ice. That's Signore Zamboni from Folkestone. And you'll never guess what he always says as he leaves."

"Let me guess. 'You gotta watcha you assa.'" I told her Meg's story and we had a good laugh. Then I took a pot of tea to the dining room. Betty brought the other items.

Our high tea was uneventful. Even young Frank Bourne was a bit understated in his dialogue. I suspect this was because he had had a full day of play. He had no school and had done his household chores in the morning. Mr. Grimstead, as usual, made no interesting addition to the conversation. In fact, he was, as always, occupied with eating.

"Oh, hello! What's this? Herring, to be sure."

"Yes it is, Mr. Grimstead. Eat all you like. Each fillet is quite substantial, and there are plenty of them."

I reflected that I loved this meal for its simplicity. Actually, I found high tea generally to be more fun than dinner. With the meal over, I helped take the dishes to the kitchen.

“So, Patricia, what will you do with your evening?”

“Read, I suppose. What will you do?”

“I’ve no interest in spending the evening at the pub, although it is Saturday night. I’m taking a long, hot bath. Would you like one, as well?”

“That sounds wonderful. But isn’t it complicated to bring a tub into the kitchen and heat all the water needed?”

“I have another way of doing it: At half seven, come to my room. It’s on the same floor as yours, at the rear of the house. Wear only a robe, unless you sense that Mr. Grimstead is snooping.”

“But what about Frank?”

“He won’t be near. His room is on the third floor, as that floor is entirely empty of boarders. I’ve let Frank make his room and another into Fort Bourne, where he can play and do his hobbies.”

“Very well. I’ll be there.”

“Now wait a moment. I’ve thought of something. Before you go, I’ll lend you a book.” Betty left the kitchen and returned a minute later. She handed me a slim book, and I opened it.

“Ah! It’s called *Highland Rogue*. The title page says, ‘The historical and true adventures of John Loudon McAdam, a bold, handsome highwayman and thief, who takes what he wants and laughs as he does so. He is loved by the common people, as he gives them the gold he takes from the nobles. When he takes the love of Elizabeth Lindsay, her father, David Lindsay, Duke of Montrose, vows to kill him. But McAdam does not flee. He shows the people he has a brave heart, rallies them to rebel against Montrose, and strikes a blow for Scottish independence. His passion for a free Scotland is exceeded only by his passion for Elizabeth.’”

“Patricia, it’s quite trashy. I love it.”

“But Betty, won’t such books ruin your mind?”

“I think not. These novels are merely a passing fad. In a hundred years, no one will spend any time reading such silly books.”

“Then I’ll read it, based on that excellent critique.”

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I went to my room. I read a bit from the novel, and I saw that Betty was exactly right. It was indeed trashy. It featured shallow characters, insipid dialogue, and virtually no in-depth descriptions of people and places. Just the same, I found myself reading page after page.

I couldn’t help thinking of that piece I had read in London: “Novel Reading, a Cause of Female Depravity.” I doubted very much that this book would be a contributor to depravity.

As half seven approached, I took off all my clothes and donned my kimono. I opened my door and peeked into the hall, as I didn't want an encounter with Mr. Grimstead.

Grimstead was not in sight, so I walked down the hall to Betty's room. I gave the door a light rap and she let me in. She, too, was wearing a robe.

Betty had a suite of three rooms, connected by wide portals rather than doors. Central to the layout was a bedroom with a large four-poster bed. To the left I glimpsed what must be a sitting room or study, and to the right, I saw a bathing room, if the tub was any indicator.

"Betty, these rooms are delightful!"

"Well, I'm fond of them. No deep, dark, Victorian treatments for me. You see that the walls are painted a delicate, soft yellow, with white chair rails, plate rails, and door mouldings. Even the drapes are solid in a light color, with only fringe to enhance them. My concession to 'busy-ness' is the Persian carpet.

"And how, young lady, does a farm girl become such a fine decorator?"

"I was influenced chiefly by my Angus and his ideas of restraint. Also, the colors are reminiscent of the farmhouse I grew up in, and Angus and I used them when we owned the hop farm. Note well that the fireplace has a simple mantel. Those in the my two other rooms are similar, as I find such simplicity to be quite soothing."

We went to the bath. It featured a metal coal stove and a slate floor. In the center was a large, copper slipper tub, with one end raised and sloped for comfort.

"But Betty, you have no hot water. How can one bathe in this room?"

"Look again, sister. Next to the stove, you'll see a copper cistern. It contains hot water. No more boiling water in the kitchen for me!

"But how does the water get into the cistern?"

"Frank pumps water from our well and takes it to the kitchen. Did you notice that the kitchen also has a copper tank next to the stove? The water in that tank picks up heat from the stove. Angus saw this arrangement in New Orleans, in the United States.

"Before I leave the kitchen, I pump hot water up to this tank. I start a small fire in this stove under the tank here to add more heat. Then I have hot water for bathing. I'm quite proud of it, really."

"I thought you were just a farm girl, not an engineer."

"Angus was quite an engineer, so we had this arrangement at the hop farm. You see, the only thing the Scots are good for is medicine, engineering, and Scotch whiskey. Oh, and lovemaking, of course."

"How does the tub drain?"

"I open a stopcock and the water runs through the wall to a sump in the yard. Sounds a bit like an elephant taking a bloody piss! Now I'll draw water and pour it in the tub. You take your kimono off."

As I removed my robe, Betty poured several pots of water into the tub. I stepped in and lay back on the slope of the tub.

“Good! Now settle back and relax. I’ll arrange accessories.”

Indeed, I did relax. I found that I had sore muscles from the gardening I had done earlier in the day. Betty laid out towels, washing cloths, and soap on a small table. She took off her robe.

“Well, I can’t wash you properly in this chemise and pantalettes. I’d only soak them.”

With that she pulled off the last of her clothing.

“What a lovely body you have! That’s a very slim, boyish figure.”

“Angus loved it. The benefit, I feel, is that while I have a smallish bosom, I also have very smallish hips, while by contrast many women complain of their buttocks being too large. With all due respect, Patricia, Angus wouldn’t have appreciated your formidable breasts. I like them though.”

I studied her a moment. It was indeed a lovely body, quite different in construction from my own.

“Oh! Should I point out, my friend, that you do not have any pubic hair?”

She laughed. “Why yes, I know. Shaved. It’s a little whim of Nick and Ned Bowles, and I indulge them. Granted, it does make my ‘business’ look like that of a five year old.”

With that she set to bathing me. How pampered I felt! She applied soap to a cloth and rubbed me from toes to ears. After that, she applied soap to her hands and stroked my neck and shoulders... and breasts.

I was surprised but didn’t object. How nice it was to have someone besides me touch my body. As she lingered over my nipples, I wasn’t surprised that they grew quite hard. What startled me was that I moaned.

“Did I hurt you?”

“Oh, no. Please continue.”

And continue she did. Her rubbing, and a bit of pinching, became more aggressive.

She went to her knees and said: “Oh, my. I forgot. I’ve lost a button in the bathtub.”

With that, she slid a hand down my belly and rested her finger between my legs. With just a little probing, she encountered a bump. She rubbed it and moved it from side to side. Now I moaned without reservation.

“Ah, I think I’ve found it!”

As she continued rubbing with one hand, she lifted one of my breasts with her other and covered the nipple with her mouth. I was treated to a continuous series of licks and small bites.

“Oh, Betty, don’t stop. Don’t stop.” Betty didn’t stop.

I found I could supply no intelligent conversation. I was limited to saying, “Yes! Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!”

At last, I arched my back. I avoided screaming, uttering only one loud, long moan. Exhausted and fulfilled, I lowered my hips.

"There! You should be a bit relaxed. Now in a moment get out of the tub, and I'll dry you off."

I did so. She gave me a little kiss on the cheek, and supplied me with a towel for my body, and another one to wrap around my hair.

I stepped close to Betty, pulled her close, so that our bodies touched, and kissed her on the lips. I lowered my hands, grasped both her buttocks, and held them tight. "Oh, your bum feels a bit like Michael's!"

After a moment, I gestured toward the tub and she turned to step into it. I bathed her just as she had bathed me. After washing her, I helped her out of the tub. As I dried her, I got another one of my impish ideas.

"Oh, Betty..."

"Yes?"

"I just remembered. I too lost a button. I believe it's on your bed." With that, I took her by the hand and escorted her to the four-poster. At the edge of the bed I turned her to face me. Then I pushed her back by the shoulders. She fell on the bed, with her knees hanging over the edge.

In an instant, I was on my knees. I spread her legs apart.

"Oh, I think I see the button, I'll take a closer look." I put my face to her crotch.

"Here it is, but I can't reach it. I'll have to use my tongue." And with that, I darted my tongue between her lips—the lips that never smile, as they are called. I commenced probing, licking, and nipping. Results were instant.

"Oh, Patricia. It's good, it's good, it's good!" Her hips fairly bucked, rising to meet my face, and the motions grew more and more agitated. At last, she arched hard and held her posture. Then her hips collapsed back to the bed. I swear I heard her sobbing.

"Oh. No one has ever done that to me before!"

"What about the Bowles brothers?"

"No, at the pub, I generally do something like that to them. But now there may be a change in the programme. Where did you learn?"

"From my Michael. He liked to explore everything, especially my body."

"And that included your..."

"Oh, yes, that too. Especially that."

Betty rose slowly, and we again held each other tight.

"I must thank you for the excellent bath."

“The pleasure was all mine.”

I laughed. “Well, half yours, actually. Tell me, don’t you think my Michael and your Angus would disapprove of this?”

“Well, being that neither one was a prude or a clergyman, I think not. Maybe Angus and Michael are in heaven, looking down on us, and giving each other hand jobs until we arrive to be with them.” With that, Betty put on her robe. She helped me with my kimono and escorted me to the door. “My dear, you are positively glowing.”

“You too, Betty.”

“Now walk quickly down the hall. You don’t want to encounter Grimstead.”

“To be sure.” We laughed.

“Would you care to come with me to church tomorrow?”

“Very much so, if you don’t think God will be angry with us.”

“I think God has better things to do than worry about two women pleasuring each other. I’ll call for you at nine o’clock.”

With that, I hurried back to my room. There was no Uriah Grimstead lurking about.

When I got to my room, I slipped out of my kimono and settled into bed. I read for a few minutes, but truly, I was too limp to make a success of it. I doused the kerosene lamp and fell promptly to sleep.

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**Sunday, June 18, 1865**

On Sunday, Betty knocked at 9:00 AM precisely.

I had put on a proper dress for day wear, especially for a day that included church. It was a simple blue cotton affair, rather plain, in the tiniest floral print. The dress had wide pagoda sleeves and a high neckline, as do most day dresses. It featured a white lace collar, white lace cuffs, and a single row of white buttons from the neck to the waist.

For a hat, I chose my new straw boater, with the pink band and floral adornment, which I had purchased in London. In truth, it was the only hat I owned.

“Good morning, Betty.”

“And good morning to you, Patricia. I see you are dressed. Oh, that’s a clever hat! I remember it from the day when you moved into your rooms. Now, let’s hie ourselves down to the kitchen for a cup of tea.”

We had tea in the kitchen. The others (Mr. Grimstead and young Frank) had already eaten at eight o’clock.

“Wasn’t last night pleasant?”



“Yes. It was lovely. You know, Mr. Leonard and Mr. Bruce, my bookseller friends in London, tell me that men often say, ‘Why, I can’t remember a thing. I must have been drunk.’” We laughed.

“I feared that we might be quite shy with each other today.”

“Yet we are not. Betty, it was very sweet, and because of your ministrations, I slept wonderfully.”

“Yes, me as well. Now let’s be off. Services start at ten.”

“What about Frank?”

“He’s gone ahead. He is at an age where his mother is the last person he wants to be seen with.”

We walked to the church. First, we went east on Oak Lane to Dr. Prang’s house. Then we crossed the field to Church Street, and heard the church bell pealing. After a minute or two of walking down the street, the church was in sight.

I found the church to be surprisingly grand for a village as small as Hawkinge. It was constructed of stone, and consisted of a nave, a Gothic tower, and a spire.

“Betty, that is a rather beautiful church.”

“Part of it is quite old. My mother once told me it was built back in 1147, as all this land was once the holding of a Norman knight, who held the Barony of Folkestone. In 1533 Henry VIII pretty much closed the church down and it fell into ruin. But it was rebuilt in the 18th century.”

“What’s its name?”

“St. Lupulin’s of Hawkinge.”

“I’ve never heard of him or her.”

“He’s the patron saint of hops.”

We approached the church and I saw that people were filing in. There were many farmers, if I read their clothing correctly. I hadn’t seen such a large gathering in my few days in the village. I believe church attendance exceeded that of the Saturday concert in the park.

We went into the church and moved to seat ourselves. However, Betty, being a churchwarden, was obliged to say hello and shake hands with a good number of people. But at last we were both seated in a pew. At the appropriate moment, the Reverend James Pritchett, COE, Vicar of the Parish Church of St Lupulin’s of Hawkinge, entered. He ascended to his pulpit.

He wore a simple preaching gown, not the fancy vestments I was accustomed to in London. His black gown was worn open over a cassock, and had wide, bell-shaped sleeves. He had the expected clerical white tie, and a cross dangled from his neck. It was difficult to believe this was the same Reverend Pritchett who had worn a striped blazer and a boater at Saturday’s concert.

Reverend Pritchett was a bit portly, but I was taken especially by his face. It was very broad, accentuated by his receding hairline. He had bright red hair, shot through with a good deal of gray. His complexion was quite

ruddy, and he had a very wide gap between his front teeth. In nursing, we call that a diastema. For a man of the cloth, he looked very much like a London navvy or a railroad porter—or perhaps even a pirate!

He welcomed the congregation and proceeded through the first steps of the Anglican ceremony. Then he said, “I shall now read from the Gospel of John, Chapter 5.”

And so he read. His voice was quite low and very strong. I found it most powerful for praising the Lord, for reading scripture, and perhaps for instilling fear.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.

I was struck by this selection. By sheer coincidence, his sermon was about a man who couldn't walk, and I was in Hawkinge to attend to a man with a similar affliction. I wondered exactly what cure Jesus affected. In my opinion, “taking the waters,” as they do at Bath in Somerset, is a bit overrated, but who knows for certain? In the case of Sir Reginald, I wondered if it would take a miracle for him to walk again.

Reverend Pritchett began his homily. He advised the congregation. “The hop harvest will soon come. Extend a hand to the many from London who will visit us. And lock up your belongings. For does not the Bible tell us in Ephesians 4:28, ‘Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need?’ I advise you that there may be heathen Catholics among these laborers, possibly Irish, who haven't heard the message of Ephesians.”

We then sang two songs from *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, the book we found in our pew. That ended the service.

After the service, the vicar stood outside the church to meet, greet, and exchange pleasantries with each attendee. Betty and I walked up to the vicar. By coincidence, the Brown family was there.

“Hello, Reverend. And hello, Tom Brown.”

Tom Brown shrunk back. He took a step behind his mother's skirts.

“You are?”

Betty spoke: “Why Vicar, this is Mrs. Patricia Goodman, the nurse from the Nightingale school. She is attending to Sir Reginald Pleydell at the manor.”

“Oh, yes. Now I recall hearing of you. Well, I'm very pleased to meet you.”

“Reverend, I enjoyed your Gospel reading very much. “Tell me, sir, would you favor me with a special quotation from the Bible?”

“And what would that be, daughter?”

I gazed directly at Tom Brown. “I wish you to advise young Master Tom Brown, in front of his parents, that it is very wrong for him and the other boys to throw rocks at Simon Shepherd. Is that not so, Vicar? Unless, of course, you think that is Christian behavior.”

Reverend Pritchett looked at the Browns. He nodded his head slowly and pursed his lips. I sensed that he was aware of multiple misbehaviors. He stared firmly at Tom. “That is wicked, my boy. That is cruel. John 8:7 tells us, ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.’ And all the village is aware that you are not without sin.”

Mr. Brown spoke: “Aw preacher, boys will be boys.”

“On this we must disagree, Mr. Brown. Simon Shepherd has been touched by God. He isn’t right in the head. Tom has behaved badly, and I fear for his immortal soul.”

Mrs. Brown was more direct. She frowned and “fetched Tom a box on the ear,” as the saying goes. “That’ll learn you, maybe.”

An excuse from the father and summary corporal punishment from the mother. I suspected the Browns were far from being ideal parents.

I spoke: “Mr. Brown, Mrs. Brown, a moment, please. Tom Brown. I ask you only to think before you act. Mr. Shepherd is a former soldier, wounded in the charge of the Light Brigade. Tom, may I ask you something?”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

Another box on the ear from his mother. “That’s, ‘Yes, Mrs. Goodman,’ young man.”

“No, please, Mrs. Brown. Restrain yourself. You cannot beat wisdom into a young man. Tom, if you were injured playing ball and had to use a crutch, would you like the other boys to call you names and throw rocks at you?”

“Naw, I mean, no, Mrs. Goodman.”

“I would be grateful if you and your friends would think that way when you next see Mr. Shepherd.”

Reverend Pritchett joined in, saying, “Luke tells us: ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’”

“Indeed, Reverend. Thank you for your remarks. Now, I wish you all an excellent Sunday.”

As we moved away from the church steps, Betty spoke. “You were quite firm, I see.”

“And not too harsh, I hope. Harshness won’t solve problems.”

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“Now, Patricia, we are quite done with church, and I should like us to visit my Angus.”

I spoke softly, "I imagine he's in the churchyard over there."

"Next to an Anglican church? No, that doesn't sound like Angus to me. He was Church of Scotland through and through. We'll walk to the old hop farm."

We walked east on Church Street, away from the village. The street soon became a country wagon road, as is true of most roads in Hawkinge. We hadn't walked long when the first farms appeared.

"What grows here, Betty?"

"Well, Kent is called the garden of England. We have many orchards, so cherries and plums abound. In fact, ninety percent of English cherries are grown in Kent, and half the plums. Later in the year, we harvest apples and pears. Most vegetables are grown in kitchen gardens. But our chief produce is hops. We grow hops, hops, and more hops."

As we walked, Betty pointed out a farm. "There you see our old farm, now owned by Harry Turner. Good man, Harry."

Just beyond the Turner farm, we arrived at a plot of land. I made it to be about two hundred feet by two hundred feet. Indeed, I learned from Betty that it encompassed exactly 43,560 square feet, or one acre.

"Here we are. I call this Angus' Acre."

The land was enclosed by a low fence of stone with a wooden gate. As we entered, I saw that the plot was filled with many poles and covered by a roof of netting. At the center, we came upon a lovely, well-maintained granite gravestone.

Betty lay down the flowers she had brought, and we passed several minutes in silence. I read the inscription:

Angus Bourne  
b. March 15, 1830. d. June 20, 1860.  
Oh, to be taken so young.  
Well, whit's fur ye'll no go by ye!

"Well, Patricia. I believe we're done. I feel good, and I hope Angus feels good, too."

"Betty, what does the saying on the marker mean?"

"Ah, that's easy. 'What's meant to happen will happen.' Now, my dear, let us do as Angus would have done. Smell the hops. Look at them. These were the most important part of his work."

I took a long moment to gaze at the many long poles with wires strung across them. There were strings reaching up to the wires, and upon the strings were vines.

"So these are hop vines. They're lovely!"

"Actually, my dear, as Angus would always tell me, they are called bines, not vines. A bine is a climbing plant which climbs by its shoots growing in a helix around a support. It is distinct from a vine, which climbs using tendrils or suckers. Now, I must tell you that I have no idea what a helix is, but that's what Angus always said. In any event, hops want to climb so we train them to grow up strings."

I stepped up to a vine, or bine, as Betty called it, and looked at it carefully. "Why Betty, the hops have leaves that look like the marijuana that Dr. Wong Kei gave me for Sir Reginald."

"Marijuana? I don't know the word. Oh, wait! Yes, I believe Angus used to use the term. I always thought it was a Scottish expression. You know, "*Mary wanna* be the Queen o' England, but the damned English will not ha'e it so."

I laughed.

"Did I get it wrong?"

"Yes, I think so. You have been the victim of a mondegreen."

"What's that?"

"When spoken words are heard differently than they are. You see, there's an old Scottish ballad:

Ye Highlands and ye Lowlands,  
Oh, where hae ye been?  
They hae slain the Earl O'Moray,  
And Lady Mondegreen.

"Nobody slew Lady Mondegreen. There is no Lady Mondegreen. They slew the Earl O'Moray, and *laid him on the green*. That what's why we call such a thing a mondegreen.

"Well, at last I know the real word. What *is* this marijuana?"

"Marijuana is a powerful herbal drug."

"Ah! Perhaps Angus discovered it during the California gold rush of 1849. As I have told you, he was quite an adventurer. He always brought back his discoveries."

"Did he smoke the leaves, as I have asked Sir Reginald to do?"

"No. I never saw him with a pipe or cigar. He didn't care for smoking."

"Betty, you say that you supply hops to The White Horse and The Black Horse?"

"Yes, for years now. My hops and my hips."

"Maybe the hops are the secret of their great ales."

"Sister, I believe you have something there. Hops are supposed to be just a bittering agent and a preservative, as both Angus and my parents told me. But indeed, anything in the hops will affect the ale.

"Well, we should go. I have Sunday dinner to prepare. Oh, wait. There's one more thing."

Betty reached into her bag and produced a beautiful, chased sterling flask and three small silver cups. She placed the flask and cups on the granite marker, and then filled the cups with an amber liquid. She handed me a cup.

“Please join me in a toast. To Angus Bourne, my favorite man:”

They say that Heaven has no beer.  
That is why we drink it here.  
But Angus, surely ye’ll not fail  
To brew for God some bitter ale.

We tossed off our shots.

“What’s the third glass for?”

“That’s a wee dram for Angus. He might down it if he likes.”

“Did he like Scotch whiskey?”

“He appreciated Scotch, much as any patriotic Scot should. I’ll stand in for him.”

With that, Betty picked up the third glass and drank it herself. She shook the remaining drops out on the grave.

“Well, my friend, we have paid our respects to Angus. Now, he wouldn’t tolerate an excess of sentiment, so let us return home to dinner.” We left Angus’ Acre and walked back to the house. We weren’t sad. Betty wouldn’t permit that. She chatted gaily of some of her best memories of her marriage.

“Oh, Patricia, my Angus was a young and dashing highlander. His hero was Mungo Park of Selkirkshire. Park explored Africa in 1794. He was the first European to see the Niger River, and he was only twenty-five years old at the time.

“In 1847, Angus attended the University of Edinburgh to study medicine and engineering. But In 1849, he went to California because of the Gold Rush. At 19, mind you! Ever thrifty, he was one of the few who found gold, kept it, and brought it back.

“I met him in Hawkinge in 1852. We were married within days. I must say, he quite swept me off my feet.”

“Why did he come to Kent?”

“He wanted to farm, and hops were on his mind. That would draw him to Kent, but why the boy wanted to farm, I know not. He bought a farm, an abandoned one. He was ever thrifty, as I say, so he found a good bargain.”

“He could have raised barley in Scotland. Why did he not grow barley and distill Scotch whiskey?”

“Well, his affection for the whiskey was minimal, just as was his love of haggis, I’m happy to say, as I am no lover of haggis, either. When he drank whiskey, he always said... let me try to imitate him:

Scotch makes ye droonk without fillin’ ye up.  
Ale fills ye up without makin’ ye droonk.

“Besides, he knew that the English population is fueled by ale, and that hops are essential in making ale. You know, he was the smartest man I ever met. He taught me a lot. Me, just a farm girl. When we started the farm we worked like Trojans. He knew his accounting and engineering, and I knew what to do in the hopyard.”

“And the farm prospered?”

“Yes. We worked hard, as I say, and our efforts were rewarded. After we were successfully producing conventional hops, Angus set about with great energy to create a variation, a ‘hybrid’ he called it. And he succeeded.

“If I may ask, how did he die?”

“Sailing to Edinburgh, if you can believe that. The man had been around the world, yet his ship was taken in a storm off the coast of Scotland. It broke up on the rocks.”

We had reached Betty’s house. The time was about half one. We went straightway to Betty’s kitchen.

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“What will dinner be, Betty?”

“I’ll serve what is traditionally served on Sunday, a roasted joint of beef. Boarders expect it.”

“But won’t that take more time to prepare than we have?”

“Not at all. We are having rump cover. The meat’s a little tough, but with slow roasting and the meat’s thick cover of fat, the joint will be quite good.

“Slow roasting?”

“Oh, yes. I started the meat in a covered pan with some liquid before we left for church. I put it into an oven with very little fire, and it’s been roasting for three hours.”

I helped Betty prepare boiled potatoes, boiled vegetables, a salad of garden greens, and bread and butter. I learned that she had made a lovely fruit tart, using strawberries from her garden. As half two approached, she removed the roast of beef from her oven, and I saw it was cooked to perfection.

“Patricia, all is ready. We’ll let the roast set, and I’ll use the drippings to make Yorkshire pudding. Please take the other dishes to the dining room table and sit.”

In the dining room, I seated myself. Shortly after, Betty arrived with the roast and the pudding. Frank Bourne and Uriah Grimstead entered; they needed no prompting to show up to eat. Dinner was very pleasant.

“Good afternoon, Frank. Have you had a busy day?”

“Oh, yes, Mrs. Goodman. I went to church, because mum says it’s good for my soul. I sat with my mates, and afterward, we went punting on the Pent Stream.”

“You didn’t come with us to visit your father’s grave.”

“No. Mum reminds me that I don’t need to visit the grave to talk with me dad. He’s not really there, you know—just some bones.”

“Your mother is very wise. What will you do with the rest of the day?”

“My friends and me, we’ll play soldier in the orchards. The fallen fruit makes excellent hand grenades.”

“And you, Mr. Grimstead?”

“Oh, I’ve had a lovely day, to be sure. I spend most of my time writing poetry and some time reading.”

Our conversation was, as usual, limited to niceties and small bits of news of the day. As we finished, I helped myself to a second cup of tea.

Betty spoke: “Now, gentlemen, since Sunday dinner is served late, there will be no high tea. In the late afternoon, I’ll set out some simple dishes on the table. Come down and graze them as you wish.”

The meal being over, I adjourned to my rooms. I wondered what I might do with my afternoon, the time being merely half past three o’clock.

I determined to walk, but not to Folkestone Manor. First, I changed into an older dress, as I had a notion that walking in fields did not require a new frock. I examined my most durable shoes, but they were too fancy for my excursion. It occurred to me that the simpler shoes worn by country women would make more sense.

Ah, an inspiration! I walked down the hall to Betty’s room and knocked. When she answered, I told her my plight. In an instant she fetched a pair of very practical shoes. They were worn—and soft. They had but four buttons and no heel. In London, we call such shoes “flats.”

Now, dressed for a country hike, I left the house and walked to the Canterbury Road. I took no books or journals.

Only a little distance up the Canterbury road, just before the blacksmith’s shop, I saw a narrow wagon track at my left. At my right was School Street, but the lane at the left had no name. I turned into it. There I found orchards, neatly laid out, surrounded by a green expanse of grass and flowers.

Ahead and on the right I saw small cabins. I turned in that direction and approached. I counted ten of them and saw that they were apparently deserted. *These must be quarters for the seasonal hops pickers*, I thought.

I took a path near the cabins, which I surmised to be roughly at the latitude of Church Street. After walking just a few hundred feet down this lane, I turned to the right and set off for what I knew must be Barnhart Lane. Walking wasn’t difficult, as there seemed to be small footpaths everywhere.

At Barnhart Lane I turned to the west and continued my walk in the direction of Folkestone Manor. As I passed the manor, I found myself soothed by the view of the beeches at the entry and the sea of bluebells blooming around them. I continued to walk until I came to a stone bridge. The bridge had a single arch and was wide enough to permit just one farm wagon at a time to pass over it.

I went to the bridge’s center and looked down. “Ah! This must be the Pent Stream!” It was indeed a stream, not a roaring river. I could imagine its course, moving from above Folkestone Manor to Sir Reg’s pond, and on to here. At the side of the stream I found a wide footpath. I turned down it, intending to walk to the bluffs that overlook the sea.

After perhaps a quarter of a mile I observed a flock of sheep in a meadow, not far from a small cabin. *I’d wager that Simon Shepherd lives there.*



I sauntered on, taking in the grasses and the groves of trees, near and far. In a short time, I spied a rise in the land—a mound, if you will. That seemed to me to be an unusual geographic feature, given that most of the surrounding land was flat fields and rolling meadows. This was clearly a rise from the flat; further, it seemed to be crowned with shrubbery and small trees.

A branch in the path led me directly to the slope of the mound, and from there it conducted me to the top in one brief circuit. A spiral path!

At the pinnacle, I was treated to several surprises, the first one being a wonderful view of Folkestone, with its harbor and rotunda. Even at a great distance, I could see that, compared to Hawkinge, Folkestone was a metropolis. Many small boats filled the harbor—the fishing fleet, I surmised. The ocean was quite dark, being that the afternoon was growing late, but it was by no means forbidding.

My second surprise was to find a carved stone bench. This old piece of granite had cracks and some chips, but was entirely free of moss. *How odd*, I thought. The bench was surrounded by an arc of small trees, at the center of which was a statue. I approached and saw that it was a marble statue, of a lovely woman, and it also was free of moss. The statue was covered by a simple canopy, supported by four delicate columns.

I returned to the bench and I sat. At first I studied the statue. I found it to be remarkably alluring and soothing. Then I turned to again view Folkestone and the ocean. I felt a bit like a great lady, taking in my vast estate, or a queen, overlooking my domain.

I decided at this point to discontinue my walk. I would save a journey to the very edge of the bluffs for another day. I walked back on the path, past the flock of sheep, to Barnhurst Lane, and from there took my normal route into the village.

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I arrived at my home, as I had come to think of it, as the sun was sinking. In the dining room, I helped myself to a cup of tea and some biscuits.

I went to my room, and as darkness approached, I slowly removed my clothing and prepared for bed. Reading and writing letters would have to wait for another day. I settled into my bed and simply spent time reflecting on my excellent first week in Hawkinge. There being nothing to do, and being a bit fatigued from my walk, I extinguished the lamp and promptly fell asleep.