

The Education of Mr. Brown

A novel of appearances and substance in Victorian England



John C. Nash

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To Mary, with thanks for six decades of partnership.

Preamble

This is the third volume in a series I undertook to try to expand my understanding of how women in the mid-19th century navigated the treacherous waters of business when they could often lose all control of their economic lives by simply marrying. *Miss Match's Misadventures* considers an enterprising young woman who is widowed at age seventeen, just four days into her marriage. *Moonbeam Shadows* and the present work follow a young woman who has, through death of her mother and grandmother, been on the streets since infancy, living as a boy to avoid sexual exploitation while keeping clear of the Workhouse. In the current narrative, he/she is coming of age.

In writing these works, I have sought to get as many details right as I can. There are sure to be errors and omissions. Indeed, I have sometimes had to subtly overlook some topics for which suitably complete information was not available, or else make a best guess.

An example of the difficulties is that in *Miss Match's Misadventures*, the text may imply that piped water was more or less common. In fact, from 1834 some wealthier residents could get piped water, possibly only for a couple of hours a day. In the 1850s, this became more common. I was silent on the topic of sewers, but have since learned that the town council only resolved to build proper sewers in 1860, and the actual designs for main sewers date from 1874. There were some sewers before this, but rather few. In April 1849, the General Board of Health's inspector, Edward Cresy found only 32 out of 186 streets fitted with any sewers at all.

My protagonist, Tony, presents as a young man, so is in an awkward situation for finding someone to share life with. In the early 21st century, we see many same-sex couples. This was not the case in the 19th century, with society still under the thrall of the 1533 Buggery Act introduced by Henry VIII. While repealed under Mary, it was reinstated by Elizabeth I. The last victims of its capital penalty were a pair of unfortunate men hanged as late as 1835. Yet lesbian activity was never a criminal offence. One may conjure many possible reasons. My own guess is that the entirely male lawmakers simply did not regard women as persons – the same issue that I am trying to explore from the businesswoman's perspective – so just overlooked the possibility completely.

Nonetheless, it seemed to me that Tony and many real persons who pretended to be male did so largely for personal security and to earn their

living. As such their sexual orientation might be ambiguous, or perhaps unformed, which is how I have chosen to present the story.

A sub-theme of the narrative reflects what I believe was a time when many people rose in social status, or what the British referred to as **class**. This was, and possibly still is, a pernicious aspect of British society. However, the notable social transformation in the mid- to late-1800s was real and reflected innovation and enterprise that is manifest in my characters such as Tom Soulton and Tony Brown. One of my own great-great-grandfathers was listed in 1886 as an agricultural labourer when his son married. The son, my great-grandfather, was a clerk, census enumerator, and served in WW1 as a recruiting sergeant, showing rising social status of families.

Another sub-theme that may be more difficult for readers to recognize is the increasing application of tools and procedures to improve productivity. The 1850s was the decade when Colt, for example, showed the importance of interchangeable parts for his firearms. In the 1870s we see a reaction to such approaches in the Arts and Crafts movement, where skill and craftsmanship are the be-all and end-all in creating unique objects. However, my characters, and likely most common folk of the time, were more impressed with function and price.

Details of the lives of "ordinary" people rarely get as much attention from historians as the self-appointed great and good, but that may reflect that ordinary folk were just too busy keeping body and soul together. If readers can provide clarifications or expansions for the episodes laid out here, I am open to suggestions.

This novel was very competently edited both in copy and content by Breanne Gormley in a Student Placement arranged between Algonquin College and the Stittsville Creative Writers Group through the coordinator R J Partington. Breanne can be contacted for editing assignments at **breanne2202002@gmail.com**.

I welcome courteous communications, including criticism if the sender is willing to engage in discussion that can bring better understanding. I may be contacted at nashjc _at_ ncf.ca.

John Nash, Ottawa, 2024

Pounds, shillings and pence

British currency before 1971 was based on the **pound sterling**.

This was divided into 20 **shillings**.

The shilling was divided into 12 **pence** or pennies.

The penny was (at least in 1851) divided into 4 **farthings** or 2 **halfpennies** or more commonly **ha'pennies**.

Needless to say, the arithmetic is tedious and error-prone. I hope I have got everything correct in my narrative below.

An amount might be written £23 13s 5³/₄d or £23/13/5³/₄

This would be read as

23 pounds, 13 shillings, 5 pence 3 farthings

or perhaps archaically

23 pounds, 13 shillings, 5 pence ha'penny farthing

The "£" is the abbreviation for pounds, but precedes the number. "s" is for shillings. "d" is for the pence. These symbols derive from the Latin 'l' for libra, s for solidus and d for denarius used in the Middle Ages.

When the amount was less than a pound, for instance, 3 shillings and 4 pence, we might write 3 / 4, and say "three and four". Five shillings might be written 5/-.

Colloquially, of course, there were other names for particular quantities. Here is a table of some of the units, where those which had coins or notes are indicated.

- $\frac{1}{4}$ d == 1 farthing (coin)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ d == 1 halfpenny or ha'penny (coin)
- 1d == 1 penny (coin)
- 2d == 2 pence or tuppence. No coin
- 3d == 1 threepence or thrupence (coin)
- 6d == 6 pence or a "tanner"
- 1s == 1 shilling or a "bob"

- 2s == 2 shillings or a "florin"
- 2s 6d == 2 shillings and 6 pence == half a crown or "half crown"
- 5s == crown (coin. Rare in circulation. Largely commemorative.)
- 10s == half sovereign (coin). Note that the 1844 Bank Notes Act prohibited notes under £5 in England, so 10s notes did not exist during the time of this novel.
- £1 == 1 pound or sovereign (coin). No pound notes existed at the time of the novel.
- 1 guinea == 1 pound 1 shilling. No coin or note was available for this at the time of the novel, but it was used as a unit of payment, ostensibly as a way to provide auctioneers with a 5% commission, but often simply to inflate prices.
- £5 == 5 pound note. White with black print, and printed only on one side, it was approximately 200 by 130 mm (8 inches by 5). Hence, in Edward Lear's *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat* "They took some honey, and plenty of money, Wrapped up in a five-pound note."

List of characters

Adams, Sam b. 1844 urchin. Friend of Arthur Anderson who goes to work for a rag and bone man in 1857

Anderson, Arthur b. 1844 urchin who went to police station when Tony rescued Miss Crouch. b. 1844, hired by Tony in 1857

Arbuthnot, Percival b. 1812 estate agent

Arbuthnot, Theodora wife of Percival

Armstrong, ? clerk to solicitor Cavendish

Bairstow, Evelyn b. 18240629 former nurse, housemaid, interested in horticulture

Baldock, Emma b. 1798 seamstress to Brighton Ladies Emporium

Baldwin, Frieda b. 1797 mother to Cassandra Match; co-owner of Brighton Ladies' Emporium

Baldwin, Zachary b. 18041121 d 1851 father of Cassandra; pharmacist.

Bingham, Rose b. 1826 secretary to Archibald Turcotte QC. Later wife of Angus Sinclair

Brougham Frederick builder

Brown, "Tony" b. 18390315 Birth name Antonia Crown. Main protagonist of *Moonbeam Shadows* and *The Education of Mr. Brown*

Burke, Dora b. 18350105 nurse/farmworker from Dorset

Camby, ? hansom driver – Jan 1857 runaway horse

Campbell, Catherine "Miss" dressmaker to Brighton Ladies Emporium

Cantley, Margaret b. 1818 nurse from Hove

Catchpole, ? draughtsman in Hove, not linked to Emma and Constance

Cavendish, ? solicitor

Cohen, Abraham b. 1815 Joshua's cousin and colleague marries Cassandra Match April 1853

Cohen, Catherine b. 18550708 Daughter of Cassandra Match and Abraham Cohen

Collier, Alexander b.18300131 store man, assistant manager of Bartlett and Jones haberdashery

Crown, Eleanor d. 1837 Paternal grandmother of Tony Brown

Crown, Ezekiel b. 1792 d. 1855 Great uncle of Tony Brown who misappropriates estate of his brother

Crown, Matilda b. mother of Tony Brown, wife of Samuel

Crown, Roger b. 1790 d. 1837. Paternal grandfather of Tony Brown

Crown, Samuel b. circa 1817, lost at sea January 22, 1853. Father of Tony Brown

Dixon, Dan b. 1840 Handyman at Fortescue Rd; succeeded Tom Soulton

Dixon, Jack b. 1842 Brother of Dan. Main agent for News and More

Dixon, Joe Joiner – friend of Souldons' late father and father of Dan and Jack

Dixon, Laurel 1837 Sister of Dan and Jack; works for Frieda and Winnifred at the Brighton Ladies' Emporium

Dodds, Jenny friend of Matilda Evans (Tony's mother) in Albourne

Dwyer, Jerome b. circa 1825 Solicitor – Ezekiel's executor; one of trustees of Tony's inheritance

Evans, Josephine b. 1786 d. 1846 Maternal grandmother of Tony Brown

Evans, Matilda b. 18200701 d. 1843 Mother of Tony Brown

Evans, Sylvester b. 1778 d. 1837 Maternal grandfather of Tony Brown

Fraser, Angela wife of Capt. David Fraser

Fraser, Capt David wounded officer, tenant of Cassandra. Sets up private school.

Goldman, Joshua b. 1801 pawnbroker, Escaped pogrom in Odessa in 1821 with wife and nephew (Abraham)

Goldman, Rachel b. 1802 Joshua's wife, children? (grown and in America)

Hackman, Ebenezer pawnbroker

Hackman, Stephen b. 1838 son

Hancock, Hector Worcester merchant

Hancock, Henry retired military officer

Hancock, Melody b. 1843 pregnant daughter of Hector

Harper, Jane b. 18290701 nurse in crimea; nee Mudd. Becomes partner to Tony Brown

Hawking, ? Sylvester Sweets owner

Howard, Anthony blacksmith

Hoyle, Ian b. 18391010 servant/watchman for *Goldman's*

Johnson, ? ironmonger

Jones, John draper / haberdasher; owner of Bartlett and Jones

Jones, Percival (Percy) b. circa 1830 engine driver, marries Ethel Soulton 18560531

Karwowski, Yolanda b. 1832 Cook/housekeeper for Maud and Henry Mortimer

Lawrence, Caroline mother of Mary.

Lawrence, Mary b. 18411208 dark haired girl at church Joseph Upton marries

Lawrence, Theodore father of Mary Lawrence;; dry goods wholesaler

Macdonald, Angela b. 18501031 daughter of Toby; informally adopted by Mortimers

Macdonald, Martin b. 18480427 son of Toby; informally adopted by Mortimers

Macdonald, Toby murders wife in 1857

Match, Cassandra b. 1819; gives birthday as Sept 9, but actually August 9. In 1836 to Greenock house of ill repute. 1851 to Brighton; born Diana Baldwin; marries Abraham Cohen 18530402

McDowell, James Crimea veteran soldier with injured face b. 1826

McNair, Mary b. 18100510 1839 to Greenock; born in Falkirk, but says Glasgow, St. Enoch's 1807 July 31 in 1842 gave up game and became cook

Moore, Matt b. 1847 boy known to Bobby Pope who helps 18590511 when donkey Annabelle injured

Mortimer, Henry 1829 clerk to Archibald Turcotte QC. Sets up as solicitor in 1854. Marries Maud Soulton Easter 1854

Mortimer, Joan Eleanor b. 18580906 daughter of Henry and Maud

Mortimer, William Henry b. 18550519 son of Henry and Maud

Moss, Winnifred 1800 companion of Frieda; co-owner of Brighton Ladies' Emporium

Murphy, Martha b. 1840 (late). Hired as nursemaid for Cassandra from Workhouse by Ethel Soulton and Adeline Naismith. Orphaned in Liverpool due to cholera 1854

Naismith, Adeline b. end 1790. Tenant then worker at Fortescue Road.

Nuffield, Felix b. 1842 hired from workhouse by Ethel for Fortescue Factory

Nuffield, Janet b. 1840 hired from workhouse by Ethel for Fortescue Factory

Oliver, Ernest father of James

Oliver, James b. 18510828 crippled child

Owens, Phoebe b. 18290512 nursing colleague of Jane Harper

Pope, Roberta (Bobby) b. 18470228 street kid Tony rescues Boxing day 1858

Schulman, Raisa b. 18361111 servant to Goldmans

Shawcross, Alice b. 18321212 nursing colleague of Jane

Sinclair, Angus b. 1822 Crimea veteran soldier with lost leg and fingers

Smith, Vera b. 1830 wife of Tom Soulton married 13 Sept 1854

Soulton, David b. 18580224 son of Vera and Tom

Soulton, Ethel b. 18350904 marries Percy Jones 31 May 1856

Soulton, Maud b. 18340610 marries Henry Mortimer - Easter 1854

Soulton, Tom b. 18361221 Handyman - marries Vera Smith 13 Sept 1854

Stanley, Colin brother in law of Rebecca Upton, curate in Hove

Stanley, Ruth sister of Rebecca Upton

Stourbridge ?, solicitor for Jane Harper's late husband

Turcotte, Archibald b. 1793 Chancery court lawyer

Turcotte, Priscilla wife of Archibald

(unknown), Gerald husband of Cassandra in 1836, died 1836 of cholera after 4 days

Upton, James second-hand furniture merchant. Died April 1852

Upton, Joseph b. 18411102. Business partner in donkey cartage with Tony Brown

Upton, Rebecca b. circa 1820. Takes over late husband's furniture business. Mother of Valerie and Joseph.

Upton, Valerie b. 18400610

Vance, Molly b. 1842 Cousin to Robert. Cook to Tom and Vera Soulton

Vance, Robert b. 1841 Works at Saultons' Workshop with Tom and Vera

Vance, Ronald beekeeper and smallholder; father of Robert

Winters Eric b/ 1843 urchin. Hired by Tony Brown for Hove deliveries and collections

Yarrow, Elizabeth 13 daughter of Michael

Yarrow, Michael b. 18100909 Widower. Superintendent of railway maintenance. Marries Mary McNair

On a late January day in 1857, a donkey cart proceeded slowly along a Brighton street. The carter was dressed in a seaman's pea jacket and canvas trousers with a cap pulled down as far as it would go on his head. He wore a scarf and gloves against the cold drizzle that was being driven by a nasty wind. Normally his route would be along the promenade, but today's weather meant the chosen street was a couple of rows of houses to the north. A rather odd looking dog, brown with shortish fur, trotted along in front, seemingly oblivious to the weather. Perhaps the part of it that was English sheepdog made it resistant to the damp cold. The donkey, named Moonbeam, was less happy, and was eagerly anticipating her stall, which was dry and relatively free of draughts, with the company of another donkey, Annabelle, several cats and the dog, a bitch named Jolly, with plenty of food and water.

The carter appeared to be a young man, but in reality was a young woman just shy of 18 years. Tony Brown had been orphaned at a tender age and survived on the streets, managing to avoid the Workhouse. Some five years before, he had been rescued from the streets by a Miss Cassandra Match, now Mrs. Cohen, into whose entrepreneurial activities he had been absorbed. About two years ago she had sold him Moonbeam and her cart, and he had been doing quite well with the business, having above £40 set aside. By behaviour and mannerisms as well as clothing and trade, Tony was taken to be a young man, even by those who knew there was a young woman inside.

We have, in previous narratives, told some details of Tony's life. What is most pertinent?

Almost two years ago, in April 1855, a serendipitous accompaniment of his friend Maud Mortimer to an estate sale had had momentous implications for Tony. Maud, who traded in secondhand furniture, was looking for some pieces she could sell on at a profit, possibly after some refurbishment by their friends Tom and Vera Soulton. Tony and Moonbeam were there so any purchases could be removed *post haste*. In curiosity, Tony came inside the sale venue with Maud, paying a street urchin to watch Moonbeam. He saw a seaman's chest that took his fancy. Maud bid on it for him. As it happened, nobody else was interested in a locked chest that had no key, and they got the item for half a crown.

The chest turned out to be that of his father, Samuel Crown. "Brown"

was likely a mis-hearing of the name, and Tony short for Antonia, for that was the name eventually found on a baptismal record showing a birth-date of March 15, 1839. Tony recalled his mother said he was born on the Ides of March, 1839, though he did not learn what this meant until he began to explore his own history. With the help of his landlady and friend, Rebecca Upton, the chest was opened.

The contents of the chest started a pursuit lasting a year and a half for information that led to the discovery that his great uncle Ezekiel Crown, had maliciously usurped the inheritance of Tony's father, Samuel. With the loss of Samuel overboard at sea in a storm, Tony was the rightful heir. It was just pure luck that Tony and Maud had gone to the estate sale of Ezekiel Crown and found the chest.

Given Tony's age, he would have just over three more years until he took control of the monies and house that made up the estate, worth roughly £1000. The house had, however, been rented out by Mr. Dwyer, Ezekiel's solicitor, in order to preserve its fabric while the will was probated. Nevertheless, the diocesan court that held judgment of wills had allowed that the trustees might distribute modest amounts to Tony for purposes of which the trustees approved. Maud's husband Henry was one of the trustees, but also a friend. Dwyer, with whom Henry had formed an alliance, and who had not liked the avaricious Ezekiel, was the other trustee. Both were sympathetic to Tony's fortunes.

This situation meant Tony spent quite a bit of time thinking what, if anything, he might do if he requested some money. So far, he had come to the conclusion he would like to travel to some parts of the United Kingdom to improve his general education. He had invited his friend, Adeline Naismith, a lady in her late sixties who had taught him to read and who he considered a trusted advisor, to accompany him, as he felt he would profit from having a companion with whom to discuss his discoveries. Adeline had also been, in a sense, rescued by Cassandra Match-Cohen, and indeed lived in the Fortescue Road house Cassandra owned and occupied with her husband Abraham.

It was the particulars of the travels that were preoccupying Tony's thoughts. Indeed, they took the majority of his mental activity when he, Moonbeam and Jolly were, as today, moving from one location to another and the roads were quiet.

Jolly barked, and Tony pulled on Moonbeam's bridle to hold her back at the beginning of an intersection, just as a hansom cab came barrelling down the cross street.

"Whoa! Whoa!" shouted the cabby, since the horse was moving at a rapid clip, but eventually slowed and stopped about a hundred yards down the road, in fact just before the promenade. Tony tied Moonbeam to a gas lamppost and jogged to the cab, where the cabby was checking on his clients.

“You all right, Mr. Camby,” Tony asked, as he was acquainted with the driver.

“Yeah. Some urchins decided to throw pebbles at the horse. If I find ’em they’ll get a taste of my whip.”

It seemed the passengers were not injured, though possibly a bit shaken by the experience. Tony returned to Moonbeam and they made their way to *Upton’s* yard, where he took an old sheet of towelling and dried Moonbeam as well as he could, finishing with her hooves. The towelling would need to be washed and hung to dry, then put back with others he kept handy for drying the animals, so Tony took it with him into the house part of the shop building. Jolly stayed in the stable. She had a small bed there in with Moonbeam, but also a mat beside Tony’s cot in the house. Today she opted for the stable.

“There you are, Tony,” Rebecca Upton greeted him. “Joseph’s just back too. I’m glad you’re in before dark on a day like today.”

“I’ll just wash this, then myself,” Tony said, heading for the scullery.

“Take the kettle, it’s not long boiled. No sense having to do everything in cold water.”

“Thanks, Mrs. Upton.”

When he came back from the scullery into the kitchen proper, Rebecca said “Tea in about twenty minutes. I’ve some mutton stew that’s been going since early this morning so the meat should be tender by now.”

“Good. I’ll welcome something hot inside. I’ve told Mrs. Naismith I’ll be by to see her tonight.”

“Out again? Take care you don’t catch cold. And make sure you’ve got your key. We might retire early rather than bother with light.”

“Before I go out, I’d better see if Joseph thinks he can do without me for a couple of weeks starting the end of April.”

“You’re taking a journey?”

“I want to learn about different places in the British Isles. Mr. Mortimer said it might be possible to have a little of the money from Ezekiel Crown’s estate for sensible purposes. Actually, I probably have enough myself, but a bit extra will allow for more comfort.”

“Do you think Valerie could handle Moonbeam if we need her and her cart?”

“I don’t see why not. Mr. McDowell might help out too, but his facial injuries tend to upset people.”

“Yes. The Crimea was very unkind to him, yet soldiers like him saved our bacon from the Cossacks, and he deserves better. But he and Valerie together might work. She’s good with clients, and he with the animals.”

“I’ll talk to him. He’s a good fellow, and seems to be finding a way of living. However, I need to sort out when and where we’ll be going. I’ve

invited Mrs. Naismith to accompany me. I think I'll learn more if I can talk to someone about what we're seeing."

"Better to have a friend with you, especially one who knows who you really are." Rebecca said.

* * *

Tea and biscuits were on the table, along with some newspaper pages.

Adeline Naismith said "I'm glad you saw this newspaper item too, Tony. I read it and also another item. The Art Treasures Exhibition starts on May 5, it says, but the admission will be half a crown for the first 10 days, as well as on Thursdays, but a shilling otherwise."

"That's a strange arrangement of prices. Why would anyone choose to go on Thursday?" Tony mused.

"Perhaps they expect Thursdays to be favoured by those wanting a less crowded exhibition. If we lived nearby, we could get a season's ticket, but they cost a guinea. That's several weeks' wages for most. They ask two guineas to include the two state ceremonial occasions on May 5, when Prince Albert will open it, and June 29, when the Queen will visit publicly. I suppose the public will want to see her, but she'll have her own private visit on the 30th."

"It would be interesting to see the Exhibition," Tony said. "If we were to arrange our journey so we could go there after the first 10 days, perhaps allowing two days since there are to be so many works to be displayed."

"I have a calendar here. Perhaps we could aim for May 25 and 26. That's a Monday and Tuesday. We could arrive on the Saturday or Sunday and leave on the Wednesday or Thursday, depending on our interest in Manchester apart from the Exhibition."

"I had hoped to travel in April, in order to be here when there are visitors wanting rides on the beach, but if we leave Manchester until last, we could come back on the 27th of May."

"That should be possible. If you want to see more of Manchester, we could even arrive on the Friday, May 22," Adeline said.

"And I believe we could get to Manchester from the Lake District quite easily by rail."

"Well, we have the end of our trip. Do you think we can get home in one day from Manchester?" Adeline asked.

"We will have to check, but I don't believe we can. It takes at least five hours from Manchester to London someone told me, and about two and a half hours from London to here, but of course we need to get across the city

and match the schedules. But we know we can get an hotel in London for one night. Or perhaps make a stop, for example in Birmingham.”

“Well, we have the end of our excursion. Now we need to plan the start and middle,” Adeline said. “But first, let us have some tea and biscuits.”

* * *

That evening, Tony and Adeline sketched out their itinerary. Putting a partial calendar on a piece of paper in pen and ink, they could pencil in tentative plans. They would aim to go to York, Durham, Carlisle, the Lake District, Manchester and Birmingham. Tony also wanted to see London, but to do this they decided to take a weekend in March, travelling up from Brighton to London on a Friday morning and coming home on Sunday night. Adeline had talked with Mary Yarrow about the time Mary and Cassandra stayed in Brown’s Hotel in 1851, and thought they might stay there if finances allowed.

Henry Mortimer had told Tony that the procedure for obtaining monies from the inheritance was to write to the trustees explaining the proposed amounts and their purpose, with expected benefits. Tony felt he would use some of his own monies, possibly as much as £15, and would need perhaps £15 more at the outside for the two excursions, and made a draft letter in pencil to show Henry.

\textit{Upton’s} Yard
Brighton

February 2, 1857

Messrs Dwyer and Mortimer, Solicitors
c/o Henry Mortimer, Esq.
Chorley Terrace
Brighton

Re: Request for funds from trusteeship of Antonia Crown

In accordance with the terms of the diocesan judgement on my inheritance, I am requesting £ 15 for the purpose of travel in England to widen my education. I hope to visit London for 2-3 days in March, and York, Durham, the Lake District, Manchester and Birmingham in May. In Manchester, I plan to attend the Art Treasures Exhibition. In addition

to the monies requested, I also intend to spend some of my own savings. I have asked Mrs. A. Naismith to accompany me, as I believe the companionship and additional perspective will enlarge my own learning, and plan to cover her direct expenses.

I would be obliged if you would inform me of your decision shortly, and remain, yours sincerely,

Antonia Crown,
commonly known as Tony Brown

Tony did not post this. Instead on Tuesday, February 3, he made a detour to Chorley Terrace near the end of the day and knocked on the door. Yolanda Karwowski, the cook and housekeeper, welcomed him and showed him into the office. In truth, Henry had seen him arrive and opened the office door.

“Hello, Tony. How are you?”

“I’m well, Mr. Mortimer – Henry. I came to show you a draft letter to ask for some money from the inheritance.”

“Well, let me take a quick look, and if needed we’ll make a few adjustments.”

Tony passed over the sheet of paper, and Henry took a few seconds to read it, then said

“This is very much how you should present a request. Bravo. However, I’ll suggest a few changes.

First, I believe that you will need some more ... er ... stylish clothing. I think at least a suit and a cloak or coat. Probably a new shirt or two and a tie. It will help you to fit in. As I recall, Mrs. Naismith has some decent attire, though if you are going to spend your own monies, I would direct them towards her needs, keeping a rather precise record of what you spend on the travel, accommodation and activities. In fact, one item of expenditure that should appear would be a notebook in which to record such expenditure, so that you may, should there be any query, present an accounting.”

“That does make sense. And I am ... er ... a bit ... ashamed ... I did not think of how my appearance might be important to being a part of the society in which we will be moving.”

“I am going to suggest that you ask for £15 for the entire year to improve your wardrobe. If you are careful, possibly looking for secondhand items, I think that will get you properly outfitted. I will suggest you ask for £30 to cover the travel, accommodation and activities. You need not spend all of

this, or not all in the activities already considered, but you may later in the year wish to do something else of a similar sort, and I believe you are not being unreasonable in your plans.”

“Thank you, ... Henry.”

“I’ll look forward to getting the finished letter tomorrow or the next day, and I will make sure Dwyer and I give you a quick response.”

* * *

Joshua and Rachel Goldman’s pawn shop was not far from Rebecca Upton’s second-hand furniture shop. Both premises had rear outbuildings with stalls for animals and for storage of a cart or other equipment. The Goldmans no longer often used the cart, as the pony, Moses, was almost 30 years old.

Since Jeremiah Quigley, an escaped American slave, had left for Upper Canada in the latter part of 1856, James McDowell was exercising Moses and spending some time at *Goldman’s*, but there was nobody who acted as a regular watchman and general servant. Rachel and Joshua had several times discussed hiring someone, and in the last few weeks had mentioned to their friends and associates that they were interested in finding somebody who would be suitable for both the security of the premises and assist with some household tasks. Rachel felt she could handle the cooking, but laundry, carpet beating, and sweeping were tasks she would gladly give to another.

On this rainy Friday, February 6, a quite tall young man came into the pawn shop soon after nine o’clock.

“Mr. Goldman. I believe you have a note from Mrs. Mortimer to say I would come to see you. I’m Ian Hoyle.”

“Yes. Mr. Hoyle. I understand you are interested in working for my wife and I.”

“Yes, sir.

I have been working for Astley’s the auctioneers in Lewes since I was twelve, and I liked the work. But two weeks ago, Mr. Astley’s nephew was given my job. I was told I wasn’t needed any more, and given notice. I’ve seen Mrs. Mortimer come to sales with the men from *Best Bonnet*, and asked her about a job.”

Joshua already knew the story. He also knew that Ian was the person who generally set out the lots at the sales, particularly the larger furniture pieces.

“Did Mrs. Mortimer tell you what we require?” Joshua asked.

“She said you needed someone to help around the shop and act as watchman, and to do household cleaning and laundry. I’ve been doing those things

for my family since Ma died when I was ten, but my brother Joe can take over now.”

“Did Astley’s provide room and board?”

“No. They paid 7 and 6 a week. That was it.”

“Let me suggest a four-week trial. We’re willing to pay you 4 shillings and give you bed and board. When we know how you fit into our activities, we can consider how you may earn more. To start with, there will be some adjustment needed to find what tasks should be done when.

Have you ever worked with horses or other animals.”

Ian replied “No, Mr. Goldman. I’m afraid I never had the chance.”

“We have a very old pony named Moses, but Mr. James McDowell exercises him, and he harnesses Moses to a gig he and Mr. Dan Dixon built using scrap. They use this to give outings to Angus Sinclair, who lost a leg in the Crimea. And Mr. McDowell, I should caution you, took a ball to the jaw and his face is ... well ... a shock if not expected. His speech is slurred, but he will write things down if you ask.

In any event, if you wish the job, I will introduce you to my wife and we will find you a place to sleep.”

Ian took the job and stayed on after the trial. His height and youthful strength were highly suitable to the watchman part of his role. Rachel’s food – a little different from the norm of English households of the time – was tasty and of sufficient quantity that he put on a few pounds.

* * *

As might be expected, Tony put the finished letter through Henry’s letter slot the very next morning. The following Monday, February 9, a formal letter was carried by Joseph to Tony. Joseph had accompanied Maud Mortimer to an estate sale that day in order to convey any purchases Maud made to their destination. That would be to Tom and Vera Soulton for refurbishment, to *Upton’s* for resale, or a client if they already had a request for a particular item.

The formal letter simply said what Henry had proposed to Tony, except that it included instructions for Tony to send a note giving Henry a couple of days advance notice of the amount of funds he would like of the allocated £45. In other words, it would not be necessary, nor sensible, to take all the money at once. Tony had just a cot and his seaman’s chest at Rebecca Upton’s house, a house attached to a busy shop and stable, so this was a sensible precaution.

Joseph also brought a note from Maud to come for tea and cake either Monday or Tuesday evening. As he had no business that Monday, he went

to Chorley Terrace that very night. Joseph was actually privy to the reason for the invitation, but Maud had sworn him to secrecy.

“Come in, come in and let us keep the cold out,” Yolanda said, welcoming Tony and Jolly. “Hello Jolly,” she said, scratching the dog behind her ears.

“Let me wipe her feet before we go in. People have the doormat, but she gets wet between her claws.” Tony had a cloth and cleaned Jolly’s paws.

They went into the parlour which was at the rear of the house, Henry having his office in the front. Maud was sitting with William, who would be two in May. Henry was in an armchair with a newspaper, which he put down, saying “Come in, come in and sit down. Here Jolly, come by me. Yolanda, bring some tea and cake and join us.”

Yolanda Karwowski was cook and housekeeper to Henry and Maud and had assisted at William’s birth. She had joined the household about two years before after first her husband and child died of the cholera, then her employer expired even before paying any of Yolanda’s wages. The employer had been a down-on-her-luck French countess, and the agent from France who came to settle the countess’ affairs came to Henry after noting his brass plate at the front door to sort out any legal matters.

Maud, it should be told, had escaped the Workhouse thanks to Cassandra Match, now Cohen, and had tumbled more or less by accident into trading in second-hand furniture. She had never learned cooking or, indeed, other household skills. On the other hand, she had a fine eye for bargains and for profitable items to purchase. When Henry had to deal with the demise of the countess, he and Maud were seeking a more permanent solution to meal preparation than the rather “catch as catch can” arrangements with some local women. Yolanda proved to be a good fit to their needs. However, with Maud’s background, their relationship was only nominally mistress and servant and much closer to colleagues. Thus, Yolanda ate with her employers and was welcomed into the parlour. If Henry and Maud needed privacy, they used the office or their bedroom, but such occasions were quite rare.

When the tea and cake – a light fruit cake – had been served, Maud said “I’m afraid I couldn’t help overhearing you and Henry the other evening when he said you should improve your wardrobe.”

“I had not thought of it, but Henry’s suggestion makes sense. Adeline told me that she was going to make a similar comment, and we are considering what we should both acquire, as well as what we should carry with us on our travels.”

“Well, I may be able to provide a partial solution,” Maud said.

At that moment, William started to fuss. Yolanda said, “Let me take Master William up and get him ready for bed, and you can come and say goodnight to him in about a quarter hour.”

This led to a certain amount of moving about the parlour, as William

wanted to say goodnight to his father, then Jolly and Tony. Finally, Yolanda carried him out.

Maud said “Now we can return to what I was about to say. Today Joseph and I went to an estate sale. While there, I saw a lot that was the clothing of a young man who apparently was in London for business and died of the cholera. I believe Joseph is not too different from you in size, though a little shorter perhaps. In any event, we got a number of items, all for a guinea. Actually, we had to pay a shilling for an old tea chest to put them in, as they were simply hanging on hangers on a rod.”

Henry said, “You’ve told Tony all this, but really you should be showing him. Shall we bring in the tea chest.”

“Oh, yes. We can see what might be useful, then set aside what you don’t want. Henry, bring along that pillowcase I put with the chest. We can use it for the discarded items or else for what Tony wants, whatever is the smaller quantity.”

Tony went with Henry, as the tea chest, though not particularly heavy, was awkward to move. They put it in the middle of the room. Jolly got up and sniffed, then went back to settle beside Henry’s chair.

Maud said “Henry, I think we should clear the table and take off the table covering so we have somewhere to set the items down. As yet we have not had a chance to get them cleaned or washed and it would be best they not touch fabrics.”

Tony said “Why don’t you say goodnight to William. Henry and I can finish our cups of tea while you do, then we can see what treasures you have found.”

“Yes, that would be best. Thank you, Tony.”

When Maud had left the room, Henry asked “I was also going to ask if you wanted some cash now. Possibly £5 or £10, which I can manage immediately.”

“Perhaps it will depend on how much Maud will want for anything I select.”

“Even if you double her investment, it will unlikely be an extravagance. Perhaps I may suggest I give you £5 tonight and whatever we agree for Maud can be settled by me directly, since it need not be paid tonight. However, I have set up an account book for your inheritance, and will retrieve it now, along with the money.”

Henry was gone about two minutes, re-entering the room at the same time as Maud. Henry said “Here are five sovereigns. I suspect you would prefer not to have a £5 note.”

“True,” Tony answered. “Maud, have you an idea what you would want for the clothing?”

“You know me well enough, I think. I’ve expended 22 shillings so would

like to clear that and have a small profit. However, I'm hopeful you will find some bargains that easily allow for that."

"We had better see what there is," Tony said.

The first item at the top of the chest was a Mackintosh raincoat. Tony tried it on – he had arrived wearing his pea jacket and cap, but had removed these and was now in a shirt and pullover.

Henry said, "It is a little large, but not excessively so, especially if you were wearing a full three-piece suit."

"Yes. I'm sure I can use it," Tony said.

"Lay it at the far end of the table. We'll use this end for the things you don't want."

The next item, or rather group of items, was a three-piece suit.

"Oh dear. We should have thought of a screen so you could try on shirts and trousers," Maud said.

At that moment, Yolanda returned. "Master William fell asleep quickly. I heard your last comment, Mrs. Mortimer. Mr. Brown could change in the kitchen. I will draw all the curtains, then return here."

Tony said "Let me try the waistcoat and jacket. If they do not fit me, the trousers are unnecessary."

"That's true," Maud admitted.

Tony took off his pullover. He had on a shirt with a vest underneath that camouflaged the evidence that Tony might be Antonia. He put on the waistcoat, which turned out to fit quite well, if possibly a little looser than was common. Henry held up the jacket, which was quite long, down to mid-thigh. This too, fit quite well. Many young men would choose a tighter fit, but only a discerning eye would find fault with how Tony carried the waistcoat and jacket.

"I think you should try the trousers. There are two pairs."

Tony removed the jacket but left the waistcoat, and took the two pairs of trousers through to the kitchen, shutting the door. Yolanda had left a gas light lit there. He set the trousers on a chair and took off his shoes. Unbuttoning the waistcoat, and after taking off his work trousers, he pulled on one of the pairs of the suit pants. He had to look carefully to figure out the fastenings of the waistband, but eventually worked out the organization of buttons and hooks, fastening them, then the buttons of the fly. The trousers seemed to fit but felt strange after the comfort of well-worn work pants. Doing up the waistcoat again and putting on his shoes, he returned to the parlour.

"Well, the fit is remarkable," Yolanda said. "I think a very small shortening of the trousers at the hem is in order, since you are wearing the waist very high."

Indeed, Tony had pulled the trousers up so the cuffs would not drag on the floor.

Maud said “Yolanda, where is the pin-cushion? We can pin up the cuff and see how well they look then.”

Some ten minutes went by while Tony stood on a chair and Maud and Yolanda pinned up the cuff. It really needed pressing to make the line correct, but shortening the legs of the trousers by about three-quarters of an inch allowed the waistband to sit at the right level that the trousers now felt, and looked, comfortable. With the waistcoat and jacket, the whole suit came together, though the shirt – a collarless workers shirt – was of course out of place.

Tony asked, “Is there a shirt and tie?”

Henry removed some items from the chest and put them on the table. A couple of layers down, he found a white shirt, which he handed to Tony. Further down there was a black tie. Tony returned to the kitchen and put on the shirt, which possibly was again a little on the large side, with the sleeves in particular being long. He came back to the parlour to ask Henry or Maud to help with the tie.

The entire outfit gave Tony an air of poise.

Henry said “You look remarkably well in that suit. You will have no difficulty fitting in at the theatre or concert hall.”

“Is there a mirror that will let me see?” Tony asked.

It turned out there was, but in Maud and Henry’s bedroom, so Maud took Tony up, leading the way with an oil lamp. When they returned Henry asked,

“Do you agree that the suit fits you well?”

“Yes. It looks very well on me. We will need to agree a price for Maud. Also I will need some cuff-links.

Can we see what else there might be?”

Maud said “We should go through what there is, then let you try on the things that are of interest. The suit was, however, the main motivation for my purchase. There is, in fact, another, but not as stylish.”

There were two more shirts, several pairs of socks, a pullover, a pair of gloves, a hat, now slightly crumpled from being in the chest. There was another, but less fashionable, suit, some men’s drawers and undervests, as well as a pair of shoes.

“The shoes are too big for me, as are the gloves,” Tony said.

“We can probably get rid of them to a second-hand dealer,” Maud said. “And I’d suggest we launder the underclothes then use them for rags. You’ll probably want to carefully wash the suits and iron them. Does the hat fit?”

It did not.

Henry said “I’ll suggest you buy some dress shoes, a pair of walking shoes or light boots – the latter could be worn in your daily work as well – a pair of gloves and a hat. Possibly a cane, which could be useful if there are street brigands. You may also want a wallet or purse.”

Tony asked “Maud. Would two guineas be appropriate for everything but the hat, shoes, gloves and underwear?”

“No, no. That’s too much.”

There was a short to and fro, but eventually Maud accepted £2.

Henry said “Here is the notebook I have acquired to record all transactions on your inheritance, Tony. You will see that it already has recorded the transaction that transfers Ezekiel’s estate to your account and I have attached Dwyer’s report on Ezekiel’s estate. There is also, as you will see, a rent payment on the house in your favour, but also a payment for some maintenance and rates. Now we will add £5 payment to you for the cash, and £2 payable to Maud for the clothing. I will write those down and I will get your signature against each to show you have received the money or goods, though I expect you will need to come with Moonbeam for the chest, as there is very little of the contents you are not taking.”

Maud said “Tony. Why do you not take the lot? We’ll wrap the items you don’t want in newspaper on top and you can dispose of them and buy me tea and cakes sometime when we are on a buying mission.”

This resolution was generally agreed upon and it avoided leaving things for Yolanda to have to put somewhere.

* * *

Tony and Moonbeam came by the next afternoon to collect the chest and took it to Fortescue Road. Adeline was there, as she usually was, but Martha Murphy, who was nursemaid to Katherine, Cassandra and Abraham’s daughter, helped move the chest down into the kitchen.

“Oh my. You’ve quite a collection of clothes, Tony,” Adeline said.

“Indeed, for £2 Maud sold me the lot.”

“Look at this raincoat, Martha. And this suit.”

“Maud thought the suits should be washed carefully,” Tony said.

“Yes. Brushed and very gently washed and dried carefully. Don’t want any moths or other insects. And properly pressed with a hot iron and steam.”

“There’s some items that don’t fit. The shoes, gloves and hat. Maud suggested the underwear be laundered and then used for rags.”

“Probably best,” Martha said. “Though these look hardly worn. If they were boiled hard, they’d be safe to wear I think.”

Adeline said, “Next washday we’ll do that, then we can decide after.”

Tony asked “Adeline. Do you have a raincoat? I know you often use that quite small cloak-like wrap when it’s raining.”

“Nothing particular, like this Mackintosh.”

“Then before we travel, we should find you one. And we should ensure you have something suitable to wear when I wear the better suit, for example, should we go to the theatre as we have mentioned.”

“I’m not sure I’ve the resources ...”

“But I do. Henry Mortimer suggested I ask for £15 to improve my wardrobe over the year, when I was going to spend some of my own money. Since my own funds are now released, we will make sure you and I present well.”

“Oh. Thank you, Tony. You’ll make this old woman very happy.”

“I think my travels and education will profit from your company. I don’t fancy going places and seeing things on my own.”

“We’d better also look for a carpet bag or two to carry our things,” Adeline said.

* * *

Before he collected the tea chest, Tony had stopped at a stationers and bought an attractive bound notebook for sixpence. He already had his commission book in an oilcloth pouch with a couple of pencils and added the notebook to that. He would, that evening, label in ink the new notebook **Legacy Expenditure** with his name and address below. The first page was

Amounts withdrawn			
Date	Description	Amount	Balance
1857, Feb 9	Advance from Mr. Mortimer	5 / 0 / 0	
1857, Feb 9	To purchase clothing Mrs. Mortimer	2 / 0 / 0	

He left the back of that page blank, then started another

Amounts expended			
Date	Description	Amount	Total
1857, Feb 9	To purchase clothing Mrs. Mortimer	2 / 0 / 0	2 / 0 / 0
1857, Feb 10	This notebook to record expenditure	6	2 / 0 / 6

He made a mental note to acquire another oilcloth pouch and some pencils for this new notebook.

Tony carried the unwanted shoes, gloves and hat with him on his rounds. They were of the right style, so he could show them to appropriate merchants but seek his own size. He was also looking now for a wallet and/or a purse.

In daily work, he was also used to having a belt for his trousers, so had asked Adeline if loops could be added to the trousers of the suits he had acquired. A new, more elegant, belt was a possible acquisition, though not critical at this juncture.

It had only been yesterday, Tuesday February 10, 1857, that he had taken the chest to Fortescue Road, but already other ideas began to percolate. The itinerary now had a structure. Actually it was itineraries, for Tony had suggested that he would like to spend the weekend of his 18th birthday – Sunday March 15 – in London. They would go up by train on the Saturday and come home on the Monday, staying two nights at Brown's Hotel. This would also give them a trial of their travelling.

For the larger May excursion, the itinerary was now tentatively set.

Mon 11 Brighton to Peterborough
Tue 12 York
Wed 13 York
Thu 14 York
Fri 15 Newcastle
Sat 16 Newcastle
Sun 17 Newcastle
Mon 18 Carlisle
Tue 19 Carlisle
Wed 20 Lake District
Thu 21 Lake District
Fri 22 Lake District to Manchester
Sat 23 Manchester; Could go to Liverpool too
Sun 24 Manchester
Mon 25 Art Treasures Exhibition
Tue 26 Art Treasures Exhibition
Wed 27 Birmingham
Thu 28 travel home to Brighton

Tony was moving some bolts of cloth and other items from the Station to *Bartlett and Jones* haberdashery, of which Cassandra Cohen was the director. His thoughts were, however, swirling around the various needs for his travels. He suddenly had the realization that, given the need to be on time for trains, a watch would be extremely useful. This realization struck so quickly that he nearly stopped in the street, which would have upset Moonbeam, who had set routines that did not include either speeding up nor slowing down, nor stopping unless for an emergency or by plan.

Fortunately, Tony caught himself and continued to their destination, unloaded, then, having an hour or so before the next commission, went to Mr. Goldman's pawn shop.

“Mr. Brown. Good to see you. It has been a couple of weeks and I wondered how you were getting on.”

Tony related how he'd been planning some travels to widen his education.

Goldman said “That will hopefully go well, and I approve of your taking Mrs. Naismith with you, as I believe both of you will benefit by the company. And, let me guess why you may be here.”

“Am I that transparent?” Tony said.

“Not really, but I believe you have not travelled much, if at all, by train.”

“That is true. I have never yet been on one.”

“And they leave and arrive on a strict schedule. So, you are likely to want to be on time in order not to miss your journey.”

“Yes. That is why I came to ...”

“See if I had a watch, much like our Mr. Tom Soulton,” Goldman completed Tony's sentence.

“Indeed you have guessed my purpose.”

“Today I have nothing available, but I will keep my eye out for you. There is one – it is perhaps not as good as that Tom acquired, but will likely serve – that comes available if not redeemed in two weeks. I am fairly sure that the client will not have the money to pay off the pledge.”

“What would it cost me?”

“I think 25 shillings would cover my costs and a small profit. Would that work, assuming it is available? I sold Mr. Soulton the watch he has for a pound, but it needed a lot of cleaning as the silver was badly tarnished, which he did himself.”

“Yes. I could manage 25 shillings. Could I see it to get an idea of what it looks like. I'm afraid it is like trains, I've never had the use of one.”

Goldman went to a wall of small drawers that were arranged by date and opened one, searched inside and pulled out a pocket watch with chain.

“I'd better wind it, set the time, and make sure it keeps that time. No use having a watch that lets you be late.”

“I like it,” Tony said. “A simple, clean design.”

“Yes. It has none of the fancy engraving. Actually, that is to your advantage for the price. The decorations add to your cost, but not to the value as a timepiece.”

“Mr. Mortimer suggested that I might also look for a walking stick. He thought it might be helpful if there were rough people about.”

“I might have one or two, but you may well want to talk to Tom Soulton and have one made. You likely want something that is less a walking stick than a sturdy cane. He could make it more or less to your specifications unless you wanted something fancy. The walking sticks I have are mostly the plain ones with curved top, or else quite lightweight with fancy tops, and in one case hollow to hold brandy or other liquor.”

“Exactly. I want something unobtrusive but serviceable as a walking stick when I might walk some of the slopes as in the Lake District, but also solid enough to serve for my defence should the need arise.”

“And you will have Mrs. Naismith to look after as well. Still, you did well last year with the poker when the Souldons were robbed.”

In March, 1855, Tony, Vera and Tom had caught burglars trying to rob them. Unfortunately, one had clubbed and killed Tom and Vera’s dog, but Tom had managed to spear him with the handle end of a broom and Tony whacked another across the kneecap with a poker and likely broke the bone. The man had pulled Tony down, but Vera was there with a kitchen knife at his throat and two of the men were captured for the constables. The third was caught later when trying to return to a hideout and recover some of the stolen goods and he was chased to the Chain Pier and caught.

Tony simply added “That was actually nearly two years ago. Time flies.”
“That it does, Mr. Brown. That it does.”

* * *

Given his preoccupations, Tony decided to go directly to Souldons’ yard. He had not seen Tom and Vera for nearly two weeks. For some reason Joseph and Annabelle had done the deliveries and collections of furniture.

As Tony arrived at the cottage and workshop, there was a gentle barking between Jolly and her sibling, Fuzzy, who Tom and Vera had adopted. While many dogs would be highly excited, these two simply went and lay down beside Fuzzy’s shelter next to the back door of the cottage. By this time, Vera had come out of the workshop.

“Hello Tony. We’ve not seen you for a while.”

“I know. For some reason, Joseph has had the visits here, so I thought I should come by and catch up. Also, I have a possible commission for you and Tom.”

“You need some furniture?”

“No. I’m planning to use a bit of money I have to travel a little. Mr. Mortimer – Henry – has suggested I should improve my wardrobe so I will fit in at the theatre or similar places. Mrs. Naismith is coming with me for companionship and to help me increase my knowledge. But it was also suggested a good walking stick, stout enough to serve against some of the less savoury street people, could be useful. Mr. Goldman has some he thought are too plain or too lightweight. One even was a sort of flask for brandy.”

Tom, who was coming out of the workshop, said “I think we could come up with something suitable. In fact, just wait here a minute or go with Vera and start the kettle, and I’ll show you an idea.”

Five minutes later, Tom came into the kitchen with a rather tarnished lump of brass.

“It’s a brass door-knocker in the shape of an owl. It’s perched on a branch, but I think if I cut off the edges of the perch, it will serve as the top of a cane, especially if I mount a piece of birch behind that is rounded so it acts as a good handle. Do you want it as a true walking stick too?”

“I did think it might be helpful climbing the sides of the valleys in the Lake District or similar excursions.”

“Should be good for that. Let me look into what we have around. I think I’ve got a suitable ferrule for the foot, and possibly a strap you could slip over your wrist to allow both your hands free, though the cane would hang down.”

“Tom. You’ve got it half made already,” Vera chided. “And that brass looks horrible.”

“It’ll clean up fine. Give me a bit of the salt and soda polish from under the sink and I’ll show you.”

Vera fetched an old cup with a broken handle and a moist rag. Tom started to clean a portion of the owl, which began to shine almost immediately. Tony and Vera nodded when they saw it, and Tom then set it aside for now.

“How much would you charge?” Tony asked. “It’s not that I begrudge the expense, but I need to keep track of the outflow.”

“10 shillings assembled but unfinished. A pound all done. That would cover our time and materials and some profit. The finishing of a cane needs some good black lacquer, I think.”

“I can manage £1. It might seem an extravagance, but it should last me many years. Also it will be unique.”

Vera and Tom nodded their agreement as Vera passed a plate of biscuits.

* * *

It took Tony a fortnight more to find shoes, gloves and a hat. The shoes he got at a cobbler who had been making a pair for a man who absconded from town to avoid paying some debts, leaving the shoes behind. The cobbler had not yet joined the upper to the sole. He thought he could sell on the shoes Tony had and that he could adjust the unfinished pair to Tony’s feet. A pair of walking boots were found in a different shoe shop. Together these items set Tony back 30 shillings plus the shoes that did not fit.

The hat and gloves were traded for ones that fit for half a crown. Tony even bargained and got the new hat steamed and blocked. Steam would probably kill any lice or other passengers.

Adeline asked her dressmaker friends and the ladies of the *Brighton Ladies' Emporium* and within a few days found a cloak that was, if not made of true Mackintosh cloth, was of a material that would shed the rain. It was clearly meant to be functional rather than decorative, and they got it for 12 shillings.

Rebecca Upton was helpful too. She asked Tony what he would do for luggage.

"Oh. I hadn't thought, though Mrs. Naismith did mention carpet bags. We will need to carry our spare clothing and footwear, as well as other items we might need."

"I saw a damaged carpet bag the other day with some furnishings. I'll see if it's still available."

Rebecca did better than that. She found there were two bags. One was damaged, but she knew upholstery, and found some material to effect a repair with a couple of patches. The other was simply very dirty. Tony and Joseph spent an hour or so beating much of the dirt out of it. Normally such an item would not be washed, but Rebecca told them to put it in slightly warm soapy water and work out any stains, then rinse several times in clear water. They let it dry for almost a week. Thus, Tony and Adeline had luggage.

Tony knew that March 15 was his birthday and he wanted to celebrate it with Adeline in London. But he did not recognize that his friends had such affection for him. Indeed, for some reason, this was one of his blind spots. His friends knew the Ides of March would bring his 18th birthday. While not marking his legal coming of age, it was an important milestone and they wanted to make it memorable for him. Thus Rebecca and Valerie added a small leather purse to the repaired carpet bag, as well as a brass tag that was fitted to it with a chain engraved with

Tony Brown
Brighton

Furthermore, as Tony went to collect the cane, Vera said "We've decided it's a birthday present. You've helped us out a number of times."

"That's too generous," Tony said. "It's even got my name burned into the top knob."

Indeed, there was a round knob on top of the shaft. This was made of varnished birch, with the owl's face fastened to the front of the knob. Tom had cleverly put screws through the eyes and a brass band around the juncture of the shaft and knob was brazed to the owl's perch. A brass ferrule surrounded the bottom of the shaft and held a disc of rubber. The shaft was a glossy black and the owl now shone brightly. Tony tried the cane. It was just the right height for his hand and there was a ring attached to the back

of the knob with a leather loop about 10 inches across. Yes. If he slipped the loop over his wrist, the cane would be out of the way should he need both hands free.

“It’s lovely. Thank you.”

“You’ll have to come back and tell us all about London,” Vera said. “I’ve been there, but each person finds their own version of the city and I hope you find a good one.”

“Thank you Vera. And you too, Tom.”

* * *

That night at Fortescue Road Tony was invited to dinner, but when he arrived Cassandra said, tongue in cheek, “But you have to dress for dinner,” which led to a general applause. Thus, Tony had to put on the full outfit from top to toe.

“Oh my, you do look the young gentleman, Tony. And that cane is special.”

“Tom made it for me, though I am certain Vera did the polishing and finishing.”

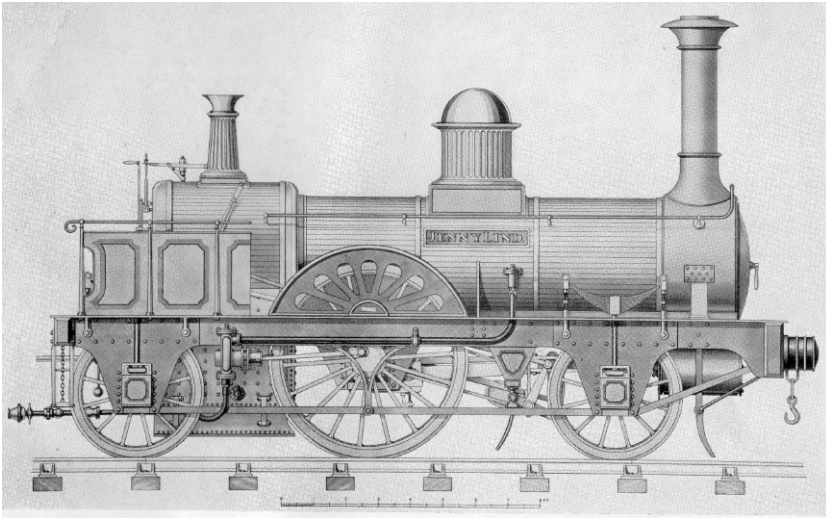
“We need not fear being taken for provincials,” Adeline said. “By the way, I’ve written to *Brown’s Hotel* and I’ve asked them if they can book tickets for the Sadler’s Wells Theatre for the Saturday evening performance. Samuel Phelps is supposed to perform, but as yet I’m not sure which of the Shakespeare plays. He has resurrected the texts from the First Folio rather than use the adaptations that were introduced later.”

* * *

Tony slept at Fortescue Road on the night of March 13. Neither he nor Adeline felt anxious about Friday the 13th. They wanted to breakfast well, but leave quite early for the Station, which was only a few hundred yards away, so they could walk. Tony had purchased second-class train tickets in advance.

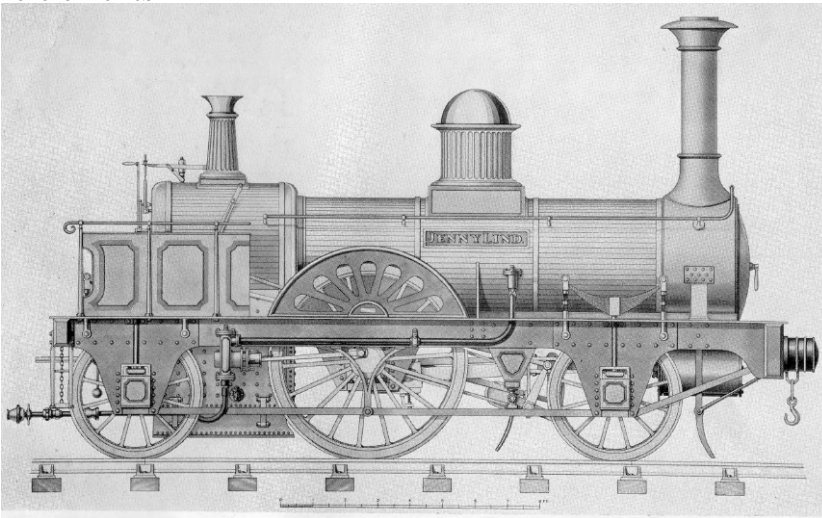
Tony wore the second suit Maud had found, as he did not want to risk the better one, given the potential for coal smuts, dirty seats, or clumsy passengers. Adeline also had opted for a sensible travel dress, but had her cloak, just as Tony had his Mackintosh.

Both were quite excited getting on the train, though for Tony the novelty was especially stimulating. However, he wanted to maintain an appearance of calm, both for himself and Adeline. They were early enough that they



Jenny Lind class locomotive

easily found seats in an appropriate compartment. Tony noticed, before they stepped into the carriage, that the locomotive was one that Timothy Lester, a local newspaper reporter, had said was of the Jenny Lind class. These were designed by the London and Brighton's engineer John Chester Craven. Tony wondered why the designer had chosen to leave the fireman and driver out in the open. He recalled the late January day when he'd returned from a commission with Moonbeam and her cart along roads away from the Front to avoid the wind and wet. The railwaymen would have an effective wind from the movement of the locomotive and would be exposed to the elements.



The novelty of the train was repeated when they arrived at London Bridge Station and they engaged a hansom cab. *Brown's Hotel* was on Albermarle Street and over three miles away. Adeline said "It's been over a decade and a half since I've been in London. I wonder if I'll remember things."

Tony had, in fact, purchased a *Bradshaw's Guide* for the train times and had found a rather tattered *Strangers Guide to London* from 1829. However, it did have a map and he opened it to follow their route. Somewhere he had learned that the fare would be 8d per mile, rounded up to the nearest half mile. Three and a half miles would be 2 shillings and 4 pence, and when they arrived at the hotel, he had a half-crown and a threepenny piece, which the cabby seemed happy to accept.

To Adeline he said, "Remind me to record the cab fares. It will be easy to forget them, but I believe I should have a careful record for Mr. Mortimer and Mr. Dwyer."

"Yes. There is no sense in omitting legitimate expenses," Adeline replied.

The reception at the hotel was also a novelty to Tony and likely also to Adeline, since she had never stayed in an establishment quite as august as *Brown's*. Nevertheless the staff were polite and if they suspected the class from which Tony and Adeline came they made no show of it.

They also made no reaction to a young man and an older lady sharing a private room. Tony was asked to sign the register and to list "accompanying guests". He simply wrote "Mrs. A. Naismith". If asked, they would answer that Adeline was an aunt who had looked after Tony since his youth. Apart from the familial description, this was, of course, true. However, the staff seemed indifferent to their relationship.

A man was detailed to show them their room. Before they left the reception desk, however, Tony had asked if the hotel had managed to acquire theatre tickets for them. The answer was positive, and the clerk presented an envelope.

"Would you like payment now, or with our final bill?" Tony asked.

"It is recorded on your account, Mr. Brown. 17 / 6 for two tickets plus our commission of half a crown."

"Thank you. We appreciate the service.

May we also arrange for tea – I assume there are sandwiches with it – for half past four so that we may take a cab to the theatre in good time."

"Certainly sir. And I will ensure there is a cab available. I believe the curtain is at half-past seven, and the *Sadler's Wells* is almost four miles depending on the route, so I will suggest a quarter past six. That will, unfortunately, probably mean you will be rather early, but we have had disappointed clients who were delayed by crowded streets."

In the corridor before their room the porter pointed out the water closet. Such facilities were, apparently, found only in better hotels and had only been introduced in the last decade. Tony had another thrupenny bit ready for the man, though he was not sure if this was sufficient. It was, however, accepted without apparent offence.

Having been shown to their room and the porter dismissed, Tony said "I'll write down those expenses right away. I'm thinking we will want to allow more than I expected for cabs and tips."

"In part that goes with travelling above Third Class and taking cabs and staying in nice hotels, but I believe you should be comfortable in such surroundings." Adeline said. "Excuse me while I visit the water closet."

In that it was now just after noon, our friends had to decide how to use their time. They had, in fact, already decided that they would sally forth in the neighbourhood, find a public house or café for some lunch, and return before half-past three to change and rest before tea. They could, of course, have found lunch in the hotel, but thought the tariff higher than necessary. Tea would be half a crown each though Tony did not begrudge that. Adeline got less than that per week for her Fortescue Road duties, which were for only a fraction of the day, and she got other commissions from the *Brighton Ladies Emporium* and other tasks and teaching she undertook. But today's expenses were in London and in an upscale hotel, so the charges were expected. Moreover, it was only for this weekend.

Brown's was nicely situated for Green Park and St. James' Palace. Having found some food and drink in an unassuming public house, they entered the park and made a promenade towards Buckingham Palace, then west to the Wellington Arch and across into Hyde Park. Tony noticed Adeline was tiring, so they only skirted the edge of this green space, then turned back into Curzon Street to return to the hotel. Tony found the Mayfair streets interesting, but thought that Moonbeam would find the bustle and noise distressing. Indeed, he found his own reaction to his surroundings was one of mild anxiety.

* * *

The beds in the room were comfortable. Adeline had the double bed and Tony the single. They had returned to the hotel at about 11 p.m., which was much later than the usual bedtime for either of them. With careful undressing so they could hang their good clothes, they were abed before midnight.

As they were preparing for bed, Adeline said "Tony, I must thank you for bringing me with you on this visit to London. I have only once been to the theatre before. This was a very special evening for me."

“With everything so new, and with the need to behave to match my clothes, I am very glad you are with me. Even the nightgown is new to me. Normally I sleep in my singlet and drawers except when it is very cold.”

“You have much to get used to. But I must say that this evening nobody could have faulted your appearance as a young gentleman. And your behaviour was fine.”

“Mainly I watched others and kept quiet. Everything feels new.”

“Do you find your new suits comfortable?” Adeline asked.

“Yes. They seem to fit me well. The day suit, as I think of it, has a looser fit, but neither are too tight, especially the waistcoat of the more formal suit I wore tonight. It would be uncomfortable across the front otherwise.”

“It is fortunate you are quite small in the chest.”

“The monthly visit is still a great nuisance.”

“Since I told you of it I have been remiss in not asking if you needed any help. How are you managing that problem?”

“I learned of a T bandage, which works simply enough, though I need to ensure enough clean rags. But Mrs. Cohen showed me how to make tampons and I always have a couple in an oilcloth bag about my person, along with a few clean rags.”

“I had heard some women talk of that method, but never tried it myself.”

“Unfortunately, the monthly visit is perhaps the most awkward obstacle to my choice of life,” Tony admitted.

“Do you ever wish to wear female clothing?”

“You must remember I have not ever worn such. It would feel very foreign I think.”

“Yes. And you now walk and stand as a young man does. That, I think, is a large part of living as a man. But do you think you will want to continue thus throughout your life?”

“I don’t know surely, but though I can appreciate the value of a partnership – a marriage – since I see Henry and Maud and Tom and Vera, and also the Cohens and the Yarrows, I know I would lose my livelihood as a donkey man.”

“Yes. And that is a job you do well. Though now you have some expectations. Will being a donkey man bring enough income to fit your station as the owner of a house and some monies?”

“I am giving that some thought. I like the work with Moonbeam or Annabelle. It could be that I encounter some other young people who have been abandoned and I can teach them to do the sort of work I do. That could enlarge the revenue of my business. Whether that is possible I do not know.”

Adeline answered “You have to make enough money in doing so to cover expenses and wages.”

“Yes. I will have to carefully work out the costs and revenues.”

“Can the donkeys compete with horses and carts?” Adeline asked.

“It is clear that horses are more common, but I think the donkeys carry or pull at least as much for their size, and they are, I believe, much easier to work with, despite the common belief that they are stubborn. It may be that they demand to be a part of a team with their driver and not simply at his whim. I’ve never found Moonbeam difficult. Look how she followed my instructions to help rescue Miss Crouch.”

“Indeed. Both of you acquitted yourselves well.

But perhaps we had better sleep. Though I don’t plan to rise early.”

* * *

The rest of the weekend was spent as tourists. There were now some horse-drawn omnibuses, indeed the *London General Omnibus Company* had started operating in January, and they took these to go to the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, then Fleet Street and St. Pauls, and the Tower of London.

Having talked to Cassandra Cohen and Mary Yarrow, they sought out a curry house for their dinner on Sunday, finding they enjoyed the meal very much, though it did result in some perspiration from the spiciness.

On Monday, they planned to return to Brighton on the last, or 6:30 p.m. train, but arranged to leave their valises at the hotel until the afternoon. They spent the morning in the British Museum then went to Regents Park to the Zoo. In both locations they realized there was far too much for the time they had allocated to these institutions, even though their lunch was a quick pork pie and ale in a public house. However, not wishing to miss their train, they recovered their luggage around four o’clock and took a cab to the area of the Station, where they found a chop house and enjoyed a decent meal of roast beef.

* * *

Tony found he could not stay awake on the homeward train journey. The motion and clickety-clack of the wheels was soporific. He put his hat on the rack and wedged himself in a corner. Adeline took the opposite corner and there was just one other passenger in their compartment, which nominally seated eight. He did, however, find he woke when the train stopped at the scheduled stations, though he found his thoughts drifted, as if he was semi-conscious. In this state, he found himself dreaming about a young gentleman,

which he realized was himself, standing in front of a stable that had a number of donkeys and carts. There was a modest but well-kept house, where through a Dutch door he could see a young woman working in the kitchen. What was this place?

At that moment a train passed in the other direction with its whistle sounding, and his reverie was suddenly halted. Adeline had been woken too. Realizing Tony had just woken as well, she said, “We tired ourselves, but I feel our excursion would be difficult to improve upon.”

“Indeed. I’m very satisfied with all we saw and did.”

The other passenger was a man of likely forty or so. He had been eyeing Tony’s cane, and said “Sir, I have been noting your most interesting cane. May I ask where you purchased it?”

“Actually it was made for me by Mr. Tom Soulton of *Soultons’ Furniture Repair and Restoration*. He has a great ingenuity and can make or repair many items. However, though I was prepared to pay for it, he and his wife – who participates in their work – gave it to me as a birthday present.”

“But how did he make the owl?”

“He found an old brass door-knocker and modified it to fit the birch knob he carved to attach to the cane. Mr. Soulton and his wife are very talented. If you wish, I can give you the address of their workshop, though I will caution that I believe this is the only walking stick they have so far made, and as I mentioned, it was a gift rather than a commission.”

“And a splendid gift it is. I believe it would be worth my while to at least talk to Mr. Soulton, so I will welcome the address. Thank you.”

* * *

Though it was not particularly late when the train arrived in Brighton, our two friends were tired, as they expected to be. Therefore, it had been pre-arranged that Tony would sleep at Fortescue Road, where they arrived around nine o’clock. James McDowell, the former soldier who had taken a ball to the jaw in the Crimea, had to some extent become the keeper of the kitchen, in that he ensured the fire in the stove which was also the boiler was kept going and even did much of the cooking. His injuries caused some shock to many, and his speech was difficult to understand, so he sometimes had to resort to a notepad he kept handy in a pocket. However, at Fortescue Road he had found acceptance and purpose. Next door, in number 23, his patrons Captain David Fraser and his wife Angela ran an informal day school to provide practical education to those of modest resources. They had taken in James and another injured soldier, Angus Sinclair, who had lost a leg in the Crimea. Angus helped with the teaching, while James did practical work

at Fortescue Road and with Joshua Goldman, especially in taking care of Joshua's pony, Moses.

Martha Murphy, the nursemaid for Katherine, Cassandra and Abraham Cohen's infant daughter, was in the kitchen to fetch some hot water. She said "There you are, Mrs. Naismith, Mr. Brown. Mrs. Cohen asked me to tell Mr. Brown that she will see him at breakfast and if he has time would welcome a few minutes to talk with him."

Tony was not apprehensive about Cassandra's suggestion. She took an interest in the people who came into her sphere of activity, though often had information that could be helpful or lead to profitable enterprise. Given all the new experiences of the past few days, Tony was ready to sleep, and was glad of the cot offered, and fell asleep immediately.

* * *

As the early breakfast dishes were being cleared, Cassandra asked "Do you have a few minutes to tell me how you are doing, Tony?"

"Of course, Mrs. Cohen. I was careful to not plan too many commissions for today."

"At breakfast we heard about your London visit – especially from Adeline – but that was about the things you saw and the play you went to. You were in new situations and your clothes and appearance would not suggest that you are a carter. On the other hand, when I saw you in the suit the other night, I thought that your appearance accorded with your inheritance. Not many people get to choose their social class. I wondered how you found the experience."

"I've been happy as a donkey-man, but in London I passed for a young middle-class gentleman. I know how to be a donkey-man and I like the life. However, if I want to put my inheritance to work, I will probably have to be more like the young gentleman. I actually found the play most affecting. I suspect that I would prefer to go to plays looking like a gentleman rather than a carter."

"A lot to think about?"

"Yes."

"I thought that might be the case, which was a part of my reason for asking to talk. On top of which you live as a man while underneath you are a young woman. Indeed much to deal with."

"My mother was about my age when she married. I find that somewhat difficult to accept as real."

"I was younger than you when I married," Cassandra said.

“But ... ” Tony was at a loss for words. Cassandra had revealed this part of her history to very few of her circle.

“We eloped to Gretna Green when I was 17. He died four days later of cholera in Glasgow. My father disowned me and I was forced to make my own way in the world. While I know I have abilities – more than most men or women I believe – I was still very lucky. Even more, I’ve been able to help others while doing well for myself, which gives me great satisfaction. It is different from your path, but I believe I have had to ponder who I am and who I wish to become. You will no doubt have to do the same.”

“I’ve had some ... I can’t really say thoughts, more like dreams or hopes that I might be able to use the inheritance when it is released to me to do some good. As yet I’ve no ideas how that may happen.”

“Give yourself time. You have friends who will listen and ask questions. That includes me and Abraham – Mr. Cohen.”

“Thank you. I very much appreciate how much you’ve done for me. I’d still be a street urchin, if I were even still alive, had you and Tom not found me with Annabelle that night.”

“Not to mention that you did a lot for yourself in how you searched for your own history. And also how you run your own business with Moonbeam.”

“Moonbeam also listens to me and as I’ve told Adeline, her answers are always appropriate.”

Cassandra laughed, but said “I laugh, but there is much to be said for having an audience such as Moonbeam. She gives you a chance to voice your ideas and I’m sure that she understands much more than we will ever know.”

* * *

In January and February, as he walked with Moonbeam, Tony’s thoughts had been of travels and learning. Now, in late March, his preoccupations drifted more to the more distant future. The plans for travel in May were still present, but now ideas of how he might live and work were often in the back of his mind. Mingled with these were a cloudy and ethereal sense that others should benefit by whatever choices he made. He would not follow Uncle Ezekiel’s road.

The newspapers and magazines brought home the uncomfortable facts that lives were often broken by events or decisions beyond the control of those harmed. In February, the Lundhill Colliery explosion at Wombwell had killed nearly 200 miners. Early in March, France and Britain had declared war on China. Like most of the general population, Tony did not have any real feeling for the justification for hostilities against the Chinese. The arguments about trade, particularly in opium, were unconvincing and the

injuries of Captain Fraser, Angus Sinclair and James McDowell declaimed against war. Still, there were many ordinary people who seemed to feel that following the Union Jack was right and proper, no matter who carried the flag nor their direction.

On April 2, a Thursday, Tony was delivering some cloth and other items to *Bartlett and Jones* when he met Rev. Wagner, vicar of St. Paul, walking in the opposite direction.

“Good morning, Mr. ... Brown. I was going to say Crown but remembered that people use Brown.”

“I will not take offence Rev. Wagner. Crown is, of course, my legal name.”

“Did your search for information about your family bear fruit? I have been remiss in not following your progress, but I did see you in church the other week in most respectable garb.”

“My investigations revealed that I was heir to a modest legacy, though I am just now 18, so will have to wait until I am 21 to have control of the monies and house, though the latter is rented out. However, the diocesan court has specified that the trustees of my legacy may grant some monies for purposes that are deemed worthy and Mrs. Naismith will accompany me on some travels around the country to broaden my education. When I broached this possibility to Mr. Mortimer, who is one of the trustees, he suggested that I should improve my wardrobe to match my expectations. Truthfully, I am more comfortable as I am today, though I am pondering my future. Given my past, I would like eventually to be able to give some assistance to young people – especially those not much more than infants – to help them advance in life. However, I also realize that I must employ my legacy to maintain revenues so any such effort could be sustained. That may require me to undertake some new ventures, and appear as a person used to business.”

“Well, well, Mr. Brown. Anyone seeing you on the street would not for a moment realize such thoughts in your head. I applaud your intent. Do keep me apprised of your progress – I realize it may take some time – as in my ministry I do come across those less fortunate.”

“Indeed, Vicar. I will no doubt need help to find those I can best aid. From my own experience with Mrs. Cohen and Mrs. Naismith, I am certain that there is a need for both practical protection as well as education and opportunity, but I confess I yet have only general sentiments and no firm plans.”

“It is nonetheless a beginning, and I will pray for your success. A good day to you, Mr. Brown.”

“To you also, Vicar.”

That Sunday, which was Palm Sunday this year, Tony met Tom and Vera at church and walked back with them to their home and workshop. On the way, he mentioned his talk with the vicar as well as his ambitions to use the legacy to good purpose.

Vera said “You are right to recognize that just spending the money won’t do enough. You have to find a way that it earns revenues if you want to help others in the long term. There’s a sad amount of poverty, even as the nation claims it is the most advanced in the world.”

Tom asked “Have you any thoughts on directions for your work that might help?”

Tony answered “Well, you remember last year you made me a hand-truck to aid in moving things?” This was a two-wheeled dolly that allowed Tony to more easily shift large boxes or trunks. Moreover, it could be hung under the deck of Moonbeam’s cart and there was a padlock and short chain to inhibit theft. “My thoughts are that tools or procedures that make work more efficient would be sensible. For example, the carts that Joseph and I use are not the same. The wheels cannot be interchanged, at least not easily. And with the increase in business from *Fortescue Factory* with Mrs. Yarrow now sending *Treats for the Tongue* all over the place, I wonder if we should not just set up a daily or even twice daily schedule. We essentially do that now, but it may make sense that we also pass other regular customers like *Bartlett and Jones* and the Railway Station. I suspect that if it is known that we come by at specific times, we might pick up other custom.”

“The schedule’s an easy experiment. Gotta be worth a try,” Tom said.

“I’ll talk to Joseph tonight.

But about the hand-trucks and the carts. You remember Dan and Mr. McDowell made a gig for Mr. Goldman’s pony Moses. I wonder if we could come up with some more or less standard designs that could be fabricated quickly from a small set of parts.”

“You mean set up so you just bolted them together? No fussing around to make parts fit.”

“Yes. That’s sort of what I was thinking, except maybe I hadn’t got to details, just a rather fuzzy idea.”

The word “fuzzy” was inspired by Tony seeing the dog of that very name, for our friends were now nearing the gate of the workshop and the dog came bounding to this gate with a small bark. If it were strangers, the noise would be greater, but Fuzzy knew his owners.

Vera said “I’ll put on a kettle and work on dinner while the two of you talk and make some notes. Don’t let these ideas simply vanish.

Oh. Call Robert and see if he is joining us.”

Robert Vance was the sixteen-year-old apprentice who had his bed in the workshop and served as watchman when Tom and Vera were away. They all remembered the attempted burglary in 1855.

Tom and Tony sketched some ideas for the hand-truck and a donkey cart. Not much was settled, but there were items of importance, such as standard wheels. Tom also thought that he could make the deck out of just one or two parts.

Tony said “Isn’t it also that we want to be able to exchange parts easily?”

“Were you about when Jeremiah and Dan and I greased Mr. Goldman’s cart? With a clever idea from Vera, I built a jack that lets us raise the cart wheel really quickly.”

“I don’t recall seeing that, but definitely that’s what I feel will be important. I often am annoyed when I can’t attach a strap with one hand, for example.”

“Let me make a note of that – one-hand strap attachment. That’s a good thought. Yes. I think if you work in that direction, you could add nicely to your business without having to put out a lot of capital.”

“I won’t have all the legacy for three more years, though Henry says I can ask for some monies for worthy projects. He actually told me to add to what I asked for in order to do a bit of travel and to improve my wardrobe.”

Vera joined in “You seem to have done well in London and with your new clothes, you’ll not be out of place.”

“Yes. When I look in the mirror, I’m not sure who that person is. I’ve never dressed as a young woman. I don’t think I’d know how to wear a dress or skirt.”

“I’d not thought of that,” Tom said. “I’d not know how to do up the hooks!”

They all laughed, then had to pretend it was an inappropriate joke as Robert came in. Tom was Tony’s oldest friend, and Vera had become close also, but Robert had arrived much later and was more an acquaintance.

* * *

It was the following night that Tony was able to talk to Joseph about his ideas. Rebecca and Valerie were present, which suited Tony’s purpose. He wanted no suspicions that he was planning to take advantage. He began,

“I wanted to tell you all about some ideas I have. They aren’t very well thought out yet, but might bring more business to *Best Bonnet*, and make us more profit.”

“Never refuse to listen when better profits might result,” Rebecca said. This was a general comment, but Tony felt it was directed towards both Joseph, now 15, and Valerie, who would be 17 in June.

“Well, you all know I’ll come into a bit of money in three years and that I can ask now for some amounts if they are for a useful purpose. I’m trying to figure out how I want to live – what I should do for a living. I like my work with the donkeys. It would give me a reasonable life. However, I’ve thought I might use my fortune, such as it is, to help orphans like I was find a better way. Mrs. Cohen did me a huge service when she found me in Archie’s hovel.”

“We’ve all a lot to thank her and her associates for,” Rebecca said. “What’s so interesting is that she does well herself even as we all find a bit more comfort.”

“That’s sort of what I’d like to do, if I can fathom how,” Tony answered.

“Makes sense,” Joseph added. “But do you have any ideas for us here and now?”

“Well, I was talking with Tom and Vera yesterday. You know the hand-truck I had him make me last year?”

“Course I do. Been trying to figure out how I could get one too.”

“Tom and I were playing around with some drawings yesterday. I think the way to get them is to work out a good design and then make them. Similarly, I figure that the carts should be standardized with parts that can be interchanged and, moreover, changed easily. Also some thinking about straps and fastenings. I’m always struggling to hold something and put a strap around, so a strap that would fasten with one hand would be good.”

Valerie said “That sort of thinking applies everywhere. It would be nice to have doors that would open somehow when you were carrying a large parcel. You know – a way that they would unlatch if you pushed on a bar.”

“Better write that down, Valerie,” Tony said. “Vera made Tom and I take notes so we wouldn’t forget what we discussed. A lot of those ideas will turn out to be rubbish, but hopefully we’ll realize they are before we spend a lot of time and money on them, because forgetting them until we see someone else profiting will be an unhappy occurrence.

But I also wanted to ask whether we should think of setting up some scheduled routes for *Best Bonnet*. We visit *Fortescue Factory* essentially every day. Would it be smart to make the visits at a particular time or times?”

Joseph said, “I’d meant to say something like that to you as well, so it seems we agree on the idea. What about the time or times?”

Tony answered “I think we have to talk to Mrs. Yarrow at least and she’ll probably want to get Ethel involved so there’s more than one viewpoint. There’s others like *Bartlett and Jones* and we have a few other clients now who we visit at least twice a week. Even if we just go by every other day, it would mean avoiding messengers and confirmations. That is, of course, providing the routes aren’t too wasteful of steps.”

“It could be a lot easier,” Joseph said. “I sometimes wondered if some of our clients might be better served by hand-carts. We’ve a few who really only get modest deliveries or make small shipments. The furniture with Maud and Mr. Cohen, of course, rarely has a fixed time or place.”

Tony said “On the other hand, *Fortescue Factory* is getting special boxes made to protect the treats, and Mrs. Yarrow is thinking of having extras to store some stock. There was a box last week that some oaf set close to the edge of the waggon and when he was pulling on something pushed it onto the platform with his arse-end. They’ve put in a claim for damages, but the shipment was largely a write-off and the agents in Hastings and St. Leonards were short.”

Rebecca asked “If you have standard donkey carts, will they take these boxes tidily?”

“I hope so,” Tony replied. “I’m thinking that the cart should easily handle them side by side. That would allow two across, and I think the deck should take three from front to back, so a total of six. If they’re not too heavy – and we’ll be sure to be careful of Moonbeam and Annabelle – we might do two layers, so 12 boxes. I’m also thinking that such standardized boxes might be thought of for other clients.”

“Do you think the right sized hand-cart could take one or two of those boxes?” Joseph asked.

“Don’t see why not,” Tony answered. “I’ll mention it to Tom when I see him.”

* * *

It was Easter Saturday when Tony next met Tom. They had been invited to Fortescue Road for lunch and agreed as they came to table to talk after.

“I mentioned to Joseph some of my ideas. He likes the idea of regularly timed routes. He’s been thinking too and figures we could get more business with hand-carts by serving clients with smaller shipments and deliveries. But he wondered if both the donkey and hand-carts would handle the shipping boxes of Fortescue Factory and similar enterprises.”

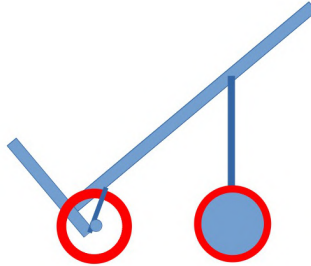
“They will if we get them sized correctly. And I think the Fortescue shipping boxes are of a size that is useful for a lot of different clients.

Actually, I also had an idea. I think we can fit a third wheel to the hand-truck that converts it to a hand-cart and the third wheel could be on a mounting that can be fitted or removed easily.”

“How would it work?”

Tom took out his notepad and drew an L on its side with the long end at an angle of 30 degrees. He sketched in some wheels at the vertex of the L.

Then he drew a vertical line from the long side of the L downward and drew a circle on the bottom.



“Oh. Now I see,” Tony said. “Do you really think it’ll work?”

“I’m confident of the hand-truck. Got to experiment a bit with the third wheel, I expect. Actually it might need to be on a caster. Things like that can be tricky, but we’ll give it a good try. The two-wheel hand-truck is best for moving things a short distance with awkward twists and turns. But for routes around town, we’ll want to pull or push the cart and not have to lift the handles.”

“I’ll look forward to seeing an example whenever you can have it ready to look at. And I’ll be happy to pay you for materials and effort, within reason of course.”

Both laughed, but Tom said “I’ll keep a good track of my costs and time, but I think we’ll find that Vera and I can make money building the hand-trucks as long as people know we have them for sale, which you and Joseph can help with, since people will see you and hopefully not too far in the future your employees using them.

Oh, by the way. A man named Shawbury came by the other morning. Said he’d seen your cane and asked if I could make him one similar. Having seen your cane, he knew it needed a brass head, and he’d found a nice lion door-knocker that will work. We agreed £2 10s. for me – well, Vera and me – to build it into a walking stick like yours.”

“I hope that gives you enough profit. I’m thinking there’s a lot of work, and fiddly work at that.”

“Yes. There’s quite a bit of work, but actually it’s work I can do in small bits and pieces. For example, the carving and filing of the knob for the handle I can work at for five minutes while I’m waiting for a delivery. And I’ve said I want six weeks to make it, so we won’t be too pressed. I think we’ll do well on it, since the value is all in the time to make it.”

“It will be unique and worth what he pays you. I love the one you gave me. Thanks again.”

* * *

The trial hand-truck with possible hand-cart adaptation was not complete before Tony and Adeline took their trip around the country. In the meanwhile there was some discussion and adjustment of tasks among the various members of the loose team associated with Fortescue Road. Dan, whose tasks were general maintenance and fixing things at the Drake Apartments on Fortescue Road, took on a few commissions with Moonbeam. Like others who had worked with her and let the donkey show them her intelligence, he found he enjoyed doing this. Tony had been worried that he might try to drive her, rather than walk along and have her cooperate in the task, but Dan had a natural sympathy with animals and in the event Jolly was allowed to stay with him for the time Tony was away. The dog liked company, and always seemed ready to be out and about with one or other of the donkeys or their drivers.

There were, of course, things going on in the world, things that would enter the newspapers, official letters and documents, as well as the eventual history books. However, our characters showed almost no apparent interest in these, such as the General Election or the ending of the Anglo-Persian War. These were items in the newspapers rather than part of "real" life.

Tom, Vera and Robert were busy with making shipping and storage boxes – they used a common design – for *Fortescue Factory*. Robert, to his credit, came up with some jigs that made the production simpler. Then Tom, noting that boxes could slide off each other if they were stacked, realized he could use some cheap wooden strapping so the top of one fitted into the bottom of the one on top of it.

Because the boxes had to be moved around and could be heavy, they wanted handles on them, but those could stick out and prevent efficient stacking. It never was clear who made the suggestion to use hand-holds cut into the sides of the boxes near the top so they could be lifted easily.

A final detail that took several iterations of trial and rejection was the mechanism to secure the lids. Hinges and latches were nice, but expensive and time consuming to install. Initially Tom had thought of going to Mr. Howard, the blacksmith, to have metal parts made, but that would double the cost of each box, which was close to £1 at initial estimate.

Then Robert suggested that iron bar could be cut, drilled or bent to make fittings. While the final product used very simple parts made by cutting, drilling and bending 1/2 inch by 1/8 inch iron bar, the road to the final design involved many experiments with material of different sizes and diverse procedures. They built a lever press and made some shaping dies out of iron and could quickly produce the parts. Initially they sawed the bar, but then made a cutting jig for the lever press.

This lever press was simply a six-foot iron bar with a set of holes through which a pivot bolt or shaping dies could be fastened. Choosing the holes gave different choices of mechanical advantage. Tom, Robert or Vera could pull the bar down and easily force iron strapping to the desired shape or cut off lengths as needed.

Once they started to use the flat iron strip material for one aspect of the box, other uses came to mind. Eventually they found ways to use it in a simple way to keep the lid on a box with a couple of tabs on one side and a toggle latch on the other.

Some shellacked canvas was glued under the mechanism to keep the contents of the box dry.

Though it was nearly 18 months until this was achieved, they were able to reduce their price for the boxes from 16 shillings down to 10 shillings. At the same time, their profit per box increased to a little over 2 shillings. Moreover, other firms saw the boxes and started to order them for shipping their products, sometimes with profitable special modifications.

Even as early as late May, as they were finishing their supper, Vera said “I’ve realized we make much better profit when we can use jigs to build things. I haven’t actually timed the work, though we should, but I think some of the jigs and special tools we’ve made double our efficiency.”

Robert, who ate with his employers, said “We also get better consistency in the work, though we need to ensure the jigs are strong and don’t warp over time.”

Tom added “It’s more like factory work than craft work, but I find it satisfying to figure out how to do things better. Tony’s thinking along the same lines with the work he does. All of us trying to get more done with the same amount of effort.”

“It’ll mean that we won’t have difficulty paying Mrs. Cohen so we own this place,” Vera commented.

Later that evening, in bed, Tom asked “Are you worried we might not be

able to pay off the loan to Mrs. Cohen? You mentioned that the jigs would help with that earlier.”

“Not really worried, Tom. But though we’ve been taking some precautions, it’s not unlikely I could have a baby and that would cut into the work I could do.”

“You now do a lot of the workshop tasks. And you’re good at them. Better than a lot of men I’ve seen doing such things. Are we making enough we could hire someone to do the housekeeping and cooking?” Tom left a lot of the figures to Vera. He had a good sense of profit and loss on individual projects and made sure they each at least broke even, but the overall state of the finances was left to his wife.

“We’re doing well. I’ve set aside a cushion of £30 or so. And I think we could afford about 5 shillings a week for wages plus the cost of food for someone to live in. We’d need to get a cot for them in the kitchen. If I did get with child, it would give us some flexibility.”

“Then let’s try to find someone. I’m sure I can find enough scrap material to make a frame for a cot. You talk to Mrs. Upton about a mattress and bedclothes. We seem to have quite a bit of work, and your labour is useful enough that it should more than offset the cost of wages for housekeeping work.

And I should probably tell you that the last time I saw Maud she asked whether there was any problem since we didn’t have a child yet.”

“What’d you tell her?”

“Just that it hadn’t happened yet. Didn’t mention the precautions. Not sure how she’d feel about that. No use risking upsetting her.”

“No. Some people think it’s immoral to try to plan things a bit.”

* * *

Tony and Adeline were away much of May, in fact from the 11th to the 28th. Manchester proved the highlight of the trip. Both of them thought much about the Art Treasures. They had, along with many other visitors, found a certain exhilaration at the old Italian masters. But Tony had astutely recognized that the excitement – at least for him and likely many others – was the age, the antiquity, of these paintings by Raphael and Michaelangelo. He found the men and women in Rembrandt’s works had souls that were lacking in the Italians’ canvases. And Turner captured the soul of landscape or scene, even if the images somehow abandoned detail.

The Exhibition had much more than paintings, but you may read of that elsewhere, or peruse images captured with the camera and silver shadows, or engravings of the massive exhibition building or the Queen and Prince Albert

visiting. He wasn't yet officially the Prince Consort, though that would be proclaimed a month later.

Many years later, Tony would encounter the images again and wonder why they were empty of people. With some effort, since it had become commonplace to "snap a photo", he remembered how photographers needed several seconds of exposure without motion to capture images with their large equipment. Moving people created blurs, and it would be two more decades before high speed photography became available.

At the Exhibition the decorative arts were, to Tony's sensibilities, over-represented. And the collections of armour seemed an anachronism beside the industrial skyline of the young and brash city. He did not abhor the porcelain and similar objects, but neither did they come into his mind in daydreams the way some of the paintings and prints did. Nor did he see any object that caught his imagination in the way that the owl walking stick of Tom and Vera did. Somehow brass and wood talked to him as ceramics and glass did not.

We could, of course, follow the rest of their journey as a travelogue. However, the important aspects of their travel from Tony's perspective were the change in his view of the world. Up to now, apart from a jaunt around Sussex with Tom a couple of years previously and the weekend in London, his life had been entirely in Brighton. While a pleasant seaside town, with the benefit of many visitors to give it a certain cosmopolitan ambience, it was still a modest urban space.

That Adeline had taught Tony to read was perhaps the largest change in his understanding of life beyond the immediate demands of daily existence. However, reading had spawned a hunger for more knowledge, hence the wish to explore the country.

The travel to York, Durham, Carlisle, the Lake District, Manchester and Birmingham offered several contrasting styles of landscape and way of life. At one point near the end of their journey, Tony mused, "It might be interesting to live in some of the places we have visited."

Without intending to inspire Tony to some serious contemplation, Adeline answered "Surely we must ask ourselves what motivates us to wish to stay somewhere. Is it a single view? That might be a short-lived reason that one could come to regret. And does one know enough about the costs and realities of a particular place before deciding?"

"You mean that one builds a daydream from some brief fragments of experience that are not a reality?"

"Yes. Precisely. But having daydreams is still worthwhile. Trouble comes with acting on them without sufficient investigation and questioning. Daydreams are just a source of possibilities. There's a lot of difference between possibilities and their realization."

This conversation took place on the train journey from Manchester to London. Tony noticed that on these longer journeys one could observe the changes in topography, architectural features of towns, type of industry, even to some extent regional clothing styles.

There was also the sameness of trains, of the dress of the middle classes, of the dirt of poverty. Thus a mixture of sameness and diversity. Tony realized his legacy would allow him to become, at least for a while, a part of any of these, moreover as a man or as a woman. The choice was daunting. Indeed, for the moment, it was too daunting even to mention to as close a confidant as Adeline.

For her part, Adeline sensed Tony's emotional turmoil and did not press him to conversation. The vocal silence was not oppressive. There was still the noise of the train, and each had a considerable weight of recent experience to review and digest.

* * *

By Midsummer's Day a few of the business initiatives discussed in early Spring between Tony, Joseph, Tom and Vera had taken some small steps forward.

The idea of a regular schedule and route for collections and deliveries was being tried with a handful of clients, of which *Fortescue Factory* and *Bartlett and Jones* were the most important in terms of revenues. Quite early each day, the route was a circuit that started and ended at the Railway Station. Of course, it had its problems. Items that had not come in on early trains were not delivered until the next day. A potential option to ship overnight production – as yet not implemented by Fortescue bakers – would not be possible on the early trains leaving Brighton.

Tom had drawn and made some parts that could be quickly assembled into a hand-truck. A very crude third wheel addition had been prepared, though the fastening mechanism was not complete so the wheel could be put in place but could not be used. Nevertheless, Tony and Joseph were impressed with the design. Tom had kept things clean and simple, and used just one size of nuts and bolts and one of wood screws. When Tony and Joseph went to look at the prototype, Joseph said

“You've also used just one size of wood for the side rails and cross pieces.”

“Yes. It's essentially 3 inches by 2, and I've used 1/2 inch by 1/8 inch metal bar to make plates and brackets to fasten them. That isn't really the best fastening, but it means everything can be swapped out if it gets damaged.”

“Where are you getting the wheels?” Tony asked.

Tom laughed “You would ask that, wouldn’t you. Well, that is our main concern now. We want to find a supply of standard wheels. These are 9 inches and iron, and I found them as scrap from a trolley that had been used in the Railway workshop. It had been run into by a careless shunting engine driver – not Percy of course. But I think I’d like to standardize on 8 inches.”

Joseph was looking at the axle and wheels. “You’ve used iron brackets to hold the axle rod to the frame and the brackets also attach the two parts of the L of the cart at the same time. Clever.”

Tom smiled. It was nice when someone understood the ingenuity that went into his creations. He and Robert had used the lever press, though with a wooden die that would not last very long.

Tony asked, “Where do you think you’ll get the wheels?”

“At the moment I don’t know. But to start with, Robert and I think we’ll get some thin slats and glue them up as sandwiches with the grain criss-crossed, if possible, in three directions. If we have a jig, that won’t be very expensive, but we’d really like to have a tire on the wheel. I think we saw something of the type at the Great Exhibition made of rubber, but where we’d get ’em I don’t know. We will put a metal bushing at the centre of the wooden wheels to reduce the wear against the axle, but really that’s just a piece of pipe of the right size. Probably won’t bother with a tire, though maybe it’s possible to dip them in molten rubber. I’ve not got much knowledge of that.”

“Would a metal wheel work and last longer?” Tony asked.

“Yes. But likely more costly, and heavier. We’re going to see what we can do. For example, we might be able to shape a disk of sheet metal over a shaped form to make a sort of pot lid. Two of them, one a bit smaller than the other could be put together to make a wheel. Robert’s going to give that a try, but at the moment the wooden wheels are almost sure to at least function reasonably. We’ve no idea if the formed sheet metal makes sense, or whether it’ll stay together properly or roll nicely.”

Joseph noted “It looks like replacement of wheels will be quite easy.”

“Yes. Probably just need a pair of pliers to unbend the wire that holds the outer washer.” There were large washers on either side of the wheels, and the outer washer was kept on the axle with a simple folded wire through a hole in the end of the axle. The fold was bulged so it would not slip through the hole, and the two free ends of the wire were looped round the axle. “I could have used a linchpin, but then it can be knocked out with a hammer or a piece of stone and your wheels stolen. Or the linchpin can fall out thanks to bumps and vibrations. This method takes a bit more work for a wheel change, but it’s actually easier to make the bent pin, and probably cheaper too, since it’s essentially a length of wire.”

Tony said “We could even carry a spare wheel with us if we were worried.”

Vera came into the workshop and interrupted the technical talk. With her characteristic clarity she said “Tom and Robert have a great design, but we’ll need to think how to sell it to advance our profits. Otherwise it’s just a nice idea.”

Tony agreed. “Yes. Joseph and I are not going to be a big enough market. We’ll need to get the attention of carters and others who need hand-trucks in other places. Possibly advertise in newspapers or magazines. Lots of thinking and figuring to do. Tom and Vera, do let me know when you have a good idea of cost and price – making sure that you’ve a decent profit – and we’ll talk some more. In my travels with Mrs. Naismith I should have watched for people using such dollies. I’ll have to start taking more notice, and also ask where they are to be purchased.”

“Well, we haven’t spent the housekeeping on the project,” Vera said. “Even if I’m playing the devil’s advocate, I think it’s a good idea. And if we all consider the possibilities, I’m sure we’ll find a way to do all right with it.”

* * *

Midsummer had been a Sunday, and Joseph and Tony had taken some scotch eggs, pork pies and cider to Saultons’ workshop to share amongst their friends. Conversation moved from hand-trucks to news of their friends, such as the growth of infants and their first steps and words, and speculation about who might next have a child. If anyone had been paying attention, they would have noted that Vera and Tom said nothing on this topic.

There was a short conversation about news from India. Native regiments had mutinied and Delhi had been taken. The situation appeared to be serious. Tony cautioned “I wonder how much of the real story we get in the newspapers.”

Vera responded “That’s a sensible thought. I understand that the Army in India is really under the British East India Company. It’s not actually under the control of the Colonial Office.”

While the topic interested Tony, Tom and Joseph could not muster much enthusiasm. Tom said “Should we take a walk up towards the Southdowns?” This precipitated a move to clear the lunch plates. Robert was staying, as after the robbery attempt it had been decided to never, if possible, leave the workshop unattended.

Thinking of how Robert had been hired for security but had become much more of a member of their team made Vera realize that she hadn’t done anything yet to hire a housemaid. Not that “housemaid” would describe the role of the general assistant she wanted. Still, it was time to take action, as

she had missed her monthlies a couple of weeks ago, but had said nothing to Tom.

Tom and Joseph each had a rucksack into which some lemonade in bottles and some biscuits were put in case refreshment were needed. The friends and the two dogs, Jolly and Fuzzy, set off happily up towards the rolling hills.

* * *

The next day Tony ran the morning route then took Moonbeam towards the beach where he would sell rides to children. Along the Promenade, not far from where he wanted to station himself and Moonbeam on the shore, he encountered Mr. Archibald Turcotte, QC, who had his offices in 21 Fortescue Road and who had given him friendly advice that had been helpful. He also knew Tony's true gender, and the reasons why. They met occasionally on the Promenade, where Turcotte liked to walk at mid-day.

"Good day, Mr. Turcotte. I've not seen you for a while."

"Good day to you too, Mr. Brown. I think we have each been away at different times, so our visits to the Promenade have not overlapped."

"Yes. Has Mrs. Naismith told you of our travels and the Art Treasures Exhibition?"

"We had the opportunity for a brief conversation. It seems you did very well, and I trust you consider it to have enlarged your education."

"Yes. I'm very glad we had the chance. It has given me much to think upon."

"No doubt your London excursion and the theatre also."

"Oh. I realize we have not met since before then. That's quite a long time."

"Indeed it is. Henry Mortimer has told me a little about the legacy, though of course no details except what would be recorded in the public register."

"I should give him permission to share whatever he pleases with you, Mr. Turcotte, for you have been a good friend."

"I thank you for your confidence in me, Mr. Brown. May I ask if the legacy subsidized your travels?"

"It did. Mr. Mortimer even suggested I improve my wardrobe so that I would be more easily accepted wherever we went."

"It was good advice. We saw you in church and my wife asked who the attractive young man with Mrs. Naismith was. I did not enlighten her beyond telling her it was Mr. Brown."

They both laughed, and Turcotte continued “As you and your business mature, you may need to fit into different groups in society, Mr. Brown. It is sometimes an awkward trick to look comfortable when you are not.”

“I have been realizing that, and it has been giving me much thought.”

“Think long and act slowly will be my advice. You are doing well and I have high hopes for your future.”

“Thank you Mr. Turcotte. Now I’d better get to the beach before some other donkey takes the good spot.”

“And Miss Bingham will give me an earful of complaint if I do not get back to work with her to complete a submission we must make. Good afternoon to you, Mr. Brown.”

“And to you, Mr. Turcotte.

Walk on, Moonbeam.”

* * *

By mid-July, it was becoming clear that the scheduled route did not increase revenues. Over supper one evening, Tony said “Joseph, do you think we should keep the scheduled route. It doesn’t seem to have made money.”

Valerie, who arranged the commissions, jumped in before Joseph could. “It doesn’t increase our income, but it cuts the amount of organization I have to do, so I think it is worthwhile. The reduction in effort is not a lot, but it’s enough that I can notice it.”

“Then we should continue with it,” Tony said. “And Johnson, the iron-monger, has asked me to stop by to see if there are any items to be delivered and he gave me a letter of authorization to pick up for him at the Station. So far not much, but it is a start.”

“Wasn’t that the idea?” Rebecca underlined that the idea had been a good one. Still, Tony had hoped for a more dramatic change or a quicker one.

* * *

You may recall that in 1856, Dan Dixon and James McDowell managed to build a lightweight 2-wheel gig mostly from pieces of rubbish, in fact for 4 shillings 7 pence half-penny. This was stored at *Goldmans* and Moses was sometimes harnessed to it by Dan or James so they could give Angus Sinclair an outing. Angus learned to drive the gig, which was easy given Moses’ quiet disposition and age. None of them ever tried to get Moses to go any further

or faster than he would of his own accord. The pony was now at least 28 years old, having been acquired by Joshua Goldman in 1829 as a colt.

Given they lived in the same building and ate quite often at the same table, Rose Bingham and Angus Sinclair were well acquainted and often shared conversation. Angus had been a soldier – a sergeant in Captain Fraser’s company. This company was actually a horse artillery battery, and the men were effectively, or in some cases actually, engineers. As such, they often had interests of a more intellectual nature than the troops of infantry or cavalry units.

Many had well-developed mathematical skills, as those were important for the effective use of the guns. But the education to provide such skills often was accompanied by other learning. Angus was one such soldier. Moreover, he had worked for some time in a publishing house, and joined the army when the owner sent the company into bankruptcy by publishing several almost unsaleable and extremely long religious texts promoting an obscure Eastern sect.

Angus was born in 1822 and Rose in 1826. Thus they were of a similar age. Angus’ parents were dead. He was a late child of mature parents. His brothers were born in 1805 and 1807, and his sister even earlier in 1803. They all farmed in the Scottish Lowlands and he had not seen them since before the Crimean conflict though letters were exchanged a couple of times a year. Rose, whose parents were in Brighton, saw them regularly but infrequently, as they had a fixation that she should marry, but insisted that only a slattern would talk to men. Moreover, they could not be disabused of this contradiction in directives.

Out of casual conversation came, in the spring of 1857, an invitation for Rose to join Angus for an outing in the gig with Moses. Later in the year, on July 5, Rose asked Dan to show her how to harness Moses, and instead of Dan driving the gig to Fortescue Road to get Angus, Rose was at the reins. Possibly with any other pony or horse, Rose might not have been strong enough, but with Moses Rose became the one to fetch the gig. From Fortescue Road, Angus was the nominal driver. Moses, of course, actually decided on the route, but could, if agreeable, be given gentle suggestions of which way to go.

Thus, on Sunday July 5, Rose had walked to *Goldmans*, harnessed Moses and came back to Fortescue Road for Angus. Angus gently pulled on the reins to suggest to Moses that they head up to the Downs, and on this occasion Moses accepted that this was a reasonable idea.

“Angus, I’ve been meaning to ask you why you don’t use a wooden leg. It always seemed too awkward before, but I think I know you well enough now to ask.”

“Well, I was at the Battle of Balaclava and the Russians had bigger guns

than we did. I was sergeant on one of our 6 pounders when a Russian shell – probably an 18 pounder, landed to my left a few feet away. It threw up a lot of shrapnel and cut my leg almost through, but also smashed some bone. Lost two fingers too on the left side. My gun was put out of action, and two men perished. The others dragged me back to where a surgeon took the leg off, but he didn't do a very tidy job. Some smashed bone and possibly some metal still there and also too close to the skin, so it won't support me on a peg leg, so I use a crutch or crutches, depending on the situation."

"Oh. I'm so sorry."

"I can imagine in the future that surgeons will be able to do some repairs, especially now it seems that they have means to render the patient unconscious and free from agony while they cut. But I do not think that they have yet worked out how to deal with situations like mine."

"It is a pity the crutches are so awkward for you, especially if you drop one."

"That is true. I feel such a burden to others."

"Perhaps we should talk to Tom Soulton to see if he has any ideas. He is most inventive, and very adept at making things. Did you see the cane he made for Tony Brown?"

"With the owl's face?"

"Yes. A marvellous walking stick. Were I a gentleman, I would definitely have one," Rose exclaimed enthusiastically, and they both laughed.

"You should laugh more, Rose. It makes you look very pretty."

"Go on with you. You'll make me all shy, saying things like that."

"Oh. I mean them. But like I am, I can't behave towards you as a man might want to."

"We can do worse than be the friends we are. And perhaps we should think on how we might better ourselves so we have the fortune to go forward together."

"Do you mean that, Rose?"

"You should know me well enough by now to realize I don't speak without meaning, Angus." And Rose gave him a kiss on the cheek, but near enough his mouth that she noted that his moustache tickled.

* * *

About a fortnight later, Tony went to Soultons after receiving a message that Tom and Robert thought he should see the hand-truck in its latest configuration. When Tony arrived, he was met by a girl of perhaps 14 or 15 as he walked into the yard and Fuzzy and Jolly barked softly to each

other. They never made a big fuss, but there were always a few moments of recognition and greeting.

“Are you Mr. Brown?” When Tony nodded agreement, the girl said “They’re all in the workshop. Mrs. Soultton said you were expected.”

Tony found Tom, Robert and Vera all working on different tasks in the workshop. Robert and Vera stayed with their work, but Tom said “Hello there, Tony. We’ve got something to show you. It’s over here.”

There was a hand-truck in the corner, but it was on a slant, with a third wheel on a post that came down from the long side of its L. There were two of the *Fortescue Factory* shipping boxes, which were cubes two feet on a side, sitting on the dolly.

“We put the boxes there to give an idea how it could be a hand-cart, but watch!”

Tom lifted off the boxes, then reached underneath the sloping deck of the dolly and undid something, which turned out to be a wing nut. He then lifted the handles of the hand-truck, the third wheel fell away and he put it aside to set the truck upright.

“Nice!” Tony said.

Tom added “The bottom of the truck at the moment is wood. That means it’s not as easy for moving things like trunks, since the deck is thicker. I’ve worked out we can do an iron plate, but that will be quite a bit more expensive. However, the parts are more or less interchangeable, so we don’t have two totally different products.”

“I’ll guess the main question is how much they cost you to make and how much you can sell them for.” Tony knew those were the critical questions.

Vera, having got to a point where she could interrupt the work she was doing on sanding the top of a chest of drawers that had suffered from a careless cigar, said “I’ve been timing some of the steps so we know how long different parts take to make. Our profit more or less depends on keeping the timing consistent and not too long.”

“Yeah. Be real nice to have a little steam engine to drive a drill or circular saw,” Tom said.

“But then you’d have to spend on coal, and that would be wasted unless you used it. What about my idea of using a treadle like an old spinning wheel,” Vera complained. She had a few days earlier pointed out to Tom that a treadle powered spinning wheel happened to turn a spindle. The spindle could rotate a drill bit in the same way it spun wool.

“We should do that,” Robert said. “With a fairly heavy flywheel, we could more easily do the drilling, and maybe even saw small pieces that we need in quantity, like the slats for making the hand-cart wheels.”

“Do you think you could make the treadle and flywheel?” Tom asked, directing his question to Robert. “We’d want a pulley on the flywheel, or

else a groove in it to drive a cord or belt.”

“The awkward bit will be changing from vertical to horizontal turning. We’ve got the drill wheel we set up last year for Tony’s hand-cart. Just have to figure out how to get the treadle to spin it.”

Robert was referring to an old wheel they’d attached to a spindle that held a clamp for a drill bit. Later usage would call this a chuck, but the present arrangement was a lot more rustic, and sometimes required two or three tries to get the bit properly centred. Still, when set up, it worked well, with the weight of the wheel providing enough downward pressure on the bit while the operator spun the wheel with his hand.

“Can’t you run the belt over a couple of pulleys to change the direction?” Tony asked.

“Yes. That works,” Tom answered. “But it does lose a bit of the energy and we’d need the right pulleys. However, I think that’s how we’ll have to do it. Then we can run the belt around the spindle between the two bearings so the sideways force doesn’t throw us off.”

This was essentially what Robert ended up doing, and it saved a lot of time with the drilling of screw and bolt holes in the iron strapping used to hold the hand-cart together. Of course, it also got used in other projects, such as the manufacture of the boxes for *Fortescue Factory*. They eventually found ways to streamline the changing of bits, which quickly dulled and needed resharpening. The solution to that was to have a dozen or so sharpened bits, though they did then need to account for sharpening time in their profit calculations. Still, the treadle wheel meant that holes in the iron now were done in less than half a minute each.

Turning the conversation back to the matter of profit and loss, Tony said “When you have a reasonable idea of how much it will cost you to make the hand-truck in both its forms, and I’ll hazard a guess that those figures will depend on numbers made in a batch, let me know and we can talk about how we might sell them. I’ve a very modest sum as capital, but I think I should try to invest some. This seems a worthwhile choice, since I know how useful the hand-truck can be. I’ll be happy to take some of the risk, since I figure we’ll find people who will want these. It should be a matter of thinking who they are and making sure they know about our product. By the way, can we add a couple of rings to the side of the main struts. That’s where I’d hook a strap, and I’ve realized that a strap with a buckle and hooks at the ends to go through the rings will be ideal for keeping a trunk or box under control.”

“Oh. That’s sensible,” Tom said. “Should have thought of that. And it half-ways meets your request for a way to attach things with one hand if the strap doesn’t have too much slack.”

* * *

The girl who had welcomed Tony was Molly Vance, a cousin of Robert. She came from a family of smallholders who, like Robert's family, lived mostly quite well on their own produce plus some cash products they grew or made. But, as was common at the time, there were often more mouths to feed than the income could comfortably manage, and when Robert learned Vera was seeking someone to help cook and do housework, he mentioned that he had a cousin who might suit. A couple of letters cemented the arrangement, though the Souldons did not realize at the time that Molly did not write the letters.

Molly was well-trained in household matters as the second eldest in a family with six children. Her most significant handicap was that she had been kept home and missed schooling. That could have been cause to send her home, but she did a good job with the house and the meals. The lack of reading and writing was still a serious deficiency if Tom and Vera wanted to be able to leave her in charge, so Vera set about to teach Molly to read at least printed text as quickly as possible. Arithmetic turned out to be equally lacking, but that was less critical, though Robert undertook to show her a few skills. The Souldons were now paying her money, which provided an incentive to learn how to reckon. Moreover, signs in shops with prices provided a lure that also encouraged both reading and arithmetic. Having lived a rural existence until now, the commercial streets of Brighton were filled with enticing products, but you needed to read and reckon if you were to make good use of your money. By Christmas of 1857 Molly had sufficient skills that Tom and Vera were content. Molly was by then able to read and respond to notes with instructions and to record simple messages.

By that same Christmas when it was clear that Molly would be an important help. Vera, seven months pregnant, was clearly with child. Indeed she was already past what the contemporary expression described as "increasing".

* * *

By early August 1857, Tom and Robert had a sample hand-truck ready. Tony already had the earlier, custom made one in metal, so Joseph took the new one out for a trial. Tony paid Tom and Vera £2 for this hand-cart and a second, which was to be made as and when there was time.

"We need to have one on hand to be able to sell if someone asks," Tony said. "You can use the cash to get materials or to build jigs." Tony knew that all those working at *Souldons* believed in having the right tools and materials. His money would, he hoped, speed their progress.

After a few days, Joseph put the third wheel on the hand-truck. This third wheel wasn't on a caster, but it was a simple matter to lift on the handles to change direction. On a straight path lifting wasn't necessary. As yet there wasn't an organized box on the deck, so they strapped on the tea chest which Maud had used to hold the auction-house clothing for Tony.

Valerie was present and said "It's likely better if the box is more or less on its side, since the deck is sloping, and we can attach a piece of canvas to cover the opening in the tea chest so rain doesn't get in."

"Good idea, Val," Joseph said. "I'm guessing you have a piece of material in mind."

Valerie did. They found a piece of thin wood to act as a batten to attach it to the lip of the chest, and Valerie hemmed the opposite edge, putting some small pebbles in the hem so it was weighted down.

That week, Valerie and Rebecca received messages about three new commissions for the carters that were small enough that she took the hand-cart and fulfilled them herself, demonstrating a new opportunity. Over supper that night, Tony said "We'd better paint the *Best Bonnet* name on the tea chest."

"I'll do it tonight," Valerie said, "but we'd better also work out how much commission you'll get. After all, you paid for the hand-cart. I already bought a notebook and have recorded the commissions so far, and I've put it in an oilcloth pouch with a couple of pencils."

"Don't forget to put in the cost of the notebook, pouch and pencils. How much did you charge for the commissions?"

"8 pence an hour, charged at 4 pence for each half hour or part thereof. I didn't really know what to say, then remembered the 8 pence a mile you were talking about for hansoms in London."

"And nobody made a fuss?"

"No. Must be close to what they expected."

"Does it seem about right if the hand-cart gets a ha'penny from each half hour?" Tony asked.

"Is that enough?" Rebecca asked.

"Well, I gave Tom £2 for this cart and one he's going to make so we'll have one to sell. He hasn't worked out his costs yet, but I don't think the selling price will be more than 30 shillings per cart. So if the cart earns, say, tu'pence a day, and there's about 200 days a year, that's over a pound in the first year. Should be about right."

"That's assuming a steady custom," Rebecca said.

"Yes, but surely if we don't work the cart two hours in a day there's not enough custom at all. Might as well not bother in that case."

"Yes. And if it works six hours, you'll have plenty of profit," Rebecca concluded.

“I’m thinking our bigger problem may be knowing how much time has been expended. I’ve now got the pocket watch I bought from Mr. Goldman.”

“I’ll keep an eye out for watches for Joseph and Valerie,” Rebecca said. “But maybe we should figure out a pricing that doesn’t require the clock.”

Joseph said “How about tu’pence to come out, 4 pence for the first commission, and tu’pence for each additional stage, for example, if they’ve several deliveries. And we should have a policy for going outside of some boundary, like over to Hove.”

“That’d work,” Valerie said. “Should be about the same general revenue. And, Tony, still a penny-ha’penny on the shilling for the cart?”

Valerie had quickly done the arithmetic that a ha’penny per four-pence was a penny-ha’penny for twelve pence or a shilling.

“Let’s go with that for now, and write it up on some cards. If it works out, we can get some handbills printed.”

“I’d still like to have a watch, Ma,” Joseph said.

“Me too,” said Valerie.

“I’ll keep an eye out, but you two had better think which of you’ll be the runner to do the commissions with the hand-cart. Or else find someone new.”

* * *

It was Tony who found them someone to operate the hand-cart. He was on the beach the next afternoon, giving rides to children on Moonbeam. Not raining, but rather dull, though not cold. An uncooperative sun or annoying clouds. Still, this was not bad for business, since children often need diversions, so the revenue was steady.

Towards half-past five, Tony started to pack up and walked toward the opening to the Promenade. Sitting by the wall was a young man who Tony recognized from the incident where Tony and Moonbeam had rescued Miss Olivia Crouch three years earlier. The boy had run to the police station to fetch help at the request of the constable who dealt with the aftermath of Miss Crouch’s rescue.

“Afternoon, Mr. Brown,” the youth said.

“I’m afraid I don’t know your name, but I believe you went to the police station for the constable who came when Miss Crouch was dumped in the sea.”

“Arthur Anderson. That was three years ago today.”

“Yes. I’d not registered that today was the anniversary. Did you get the muffin I believe the constable promised?”

“Yeah. He kept ’is word. And I was glad ’e did. Not a lot of food in our ’ouse.”

“What do you do to earn your daily bread?” Tony asked, largely out of curiosity.

“Anything I can find that’ll pay. Go round builders’ yards and ask if they’ve anything. Sometimes get some commissions to carry messages. Or some mucking out of stables, or walking horses. Bit thin lately.”

“Can you read and write?”

“Went to school for a couple of years. Manage the headlines, but not some of the fancy words. I’m all right figuring money. Gotta be or you’ll get cheated. You got something in mind?”

“It’s a bit of an experiment. Mr. Upton and I with *Best Bonnet* have a new hand-cart. We’re thinking we can do small commissions – ones too small for the donkey carts, rather as we’re smaller than the heavy transport with the Clydesdales or other large horses.”

“What’d you pay?”

“Still working that out. I know if you were getting bed and board, we’d pay 4 bob a week to start. But you live at home, don’t you?”

“If you can call it home. Seven of us if we’re all there. Just one room. If there’s a chance to get out, I will.”

“Come to *Upton’s* yard tomorrow morning at 8 and I’ll have you meet my colleagues and we’ll see if there’s a fit. For starters, it will be a trial. Well, the whole idea of the hand-cart is a trial, but perhaps it’ll give you a few weeks work, and hopefully more for all our sakes.”

* * *

“There’s room in the stable. It’s actually a small tack room which really doesn’t have much in it,” Rebecca said.

“But we’ll need to figure out how we charge costs. How much should *Best Bonnet* pay you for Arthur’s room and board?” Tony asked.

“You’re paying 2 shillings a week, but truthfully I like having you here and you just have a corner. A young man will eat more and he won’t do his own laundry, which you help with, along with some of the housekeeping, and without my asking.”

“Why not 4 shillings for Arthur?” Joseph said. “It will come out of the *Best Bonnet* revenues anyway. We’ll pay Tony three ha’pence a shilling on the hand-cart revenues for the cart use, and 4 shillings a week to Arthur for wages. Probably better buy a notebook for him to record his receipts and activities, too. And likely he’ll need some clothes that look a bit like Tony and I wear.”

“I’ve still got the ones you were wearing a couple of years ago if they’ll fit him,” Rebecca said.

Tony said “I think the shirts, pullovers and jackets probably will fit. I didn’t really get a chance to gauge his height, but I think he might have longer legs than Joseph had then.

Is Valerie all right continuing to do the commissions at the current rate? Well, at least until we see the hand-cart generating some revenue, then we can augment it a little.”

“The scheduled route has reduced the work a bit, so that will be fine. Of course, if we start to see £5 notes, I’ll want some coin.”

They all laughed, and turned to having their supper.

* * *

Arthur arrived at ten to 8. Joseph was introduced, then left with Annabelle for the scheduled route, for which he was already a few minutes late, normally leaving no later than a quarter to the hour. He was thinking that a watch would be very helpful to regulating his day, though it might mean he could no longer dawdle to watch people on the beach.

Rebecca took charge, showing Arthur where he would sleep and explaining the meals. She asked if he had had breakfast – no – and said she would make him some while he took a bath which had been set up in the parlour. She pointed out fresh clothes hanging over a chair and asked him to put his in a basket so they could be laundered. She showed him where there was some soft soap and suggested using it to wash his hair.

“Call out when you’re dressed, and I’ll check you for nits,” Valerie said.

Arthur wasn’t quite sure what to make of all this, but he couldn’t complain about a clean place and the promise of food, as well as some fresh clothes – he hadn’t changed his for several weeks. It would be nice to be rid of the nits. At home it was impossible to keep clear of them with everyone on top of one another.

Rebecca had solved the trouser problem with some old ones of her late husband. Arthur now took on an appearance similar to that of Tony and Joseph when they were working. After Valerie had gone through his hair with the nit comb, she took him past the pier glass in the hallway so he could see how he looked. The one aspect of his appearance they were not able to correct was his shoes, which were in poor condition. That would have to be sorted out later.

Valerie led him to the kitchen, where Rebecca put bacon, eggs and toast in front of him. Arthur’s eyes widened, but Rebecca said “Go ahead, we’ve already breakfasted. Tea to drink?”

“Please,” Arthur managed through a full mouth.

After Arthur had finished – in a very short time in fact – Tony showed him the hand-cart.

“Nice,” Arthur said. “It can be a dolly or a hand-cart. and it seems solidly made.”

“*Soultons*’ workshop designed and made it. It’s a design that can be made from standard, interchangeable parts so it can be fixed easily if there are problems. We hope eventually to sell lots of them.

Valerie will tell you how we work and go with you to your first few commissions. But do make sure to write down the names of the clients, how much they paid you, and what you did for them. It’s also helpful if you note the time you started and finished, though you’ll have to estimate that without a watch. And you’ll note the date and day at the top of the page.”

“Ain’t never thought much of the date before. ’ave to get used to that.”

“Oh, yes. We expect payment before we go on a delivery so we don’t have to come back. When we bring something from the Railway Station or from a supplier if the recipient is paying, we ask for payment before unloading. I find it helps to have the delivery slip in my hand and ask for payment before handing over the goods.”

“Yeah. I can guess people want to tell you they’ll pay next week.”

“Precisely. Though we do have some clients who we’ll give an account, though they are on our scheduled routes, so they pay a fixed fee per week. That gives us steady revenue and they get a discount over what they’d pay per commission. In fact they sometimes get both incoming and outgoing shipments and we get just the weekly fee.”

“But you do get the weekly fee, and you said a schedule. Does that mean you go there at a regular time?”

“Yes. That’s the idea.”

* * *

That Friday, August 14, Tony was doing the morning schedule when he came across Constable Shaw outside a shop near to Johnson’s ironmongery where he had delivered a couple of heavy boxes of nails and other items. Shaw was writing in his notebook while seated on the step of the shop. Indeed, with the constable on the step, it would not be possible to get in the shop.

“Good morning, Constable Shaw.”

“’Morning Mr Brown.”

“Trouble?” Tony asked.

“Sadly, yes. Mrs. Macdonald had this little shop selling newspapers, tobacco, sweets and other odds and ends. Two children, 7 and 9. Somehow

managed to make ends meet, but probably only just. We thought she was a widow. Turns out her husband was in prison for trying to fix a horse race, but he finished his sentence last week and last night apparently came 'ere wanting money. When she wouldn't give it to 'im he bashed 'er. Wasn't 'till the morning newspaper delivery that she was found with the kids sitting beside her not knowing what to do. Had to get from them that it was a 'bad man' who hit the woman, but the details still ain't clear, though almost certainly their father. The children said their mother called him Toby, and you don't use a name like that for a stranger."

"Where's Mrs. Macdonald now?"

"I got one of my colleagues to take a cab to the Sussex County Hospital. Had to lift her into it. She was unconscious and her injuries looked bad, but she did have a pulse."

"The children?"

"A neighbour said she'd take them until this evening, but then they'd have to go somewhere else. That means the Workhouse if we can't find family or someone to take them."

"And nobody to take on the business either, I presume."

"There's a key in the door, so I'll lock up when I've finished my notes."

Tony had a moment of decision, and he let the choice fall where he felt it should.

"Constable Shaw. You know my history, and that of the Soultons. It would be tragic for those children to go to the Workhouse. I'll finish my rounds, then see if the children can stay with Mrs. Cohen or Mrs. Mortimer for a few nights, and if you like I'll ask if Mrs. Naismith can come to try to keep this shop in order. There are likely some subscriptions to be attended. Perhaps you could put a note on the door for deliveries to contact me at *Upton's*, which is only a hundred yards away. I realize I've no legal standing, but I can be a good neighbour."

"You'll be saving me a good deal of bother, Mr. Brown. But the deliveries came already. I'll add a note on the door for customers to watch for information."

"I'll send word to you at the police station, but perhaps you can introduce me to the neighbour who has the children so I can collect them if I find accommodation."

"Of course. Let me lock the door. No sense tempting more trouble."

* * *

By noon, Maud Mortimer had agreed to take the children. And at *Bartlett and Jones*, Tony had talked to Cassandra Cohen, who took him

round to the Emporium and related the story to Winnifred and Frieda in front of two of their staff. It was soon arranged that there would be one or two ladies who would attempt to maintain the little shop while the owner recovered. Thus before one o'clock, Tony was at the police station and Constable Shaw was writing up a receipt for the key. It was, of course, rather irregular. Still, the alternative was worse. Shaw did send another constable, named Minton, with Tony to the shop, where Adeline was waiting outside. Minton was to take notes of what they found and, Tony suspected, satisfy himself that there was no misappropriation of property.

Tony said "I'm glad you're here, Constable Minton. Tongues will still wag that we're here to profit at the misfortune of another, but they will hopefully be less active."

"We also want to gather any evidence about the assault on Mrs. Macdonald."

When they got inside, things were not in too much disarray. The till had been pulled out and was on the floor, with several notes scattered about. These were IOU notes from different clients. Adeline collected them. There was, of course, no money.

Behind the shop was but a single room. The upper floors were accessed from separate outside entrances. The single room was kitchen, parlour and bedroom. A door led out to a courtyard and, visible through a dirty window, the privy. There was a pump on the sink and Adeline filled a bowl, found a rag, and came into the shop.

"May I clean up the blood?" she asked.

"In case Shaw didn't take it down, let me make notes of where the stain is."

Tony had been making a sketch in his notebook, and had noted that the till drawer was found behind, and the bloodstain in front, of the counter.

"Will this help you?" he asked.

"Thank you, Mr. Brown. That it will."

He looked at the sketch and added a few annotations, then said "I think you can clean up the blood. The customers won't like to see anything like that."

In the meanwhile, Tony had been looking in the drawers of the counter and had found a couple of notebooks. One was clearly the subscriptions. The other was a record of monies in and out. The amounts were depressingly small. There was also precious little stock on the shelves. Tony wondered who were Mrs. Macdonald's suppliers.

Minton said "How do you propose to proceed?"

Tony answered "I've found the subscription book, so I think we can try to fulfill these. Our biggest difficulty will be if someone pretends to be a client to get a free newspaper. It's likely not a big risk, but we'll ask people

to sign for their subscriptions I think, and hope for the best. I'll put a note on the door to that effect, and that our hours will be reduced.

Are there any family around?"

"Not that I know about. That's going to be my next task – to knock on all the doors in the immediate vicinity to ask for information."

Just then Maud Mortimer came in.

"Ah. Tony. I was hoping you would be here. I came to collect the children and bring them home."

Tony said "Constable Minton, this is Mrs. Henry Mortimer who has agreed to shelter the children for a while. Perhaps your first visit can be to Mrs. Ashbury where they are now so the transfer is properly witnessed. Maud, do you have your card to save Constable Minton from having to write down your address."

"Mr. Brown, you are making my work easier, and I thank you."

At that moment another constable arrived and he was out of breath. Minton said "What's up, Walter? You've been in a rush."

"It's ... ugh ... no longer ... ugh ... assault. Mrs. Macdonald died. We've got a murder to sort out. I'm to 'elp you with the door to door."

"All right. I'm going to go to Mrs. Ashbury to pass the kids over to Mrs. Mortimer here. I've got her address. Mr. Brown here and ... Mrs. ..."

"Naismith," Adeline filled in.

"will try to clear up and keep the shop running so the subscriptions aren't interrupted more than they have been. At least until we find if there's family somewhere. It's quite a mess. I'll come back 'ere when I've finished."

The constables and Maud left. Adeline had finished cleaning the floor, but there was a wet patch of floorboards that would take a while to dry.

"Adeline. Why don't you see if you can find any letters or other evidence of family connections in the back room. Also any of the children's clothing or belongings that I'll take to Maud later. I'll look about here and I'll start an inventory of stock, such as it is. Then we'll talk about what is to be done."

"Shouldn't we put a notice on the front to tell customers about their subscriptions?"

"Yes. I was about to do that when Maud came in. Oh. And I should tell you I made sure I held onto the key. Didn't want to have to chase Minton all over the town to lock up. Not that there's much to steal."

Adeline said "I'll be surprised if we don't find a loose floorboard. Mothers often try to have a hidden reserve."

Clients of Mrs. Macdonald

To avoid customer inconvenience, some local business persons will attempt to continue operations and fulfil

subscriptions during the hours of 8 to noon, Monday to Saturday, and Sunday 8 to 9. Please be prepared to identify yourself and to sign for items received.

Your patience is appreciated, especially if those volunteering have to be called away.

T Brown

* * *

It was nearly five o' clock when Minton came back. By then Tony had made the inventory, and laid out the newspapers and magazines – there had clearly been more than one delivery, and there were some magazines on the step when he'd arrived with Minton.

As Minton came in, Adeline said "There you are. I was worried you wouldn't come back, and I wanted you to sign this note of which I've made two copies."

Found by Mrs. Adeline Naismith in Macdonald's shop

Under a loose floorboard, I found a small cardboard box with 2 sovereigns and 1 half-sovereign, which I will use with Mr. Tony Brown to maintain the operations of the shop as well as the benefit of the orphaned children, and for which I will provide an accounting when needed.

A. Naismith

Witnessed: Minton

August 14, 1857

"I'm afraid I don't know your initial, Constable Minton."

"T for Thomas. I'll say you're a lot more honest than most, Mrs. Naismith."

"'Do unto others', Constable Minton. That's all. And we'll need to pay the newspapers for the subscriptions and other suppliers perhaps. Hopefully family will be found."

Sadly, there appeared to be no family, or at least none that were known.

Toby Macdonald was arrested in Lewes, where he had got drunk in a tavern on the meagre proceeds of his crime against his family. He revealed that his wife had been an orphan and he had been the illegitimate son of a minor aristocrat who had gambled away his family fortune, then decamped to Australia. Perhaps there were family there, but Macdonald was a very, very common name.

Tony felt very awkward when he went to see Maud and Henry.

“I’m afraid I let my feelings about the children get the better of my judgment. And I caused Joseph and Valerie quite a lot of inconvenience in getting my commissions completed, though Arthur Anderson, our new employee, managed to fill in rather well. But now I must try to unravel the mess I have created.”

Maud responded “Tony. You don’t have to tell me why. I was actually in the Workhouse. And Martin and Angela are delightful children. Quite well-behaved too, considering what they’ve had to put up with.”

“Do they know about their mother and father?”

“I’ve told them their mother has gone to heaven,” Maud said. “but I don’t think Angela understands. Martin seems to grasp it more. He also asks why the ‘bad man’ hit his mother. I don’t think either of them know it was their father.”

Henry said “At some point, they will have to be told, and probably sooner rather than later to avoid others telling them in the street.”

“Yes,” Tony said, but then didn’t know how to continue.

Henry added “While it will make the place a little full, we are happy to keep them here. Yolanda even said she hoped we wouldn’t send them away, and extra work for her was one of our concerns.”

“I hope you’ll let me contribute. I don’t have a lot of money now, but I can afford a few shillings. By the way, I brought what little of their clothing I could find, so I know there will be costs for more items like that.”

Henry and Maud allowed that Tony would contribute £5 per year, or roughly 2 shillings per week, while the children were with the Mortimers.

Over breakfast, Cassandra mentioned what Tony had done to keep the Macdonald shop running. Dan Dixon, the man-of-all-trades for the house, said “Tony’ll need someone to take over the shop if he wants to keep the carts running. Should send our Jack to see him.”

“Is that your younger brother?” Cassandra asked.

“Yeah. 15 now, and useless with ’is ’ands. But he can read, write and figure all right. Ma was saying it was about time he contributed to the ’ousekeeping, instead of always ’aving ’is nose in a book.”

Thus it turned out that Jack showed up the next morning to the shop, where Tony had taken to sleeping, since some of the newspapers arrived early. Some nights Arthur would substitute for him, but this particular Friday morning, August 21, Tony was there. He had run into Jack with Dan on several occasions, so knew who the youth was.

“Dan said you might need someone to help run the shop,” Jack said.

“We do, but it might not be for long. Don’t know if the Macdonalds have anyone.”

“Well, I’ve no work at the moment.”

“Can we say 4 bob a week and you can stay here. We’ll take food out of the shop operations, hoping we can make enough to do so, but I’ll make it up if not.”

“Sounds all right. When can I start?”

“Might as well be now.”

Several customers came in, and Tony showed Jack how to handle them. They were all subscriptions. The newspaper delivery had come, but then the magazines came. Tony realized that the person doing the delivery was a cabbie, and that this one was different from the previous Friday.

“Do you deliver regularly?” Tony asked, paying the fare.

“Nah. The porters call us over to make the delivery.”

“Thanks,” Tony said, and tipped the man a thru’pence.

After he’d left, Tony said “We can take over those commissions ourselves.”

Jack answered “Pretty obvious. And cabs gotta cost a lot more.”

At that moment, a man came in who Tony had seen around town collecting rents. He remembered his name, and had seen it in the accounts book.

“Mr. Peregrin Withers, I believe.”

“Yes. Here to collect the rent for last week and the next.”

“You’re aware Mrs. Macdonald is deceased?”

“Yeah. I’d heard. Anyway, it’ll be 15 shillings. 7 and 6 a week.”

“That’s odd. The accounts book only shows 6 shillings each week with your initials and PAID beside it.”

“Well. I’m putting it up, else you can clear out and I can rent to someone else.”

“I’m simply acting as caretaker until the coroner rules,” Tony said, guessing that this would be the procedure. “But it seems to me that if it gets around that there was a murder right on the spot where you’re standing – in

fact I was here when Mrs. Naismith had to clean up the blood – you might find it more difficult to rent. People are very superstitious.”

“All right. Stay at 6 shillings.” Withers moved a couple of feet back. It was clear he was superstitious. That was a bit of luck.

“Well, with the murder, business is precarious. I was thinking 5 shillings a week. I’ve a half-sovereign here.”

“All right. Show me the accounts book.”

After Withers left, Jack was doubled up laughing.

“Oh, that was priceless. You did well there, Mr. Brown. How did you know he was windy about things like murder?”

“I didn’t. But anyway, 6 shillings is above the odds for such a tiny place. By the way, we also need to get a cat. I’ve heard mice at night. If you find one, let me know, because I’ll be looking too.”

* * *

Henry Mortimer only told his wife Maud that he was going to visit Mr. Toby Macdonald in gaol. The case would come up soon enough, and it was more than likely Toby would hang. Henry wanted to ask Macdonald about his family and that of his wife.

When he came home, it was clear that the experience of the visit had not been a pleasant one, and Maud asked Yolanda to take the children for a walk while she and Henry had a cup of tea.

“I’ve been to the gaol before, but not to visit someone who is facing a murder charge. If his attorney is good, he’ll try to get the charge reduced to manslaughter, but given there’s a previous conviction, the court will likely not be sympathetic.”

“Did you find out anything?”

“Barest details. Toby Macdonald, born June 10, 1822, to a Deborah Mack in Norwich. No father listed on the birth certificate. Raised by his maternal grandparents Charles and Agnes Mack just outside Norwich where they had a smallholding. Deborah born in November 1804, exact day he could not recall.

The mother was a Geraldine Smith, and she grew up partly in the Workhouse in Norwich but got farmed out to the local squire near where the Mack’s had their smallholding. The Macdonalds married in 1848, only a couple of months before Martin was born. Macdonald was by then working for a racehorse stable, which is how he got into trouble. It may be he was the scapegoat and just did what he was told. He almost said as much.”

“What about his father?”

“He knew the name. Sir Augustus Ashbury Macdonald. Son of a minor peer. Liked gambling. He apparently paid some money to the Macks for about five years, then did a bunk when his gambling and other creditors came after him. Apparently took passage to Australia, though he may not have stayed on all the way, as the ship carried freight for Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town and Singapore before going on to Fremantle. But the last port is a major destination for convicts, and I doubt it would appeal. My guess is that he got off, most likely in Cape Town. They got their own parliament in 1854 I was reading a while ago. But it would hardly surprise me if he wasn't now known by another name.”

“Henry. You did remarkably well, and I see you wrote things down. Shall I transcribe your notes and make copies for the children for when they are older?”

* * *

Macdonald wasn't hanged. The prosecution realized that the only real witnesses were the children, who might be unreliable. The other evidence against Macdonald was circumstantial, and since he was willing to plead guilty to manslaughter, he was sentenced to transportation to Western Australia, one of the last such sentences, and an irony considering the nominal destination his father had used. He was gone from England before the end of 1857, the same year a new Penal Servitude act came into force which essentially replaced transportation by prison with hard labour. However, Henry and Maud were glad he was transported, since there would be less chance of someone raising the matter of his being "in gaol" to the children, nor the stigma of a hanged parent, given the children knew him only as "the bad man".

* * *

Jack Dixon, for all his family considered him a failure because he was not handy with tools, was adept at getting people to sign up for magazines and newspapers. He also was quick with his arithmetic and could calculate the return on an item almost without thinking. Thus he discounted the stale tobacco steeply and soon replaced it with a modest assortment of fresh stock. He had a sale of the sweets that had been around for a long time, then selected just a few items that were common and popular such as barley sugar twists, humbugs, pear drops, aniseed balls, and Pontefract cakes. A limited but saleable selection. He also added items such as matches and candles.

Thus the small shop was not overloaded with stock, but what it did have did not stay on the shelf too long. After a bit of discussion, Jack's remuneration included a share of profits, which usefully encouraged even more initiative.

Jack's success let Tony return to the hand and donkey carts, with the shop – now renamed *News and More* – being one of the stops on his routes. Dan had painted and installed a sign above the modest window at the front which Jack paid for out of earnings. Tony was a bit annoyed that he was not consulted first, though Jack had asked him if he thought *News and More* was a good name and he had murmured agreement.

An early arrival at the shop was Olaf, who was, despite the name, a female cat. Jack had simply asked around the neighbours and someone pointed to a rather forlorn animal whose owners had abandoned her in their haste to depart before paying rent. Olaf was a good mouser, but liked the front window. She chose a spot on top of some magazines Jack wanted to display. After a couple of tries to discourage Olaf, Jack put down a low basket that had no bottom and was on a trash pile, lined it with some old cloth, and moved the magazines a bit but set them up so it could be thought Olaf was reading them. On some spare card he wrote "Even the cat loves to read our magazines." While it was a form of joke, the basket was at the corner of the window by the door, and customers would regularly pet the cat as they came in or went out, establishing the shop as a part of the local community.

* * *

At the end of August, Tony gave Arthur a note for Mr. Johnson, the ironmonger, asking if he might have a few minutes of time to talk to him. Johnson suggested closing time – one o'clock – the following Wednesday, which was his early closing. Tony replied that he would be there.

Johnson was surprised that Tony arrived with a hand-cart.

"I wasn't expecting you to bring the tools of your trade, Mr. Brown."

"Actually, I wanted to get your opinion on the marketability of these hand-carts. May I show you some of the features?"

"Go ahead. I'm watching."

Tony unfastened and removed the box that was on the hand-cart, showing how it could be fastened to the deck of the trolley. He removed the third wheel and set the hand-truck upright. He pointed out the ring bolts and took a strap out of the box and showed how the strap would go around the box, now playing the role of a trunk, and could be set in place and tightened with one hand. Then he took out the iron plate that could be used as the base of a slightly different model of hand-truck, though he was careful to mention that it required a repositioning of the wheels.

“You will note that the parts are interchangeable, and there is just one size of screw and one of nut and bolt.”

“It’s a nice design and well made. Are you the manufacturer?”

“No. *Soultons* designed and made them to my commission.”

“I’ve been hearing about them. Seems they do good work.

So now we come to the critical question. How much will each cost and what do you expect as the selling price.”

“We’re thinking the retail price will be £1 for the hand truck or dolly, whichever name you give it, and 30 shillings for the hand-cart version, with a box much like this. We haven’t quite settled on a permanent design for the box. Currently we’re looking at tea chests, but Mr. Soulton has been making some special reusable protective shipping and storage boxes for *Fortescue Factory* and *Treats for the Tongue*, and for some customers that might be attractive. We’re still working out the price for those. In fact, we’re still working on the prices for the whole line, as the Souldons are experimenting with some special jigs and tools that will simplify production.”

“What about wholesale?”

“We’re currently thinking that the hand-truck that retails for £1 we’d supply one-off for 16 shillings. Ideally for sales of some dozens at once, we’d try to get that down to 14 shillings or maybe even 12/6. Truthfully, I approached you first as you’ve seen the product in use and I wanted a reaction. If we are too far from what will give you a sensible return, then we will need to rethink our ideas.”

“Every merchant wants to pay nothing and get a handful of £5 notes. Your retail price is probably attractive enough. Paying 16s. each and storing them would tie up a lot of money and space.”

“We’re looking at getting an engraved picture or two to put in a magazine advertisement. Such sales would normally be by postal communication, but that is quite difficult because of the money transaction. However, we think it might make sense if agents received orders and payments and paid us. Then they don’t stock the items, just get them in when clients order one.”

“Price makes sense then. I’ll take 4 shillings in the pound when I get my money up front. Your headache then will be the costs to deliver, especially if they’re wanted up in the Hebrides.”

“Your comment is pertinent, Mr. Johnson. Perhaps we shall have to advertise as £1 plus applicable shipping, but still have an agent to receive and deliver the items.”

“I can see that will work, especially if your hand-trucks are as good as they seem. And you will supply parts so they can be repaired?”

“That is our intent. We suspect wheels will wear and possibly break if the carts are roughly used. But as you can see, taking out the wire retainer allows for quick replacement of the wheels.”

“I like how you’ve made the third wheel fit on with just that one wing nut. Quick and straightforward.”

“May I send you a price list when we have it ready?”

“I’ll look forward to receiving it.”

* * *

While Ian Hoyle did not groom or exercise Moses, he did regularly ensure the pony had food, water, and a clean stall. However, on the morning of September 3, 1857, Moses was lying in the stall unmoving. Ian was reluctant to touch the pony in case it startled and kicked, so he went back to the shop building and fetched Joshua.

Moses was dead. Joshua’s voice wavered when he announced this. Ian was dispatched to the knackers to have the carcass taken away. Later in the day, James arrived and learned of the death of an animal who had become a friend.

The death of Moses would be a great disappointment to Angus, for now his outings would be impossible. Rose, too, had come to enjoy them. Thus, over dinner at Fortescue Road, there were conversations on what might be done to provide a replacement for the outings.

“I’d be willing to contribute to getting another pony for Mr. Goldman,” Angus said. “The outings in the gig that Dan and James made are so good for my disposition.”

“I’d contribute too,” Rose said. “What Angus says is so true. The outings brighten up life.”

James said something incomprehensible, so Martha voiced “James too.”

Dan added “Me, as well.”

Cassandra and Abraham were present, and Cassandra said “We should approach Joshua Goldman with the idea that a pony might be a shared benefit, since he could use it with a regular cart. Tony and Joseph with *Best Bonnet* might have some use for a pony, too. But it will be difficult to work out the contributions and the rewards fairly. Let me find out his opinion. He was not, I think, intending to replace Moses.”

Rose, ever practical, said “I have been cautious with my money. How much would it cost for me to purchase a pony or small horse, with James and Angus covering the feed and bedding, as well as exercising the animal if it is not used. Mr. Goldman would get credit or payment for the stabling, of course, but one owner would be simpler.”

“Well done, Rose,” Cassandra said. “That does make things simpler.

Does anyone have an idea how much a pony costs?”

Dan said “Fancy horses are hundreds of pounds, but working ones twenty to twenty-five quid.”

Cassandra said “For adjusting costs when people work for others in our group, we’ve been using a rate of a penny ha’penny an hour. That comes from noting that the wage of 4 shillings a week is 48 pence, which is roughly the number of working hours – or at least effective working hours– in a week. We add a ha’penny for bed and board. Something like that to Rose, Angus and James for use of a pony would possibly be workable. We should ask Tony and Joseph.

Of course, Rose will have to sort out the feed and bedding with our two gentlemen.”

* * *

Rose went with James to see Joshua on the 8th of September, collecting Joseph and Tony along the way as pre-arranged with a note.

On hearing the proposal, Joshua said “I thought on the hardship to Mr. Sinclair, and was of a mind to seek a new pony myself. However, I’m of an age where an animal may outlast me, on top of which, my need is much less now that Messrs. Brown and Upton have *Best Bonnet*. Thus, if Miss Bingham and the two pensioners can arrange details, I will be happy to have a new animal here.”

Rose said “We would, of course, pay for stabling, either in cash or in kind.”

Joshua said “Mr. Upton, I believe *Best Bonnet* pays your mother a yearly sum for the stabling of the donkeys. We could use that rate.”

“£5 per year for each animal, but that includes storage for the carts” Joseph said.

“Why don’t we say a shilling a week, but Miss Bingham and friends arrange disposal of the waste.”

Tony asked “Have you an idea of the charge to *Best Bonnet* for use of the pony?”

“Mrs. Cohen said that when people were lent to others in the ... er ... family of businesses, a penny ha’penny an hour was used. We thought it might work to keep that rate,” Rose said.

“Makes sense,” Tony said.

James had written on his notebook that feed and bedding was about 1 shilling and sixpence a week. Rose had her own notebook and was busy scribbling. Joshua said “I see Miss Bingham doing her sums, of which I approve. There’s no sense getting into a situation and finding it is more expensive than planned.”

“I was trying to work out the costs above the cost of the animal for a year. It seems that stabling, feed and bedding would be possibly half a crown a week, or £7 10s for the year. If the animal were worked 20 hours in the week, which is not at all extreme, the revenue would cover the direct costs, but not the purchase.”

“A sensible viewpoint, Miss Bingham,” Joshua noted. “I think we could reduce the stabling to sixpence a week if I had casual use of the pony. I have not had a chance to ride in the gig, and my wife might like an outing.

Mr Brown or Mr Upton. Do you have prospective employment for the pony? My cart really owes its good state to Tom Saulton and Jeremiah Quigley.”

“*Best Bonnet* has been extremely lucky that our donkeys have avoided hoof problems,” Tony admitted. “If one were to go lame, we would be hard pressed. I am inclined to think we would be advised to contribute to a pony and its cart, using the animal from time to time to keep familiar with it, in order to ensure we can maintain our business should one of the donkeys be unavailable.”

This conversation spiralled around an agreement, and eventually the details were recorded on how much would be exchanged for pony, cart, feed, and services. The remaining, and very large, issue was acquiring a suitable animal. This task fell mainly to James McDowell, who accompanied Rose Bingham to various private stables and public sales over the next month. However, on October 6, James led a small mare into *Goldman’s*, which Ian and Joshua hastened to see.

“A fine animal by appearance, Mr. McDowell,” Joshua said.

James knew that his speech was not easy for Joshua and wrote

GOOD TEMPER. TOMORROW WILL
HARNESS CART AND GIG.

“Very good.

Will any of the others come this evening to see her?”

James “yes” was more or less comprehensible. That evening, around half past seven, a modest group came to the stable. In the ensuing conversation, Rose learned that Joshua had intended originally to call Moses by the name Phoenix. The new mare became Phoenix from then on.

Joshua asked “May I be inquisitive and ask how much you paid, Miss Bingham?”

“Twelve pounds, Mr. Goldman. James saw her and noted she is eight years old, which is older than most ponies come up for sale, but her owner died. People wanting cart animals want them younger, and Phoenix was almost left alone at the end of a sale, having not met the £15 reserve at

auction. James suggested we make a direct offer to the owner so he wouldn't have to take her home, and it was accepted."

"Well done, Miss Bingham. With care, she will serve you for many years."

* * *

The Mortimer house at 84 Chorley Terrace was, for the house and office of a solicitor, decidedly busy with infant William Mortimer, the foster children Angela and Martin Macdonald and the housekeeper Yolanda Karwowski. At the end of September, Maud had asked Mr. Brougham, the builder, to suggest if they could extend the house into the rear garden.

"How much of an extension do you wish, Mrs. Mortimer?"

"I was hoping for a decent sized room on each floor. Would that mean an extension to the house of about a dozen feet to the rear?"

"That might be just possible. There's a cesspool under that grass there. Can you hold this end of the tape for me and stand by the French window so I can learn the space we have to work with?"

"Do you want me to put my hand next to the house?"

"Please.

Yes. We have 15 feet to what I judge is the wall of the pit. It would be good to empty it before we build. Give you a few years before things fill up."

"At least we can build. But how would we empty the pit?"

"Normally buckets to a tank on a dray. But here we'll want to avoid open containers, because I can't see how we're going to avoid going through the house."

Maud said "That probably applies for the building materials as well, does it not?"

"Unfortunately, yes. If you go ahead, we will want to protect the floors and some walls, and get as much furniture as possible out of the way."

"It will be a challenge."

"I'm afraid so."

"But it is possible, you think?"

"Oh yes. We can build walls outward from the house. The parlour will have the French window moved out 12 feet. Probably you'll need to let the smallest bedroom upstairs become a corridor or ante-room to the one or two rooms at the rear. In fact, I'd recommend using some posts rather than walls, and use some lightweight partitions if you want separate rooms."

"And downstairs?"

"I think one big room. It may need a pair of solid pillars and a beam to support the floor above. You'll want big windows at the back of the house, because you cannot really have them at the side in case your neighbours do

the same extension. So the light has to come in from the garden, and the existing rooms can be dark and need lamps. Upstairs we could put in a skylight.”

“Does it make more sense to expand into the attic if we have to work there to put in a skylight?”

“The space is more awkward with the slope of the roof and things like the water tank. But it means a lot less building. We need to put in stairs and some structure, but not a lot. And we can add skylights or dormers if needed. I prefer dormers, though they are more costly initially, as my experience is that skylights need to be made very well or else they leak.”

“I’m thinking I should ask you for three separate quotations, Mr. Brougham. One for the emptying of the cesspit. One for the extension at the back to the point where it is enclosed and plastered but not painted or papered. Then one for the attic similarly unfinished. I think for the moment, we’ll leave decorating and finishing as separate jobs.”

“You are thinking that you need to be able to do the work in stages? That is, one can live for a while with unpainted or unpapered walls.”

“My husband and I have done quite well, but I do not want us to get ... er ...”

“Overextended?” Brougham suggested.

“Precisely. I come from a background where my family lost everything. That makes me ... cautious, I suppose.”

“I know your history, Mrs. Mortimer. You give inspiration to others and have no reason to apologize for a little caution. Why risk what you have? And I think that makes sense. The cesspit is more or less separate from the others, though if you decide to do the first two, then we can probably get the cesspit emptied and the materials through the house, possibly in one day, though almost certainly in two. There would still be the need to have the workmen come through the house, so you’ll want to protect the floor. Workmen aren’t the most careful in keeping their boots clean. Of course, that would apply to the attic as well, but I think there’d only be a couple of workers in that case. The space is too constrained for a lot of men, and as I said, there is less construction. The main work is the stairs and the flooring.

Let me send you some rough estimates in a couple of days. They might be a bit off on the cost of materials, since I won’t go out and price things at the moment. But they’ll be pretty close on the cost of labour and within 15 percent of the right numbers, and I mean in either direction. My estimates might be above final cost. When you’ve decided what you want to do, I’ll refine them. I think you know my work, but in any case show them to your brother Tom. He’s got a good head for building and carpentry.”

“Yes. Tom’s good like that. And your suggestion will be fine. Mr. Mortimer and I need to make sure that we’re ready to go ahead.”

* * *

Brougham's preliminary estimates were £12 to empty the cesspit, including protecting the floors in the house. Building the unfinished addition would be about £95, while opening up the attic, with dormers front and back, would be £60.

"Can we afford any of these?" Maud asked Henry.

"You know our monies as well as I, my dear. However, I think we need the space. It would cost us much more, I think, to buy a bigger house. Moreover, a change of address would impact our businesses."

"We seem to have decided to keep Martin and Angela. Are you happy with that?" Maud asked.

"For some reason, it just seems right. I'm not sure why. We've no particular obligation, save that of common decency and charity. My feelings are stronger than that. But they also seem to have a godfather in Tony who wants to contribute to the costs. I think he wants to do more, but his business is growing. It's now at a bit of an awkward and sensitive stage. Nevertheless, Angela and Martin have people who care about them."

"I'm of the view that we're better to use the attic," Maud said. "Brougham hasn't shown any chimneys, so we'd either have to be cold or have a fireplace or stove fed into an existing chimney. I think we should plan to have at least a stove up there, rather like Tom and Vera have in their kitchen, but perhaps a bit smaller."

"That makes sense. But we could, for a start, just have Brougham fit the chimney ready for a stove and close it off with an iron plate."

"Yes. No sense in spending before we have the money in hand."

* * *

Henry and Maud decided to extend their house into the attic. They put in a cast iron stove on the landing between two small rooms, each with a dormer. Brougham charged them £75 and Tom found the stove for £5.

It was Tom who also suggested that the new hand-truck with a barrel would, if appropriate planks were set out, allow for emptying the cesspit. Given that the house extension was in the attic, this was not needed immediately, but Henry and Maud decided that it would be sensible to do the job while the house was already disrupted. They didn't get Brougham to do this, but arranged to pay Tom, Tony, Dan and Robert. James McDowell offered to help as well. Paying each of them £1, spending some monies for two barrels and the use of two hand-carts, along with £1 to a man who specialized in

disposing of sewage with a cart made for the purpose, they were still under £8. They would not have to worry about an unpleasant overflow for a while.

The work in the attic took, of course, longer than expected. However, by early May 1858 the two rooms were ready to occupy. They had even been given a simple coat of distemper. The dormers were not large, but gave adequate light. Some considerable discussion about the merits of putting gas piping in the attic were finally concluded in favour of using candles or perhaps oil lamps, as at least one of the rooms would become that of children, and gas should be kept out of their reach. Yolanda would have the other room, and she chose that with a northern exposure to get the softer light.

By the time the attic was in use, Maud was certain that another child was on the way. The house would be busy with three adults and four children. Still, they would manage.

* * *

In mid-January 1858, Arthur was trundling the hand-cart from the Station to *Bartlett and Jones*. He had four bolts of cloth which didn't quite fit in the box but were wrapped in heavy brown paper. There was also a box that clearly contained something quite heavy and metallic from the clinking noise it made when moved. Later it would be revealed that it contained scissors and related items that the haberdashery would carry.

Arthur was about a hundred yards from the *B and J* shop when a youth ran from an alley and shouldered him over. Another youth pushed the hand-cart away, trying to run. Arthur's assailant followed his comrade. Arthur was winded, but quickly got up and yelled "Stop! Thief!" and tried to chase them, but discovered his leg was painful, and probably badly bruised.

The thieves had departed in the direction Arthur had been going. However, by the time Arthur's pursuit reached *Bartlett and Jones*, it was clear he was not going to catch the thieves, so he entered the shop and, rather breathlessly, related what had happened to Alexander Collier who was Cassandra's second-in-command of the shop. Cassandra was, however, in the office and overheard.

"Mr. Collier. Send for a constable. Arthur. Did you recognize either of the robbers?"

"The one who barged into me had a handkerchief across his face, and the other was running away. I didn't see either of them very clearly because they came from the side."

* * *

It took about a quarter hour before a constable arrived. This was a new man named Walton, and he was not very organized. It was not until Cassandra asked "Have you not a notebook, Constable Walton?" that he took it out and started to collect names and accounts of what happened.

Walton had hardly started to write when two urchins turned up with the hand cart. Arthur said "Eric, Sam. You found the cart?"

The one who turned out to be Eric said "Saw two oafs go down an alleyway then run off. Knew it was your truck. They were swearin' bloody murder that there was no money and had thrown stuff on the ground. We put it all back in the box. Don't think we lost anythin'."

"Thanks, fellers. I'll 'ave to buy you a pie and ale."

"Well, until Tony Brown 'ired you, you were one of us."

Walton, not bothering to ask Arthur why he did not suspect Eric and Sam, started to accuse these two of orchestrating the whole escapade to gain a reward. Cassandra intervened, saying "Constable Walton. Is it not sensible to ask Arthur why he does not believe Eric and Sam have any role in the theft?"

Mumbling something incomprehensible, Walton asked Arthur this.

"The lout who ran into me was about four inches taller 'n me. And the other was fatter than either Eric or Sam."

Cassandra said "I have a tape measure here. Should we measure the height of all three young men?"

Walton, somewhat reluctantly, took down the heights of the three. Cassandra then suggested that he draw the street layout and a diagram of how the cart was taken. Also that the lout who barged Arthur had a height 4 inches more than that of Arthur.

"What height was the other, Arthur?"

"When 'e was pushin' the cart, he ran by the door of the Emporium, and 'is shoulder just came to the top of the number on the side of the door."

"We can measure that," Cassandra said, heading for the number in question.

When she returned she said, "Constable Walton, may we examine the merchandise to establish its content and condition?"

"Ugh. I suppose so, Mrs. ... er..."

"Cohen. You did not yet ask me. However, the merchandise is four bolts of cloth and a parcel of scissors, pinking shears, needles, thimbles and a selection of spools of thread and ribbons, of which I have a purported inventory in the form of a copy of my order for the goods."

Walton woke up to the reality that it was necessary to establish if anything was missing or damaged for the prosecution of the miscreants. He asked Cassandra if she could verify if anything were missing, and give a statement of opinion on the condition. Since Cassandra had not seen the goods before

this, she had to extrapolate from her experience. Fortunately, the bolts of cloth were still in their brown paper, though one wrapping was torn and some dirt had got on the cloth. The package of notions was, of course, broken open and scattered, but when Mr. Collier and a shop girl laid everything out on the shop counter, all but a few needles and pins were present.

Arthur checked the hand-truck. Thanks to Tom's attention to quality construction, it suffered only a few scuffs.

Cassandra said "Though there is rather little damage, Mr. Anderson has been assaulted and the hand-truck and goods taken away. Save for the honesty of Eric and Sam, these would not have been recovered, so there is still a theft."

With the level of competence of Constable Walton, the culprits in the case were never arrested. They were, however, suspected by a number of the street people of Brighton, and decided to move to Portsmouth before someone pointed them out.

Tony had a passing acquaintance with Sam and Eric. He suspected neither could read or write properly, so *Best Bonnet* could not easily use them with hand-carts. Still, a few days later, when he and Moonbeam encountered them, he said

"Hold, Moonbeam.

Eric, Sam. I want to thank you for your actions the other day, and for helping Arthur."

"Arfur's one of us," Sam said.

"Can either of you read and write?"

"A bit," Sam said.

"Not much," responded Eric.

"Pity. You've seen the kind of work Arthur's doing with the hand-cart, delivery and collections?"

"Yeah. Seems like a decent enough job," Sam said.

"Right now we don't have enough work to employ anyone else, but I'm hoping we can get more, possibly in Hove or up in Lewes. And I'll be happy to employ either or both of you. But for now, I'm willing to pay for a few lessons to improve your reading and writing so you can handle notes with instructions and also send questions. Are either of you interested?"

"If you're payin' for the lessons, I think I'd be mad not to at least give 'em a go," Eric said.

"Me too," Sam agreed.

"I'll have to check to see what's available," Tony said, "but come to the shop next Monday morning between half-past seven and eight in the morning and I'll let you know what's possible."

Tony wanted to ask Adeline if she could give some lessons to Eric and Sam, for which he would pay her. This led to a small verbal tug-of-war, Tony

offering more, Adeline suggesting she take less. Eventually a modest sum was agreed for a half-dozen lessons. Primarily, Tony wanted to have Adeline check that their skills were sufficient for rudimentary written instructions. If their literacy was too scanty, he would not seek to use them, though he felt their honesty in bringing back the hand-cart and goods spoke strongly in their favour.

He also wanted to ask Arthur what was known of the two boys. It turned out that their situations were not very dissimilar to those of Arthur himself. Namely, they had families, but they lived crammed into grubby tenements. Food was haphazard and often scarce, and fuel more so. Arthur said Eric's family was a bit more stable than Sam's, in that his father had steady if low-wage employment as a night watchman, with his mother taking in washing and mending.

* * *

By Easter, Adeline had determined that Eric could manage reading satisfactorily and could print a short message without too much difficulty, but Sam was unable to fully understand more than about two-thirds of the sample messages she created. Fortunately, he got a labouring job with a local rag and bone man. Eric said "Better 'im than me. Lots of muck and stink in that job."

Tony and Joseph talked about how they might expand to Hove and Southwick.

"It's chicken and egg," Joseph said. "We really can't afford to go there until we have commissions, and until we go there, we ain't gonna get any."

"Can we expand bit by bit by asking existing customers at the west end of Brighton if they have deliveries in Hove or Southwick, or if they know merchants there and will give us a recommendation, or at least a name or two?"

"Might work," Joseph mused.

"It may be worth walking the streets to see what businesses are there and take some notes. Maybe I'll offer Eric a shilling or two to come with me and see what's there. We could push a hand-cart and ask people if they are interested. Worst case is we get short shrift and have our noses a bit out of joint."

"Well, good luck. It's not a job I fancy."

* * *

On the Thursday after Easter, Tony and Eric wheeled a hand-cart to Southwick and back. The distance from the shop to Southwick station was about 4 and a half miles directly, but our pair walked a good sixteen miles with some meanderings to see what businesses were active. They started early and finished quite late, since they stopped to talk to whoever would listen and seemed likely to be capable of hiring *Best Bonnet*.

Tony wore his day suit, as he now called the second-best one. He had Eric cleaned up and lent him some clothes similar to those that Tony, Joseph and Arthur wore while on deliveries. In fact, the clothes were Arthur's spare set, and Arthur had said "I'll want 'em washed before I wear 'em again. Don't want nits." Tony told him that washing the clothes after Eric wore them was his intention anyway. For the day, Eric would get one shilling and tu'pence plus a good mid-day dinner in a pub, so the effort was worth it to him.

Tony made sure there were some *Best Bonnet* hand-bills on the dolly, as well as a notepad and pencils. He made Eric do the recording to give him practice as well as to establish the idea that *Best Bonnet* kept track of their activities. Eric was no fool, and though at first the effort was taxing, by ten o'clock, he saw how it could be a good habit and provide a way to ensure full wages.

As they came into the shop at nearly six in the evening, Tony said, "Well done, Eric. You can change back to your own clothes in the back room, then I'll pay you."

Eric wanted his money, so was changed in little more than a moment.

"Here you are," Tony said. "Thanks for helping today. Do you think you might like the work?"

"It's not real 'ard work. Just gotta keep track of things, I guess. When we started, I thought all the notes were a lot o' rubbish, but then I could see that whoever's on the cart 'as to know what was picked up, where it goes, and not mix things up."

"That's about the sum of it," Tony agreed. "Anyway, let me talk to Joseph to make sure we agree. However, I think we'll start you next Monday and do Wednesday and Friday too. There's three people on the list who say that they have collections and deliveries, and they seemed happy enough when I told them that initially it wouldn't be every day, but two or three times a week. Monday you'll let them know when you'll next be round. We did make a note of clocks in those neighbourhoods, didn't we?"

"Yeah. But a couple o' places will be awkward and I'll 'ave to guess the time or keep me ears open for the bells."

"Not to worry too much. I think the harder task, and you should talk to Joseph and I about it, is to figure out a route to keep your walk to a minimum. I'm willing to pay for the train home from Southwick if we do

some sort of route that goes out from here. Or the other way round perhaps. We'd possibly pick up on a Monday and some of the deliveries would be on the next run, unless the client pays what we could call Express. We do that already with other customers. Most just opt to wait a day, but it'll be two days wait for a while over Hove way until the business picks up."

* * *

Tony and Joseph lost money for the first two months with Eric, but at the end of July it was Eric who showed them a rather scruffy and poorly printed summary of the month's income and outlay, including his wages. He didn't include any provision for the hand-cart, but had a gross profit for the month after his wages and train fares of 11 s and 9 d.

"Let's find Joseph and have some beer or cider," Tony said. "We'll have to hope it's not just a lucky month. Probably not. And I should show you how I try to allow for the cost of the hand-cart and its maintenance, but we'll do that at the pub."

When they had their drinks, Tony said "The hand-carts are valued at around 30 shillings, possibly a bit less now that Tom Soulton has been improving how he makes 'em. I figure the carts should be good for three years on average, so about 10 shillings a year, or about 10 pence a month. So the profit drops from 11/9 to 10/11. Still not bad. There's some other costs like the clothing, and we try to estimate it the same way, probably around sixpence a month, and other stuff about thru'pence."

"What sort of things?" Eric asked.

"Notepad, pencils, string. At some point we'll drop something and break it, and have to pay. And possibly a client we trust to pay for regular service could disappear without paying. Lots of bits and pieces of expense. But if we keep going like this past month, we'll be all right. Roughly ten bob a month ain't bad if it stays steady. In three months we'll clear the investment Joseph and I made in setting you up and the starting period when the work wasn't enough to cover costs. I suspect things will go up and down. They always do. But keep good records. If there's a steady profit, then we need to work out a way to share some with you so we are all part of the same team."

* * *

In parallel with the events arising from the theft of Arthur's hand-cart, Tom and Vera had welcomed a son on February 24, 1858. Maud and Yolanda came to the workshop cottage and assisted Vera, while Tom was banished to

the workshop itself for two nights, as Vera had a longish labour, and after the birth, Yolanda suggested she rest. Maud stayed with her in the cottage and made sure the stove was kept burning and the house warm. February could be cold.

Soultons' did much less work for the next month and a half, then gradually Vera was able to do a little work on refurbishing furniture or other light jobs. Molly had become a competent housekeeper and cook, and even shown some interest in the workshop.

Around Easter, Vera asked Tom "Would it be worth thinking of another man in the workshop so we can get everything done?"

Tom answered her "I think it's likely better for Robert and I to work out how we can do things more efficiently. The jigs and machines cost us to set up, but after that we don't have to pay them wages, and hopefully don't have to spend much on maintaining them. More a matter of sharpening blades or drill bits, which does cost us quite a lot of time. But even that we might be able to figure out how to do more efficiently."

"You'll have little David sharpening drill bits before he can walk, Tom Soulton."

"Now there's an answer to your suggestion that we get another worker."

* * *

On May 12, after their evening meal, Joseph and Tony walked to the *Old King and Queen* to talk about *Best Bonnet* over cider or ale. At least, that was the intention. However, it seemed that the business was continuing as it more or less should. Valerie was rendering regular accounting of activity, and the minor cost of the theft from Arthur's cart was well behind them, at least financially.

With business matters quickly taken care of, Joseph asked "Ever do something really awkward and not know how to get out of it?"

"We've all done or said something awkward at some point. But I can't think of anything really terrible," Tony answered.

"I'm wondering how to fix a misunderstanding with Mary Lawrence."

"The dark-haired girl we see at church."

"Yeah. I asked if she'd like to go with me to an organ concert at St. Mary the Virgin. They got a new organ a couple of years ago. I quite like the sound. They were doing something called a Bach Fugue and some other stuff."

"I should learn more about Bach – I think there were several men in that family who composed quite a bit of music," Tony said, then went quiet as he realized he was leading the conversation off-topic.

“Anyway, at the intermission, Mary said something. There was the usual hubbub of people talking, and I heard ‘water’ and thought she wanted a glass of water, so I agreed and went with her, thinking to give her aid.”

“But ...?” Tony prompted.

“She’d said something about ‘water closet’ and was none too ‘appy that I was following her. Got all anxious. I think she thought I wanted to ... er... become familiar with ‘er.”

“I assume that wasn’t the case,” Tony said.

“Not then. I think she’s pretty and ... well ... I would like to become familiar with ‘er.”

“But with her a willing accomplice, I expect.”

“Yeah.”

“Your apologies were not accepted as genuine?”

“No. She even moved to a different seat, and asked if she could have a hansom home. Cost me a shilling to pay the cabbie in advance.”

“You’d like to see her again? That is, if the misunderstanding can be rectified.”

“I would. She and I are about the same age – I was born in November 1841 and she on the 8th of December that same year.”

“The Immaculate Conception.”

“What’s that about?” Joseph asked.

“Oh. It’s the religious observance of the conception of Christ. The Catholics celebrate it. I think some consider it a day when you must go to church. Just some idea that stayed in my head after some reading. Sorry to cause a distraction.”

“You sure are an odd one, Tony. What with how you appear different from what’s underneath – I only ever think of you as a fella.”

“Anyway, Joseph, I’m not sure the rift with Mary can be repaired, but you might write a note.”

“But what would I say?”

“Perhaps something like

Dear Miss Lawrence, I very much regret mis-hearing you the other night and thereby creating a misunderstanding. You have my sincere apology and my best wishes for the future.”

“Do you think she’ll respond?”

“No idea, but assuming that message is the truth, it sets out your view of the matter, and you can really do no more than that. If you go round to try to see her, she might think it aggressive. The note lets her choose.”

* * *

Tony and Moonbeam were on the regular morning route and at *Fortescue Factory*. Two new workers whose names Tony did not yet know, though he'd seen them around talking to Mary Yarrow, were putting half a dozen boxes on the cart. Tony thought it was a good job the other collections were quite small, with the next stop at the Station.

Janet Nuffield came out of the factory with a tray on which was a plate and a mug.

"Mr. Brown, Mr. Brown. Would you like a taste of something new we are trying? Cheese and onion tarts, and I poured you a cup of tea. I hope you take it with milk."

"Thanks," Tony said, and picked up the tart which was of a size for two or three mouthfuls, with filling in a pastry shell. The top of the tart had been browned in the grill or a hot oven. In fact the tart was still warm.

"It may be hot inside, so be careful," Janet said.

Tony took a careful bite, and ate that cautiously.

"Very nice, and a cup of tea is most welcome too."

"Does your donkey need some water?"

"Probably not. Moonbeam drank at the trough a few minutes ago."

"You keep her well-groomed. The hat is such a nice detail."

"That's how we got the name *Best Bonnet*. Are you finding the work here to your taste – sorry, that could be taken as a pun given the product of the factory."

"I do like working here. It's been a salvation from the Workhouse, and I seem to have found a place. Though I must say I'm still trying to ascertain how I will fit into the local society. I have been watching for lectures and concerts – inexpensive ones of course – so that I can meet people who value intellectual pursuits and, to be honest, to find friends. Up to now, my brother Felix and I have been concentrating on ensuring our material safety."

"From my own experience, I know that material matters take precedence, but it is important to have wider interests, and, of course, friends."

"Do you ever go to concerts, Mr. Brown?"

"Occasionally. And I have had the good fortune to attend a couple of plays in the last year or so. That was a novelty for me, but assuredly one that I found very interesting and hope to do again. But the trains will not wait for Moonbeam and I. I thank you for your kindness, Miss Nuffield."

* * *

Mary Yarrow had seen Janet offer Tony refreshment. The offer of refreshment had her approval, but the motivation for making the offer was,

she suspected, that Janet found Tony attractive as a young man. This could possibly end badly.

That evening, Mary arranged to take a walk to *Upton's* yard. She told Michael and Elizabeth she wanted to talk to Rebecca about some ideas for upholstering some chairs, and indeed was so interested, though it was hardly urgent. Moreover, she made sure she got to *Upton's* early enough that the evening meal would just be finishing.

"Hello Mary," Rebecca said. "What brings you out this evening?" Rebecca was alone in the parlour.

"I believe I need to talk to Tony about a delicate social matter involving Janet Nuffield. But I've told Michael I wanted to ask you about some upholstery material."

"I think I can guess," Rebecca said. "Janet has taken a shine to Tony, which will only be awkward. But did you really want also to talk of upholstery?"

"Your guess is right. And, yes, I've a couple of wing chairs that are very comfortable, but the arms are threadbare."

"Why don't we call Tony – he's with the donkeys brushing them I think. Joseph has gone off to walk with Mary Lawrence. At least I hope they are just walking out and not getting into trouble. Valerie is in her room reading, or I'd get her to come and find some of the material we have. But I suggest that I keep in mind your needs and set aside some material for you to look at on another occasion. What general colour are the chairs?"

"They are a deep pink or if you like a faded dark red."

"Probably something contrasting would look better than a colour that is almost but not quite right. Perhaps a dark grey, and make some arm covers that can be pinned with the pins out of sight."

"Good. We've settled that in case anyone asks. I'll go and talk to Tony. Thank you Rebecca."

Indeed, Tony was brushing Annabelle, having completed the brushing of Moonbeam.

"Hello Tony."

"Good evening, Mrs. Yarrow. I'm afraid I almost said McNair."

"You'll have to just call me Mary, like you call Mrs. Naismith Adeline now."

"Wouldn't be appropriate at the factory," Tony answered.

"True. Anyway, it's something at the factory I wanted to see you about."

"Oh. Have I done something wrong?"

"No. No. Not at all. Just that I noticed Janet Nuffield bring you some refreshments. I actually approve of her doing that, but I think her motives may be ... Oh. This is awkward."

"You think she may be hoping I'll court her as a young man might?"

“Yes. And I can understand why. You have always presented as a young man, and for a woman your voice is quite low pitched. You even have the gait and mannerisms of a man. Indeed, I can’t imagine you as a woman in women’s clothes.”

“Nor can I,” Tony said, and they both laughed.

“Anyway, I’m not sure how to discourage what may become an unfortunate disappointment.”

“Does she not sometimes go to church of a Sunday?” Tony asked.

“Yes. Though not always.”

“Let me write a note that you can give her, inviting her to walk with me after church this coming Sunday. I would actually welcome her company to lectures or concerts as she suggested to me, but we had better have some ... er... clarity on what might be possible.”

“You will tell her your reality?”

“I have stated to Mr. Turcotte and Constable Shaw and others that I won’t deny I’m a young woman if asked, but plan to stay in male attire so I can continue my manner of earning a living. It seems this is an occasion where I am essentially being asked my gender, if only implicitly.”

“Thank you Tony. I hope Janet will not be too unhappy to learn what you will tell her.”

“Well, Annabelle is now properly brushed, aren’t you old girl. Let me wash my hands, then perhaps you’ll join me for a glass of something round the corner. My treat.”

“Thank you. That will be enjoyable.”

“You coming, Jolly. No. Well, we did walk a fair way today.”

* * *

On Sunday, June 6, 1858, Tony waited outside St. Paul’s after the morning service for Janet Nuffield.

“Good morning, Mr. Brown.”

“Good morning, Miss Nuffield. I trust that you are here because you got my note.”

“Indeed. Thank you for the invitation.

Where did you propose to walk?”

“If you have the energy for it, we could walk to St. Anne’s Well, take some tea, then walk back to your lodgings.”

“That sounds nice. Shall we go.”

“First, let’s pay our respects to Phoebe Hessel in St. Nicholas’ graveyard, it is not too far out of our way.”

“Is she one of your relatives?”

“I don’t think so. But her gravestone is remarkably informative.”

They walked to Saint Nicholas and quickly found the grave and read the inscription.

In Memory of
PHOEBE HESSEL

who was born at Stepney in the Year 1713
She served for many Years
as a private Soldier in the 5th Regt of foot
in different parts of Europe
and in the Year 1745 fought under the command
of the DUKE of CUMBERLAND
and the Battle of Fontenoy
where she received a Bayonet wound in her Arm
Her long life which commenced in the time of
QUEEN ANNE
extended to the reign of
GEORGE IV
by whose munificence she received comfort
and support in her latter Years
She died at Brighton where she had long resided
December 12th 1821 aged 108 years.

“What an amazing story!” Janet exclaimed. “And such a great age after such a tumultuous early life.”

“Indeed. And she was for a long time living as a man, showing how women can do so.”

“Surely it would be more difficult today, a century after?”

“Do you really think so? Perhaps a small anecdote might convince you otherwise.”

“Please. Do tell me.”

“A young couple, much in love, married in 1838. They were Samuel Crown and Matilda Evans. The two had met after the unfortunate death of Samuel’s parents and Matilda’s father when a coach overturned not far from Brighton. Their marriage led to the birth of a daughter, Antonia Crown, in March of 1839. However, Samuel’s uncle, Ezekiel, fabricated a story that Samuel’s parents owed money, when in fact they left an estate of several hundred pounds. Ezekiel indentured Samuel as a sailor, and he lost contact with Matilda, his daughter and his mother in law, Josephine Evans. Unfortunately, Matilda died in 1843, then Josephine in 1846. Antonia had been cautioned to avoid the Workhouse, and took to the streets.”

“Felix and I were in the Workhouse for a short time. It was awful. I’m so glad Ethel took us out.”

“Many young women are ... er... molested,” Tony said.

“Felix had to fight some louts who tried to take advantage of me.”

“Thus our young – not much more than an infant – Antonia put on boys’ clothing, and became a street urchin who was apparently male.”

“And grew up as a young man?”

“Never wore women’s garb.”

“And how does she make her living?” Janet asked.

“With a donkey and cart.”

“Oh ... oh ... I see. How foolish of me.”

“You are not foolish, Miss Nuffield. But I would not want to have you later on feel deceived by appearances.”

“But you use Brown as your name?”

“I suspect that is purely mispronunciation or mis-hearing of Crown.”

Tony continued Will we still walk to Hove beach? I would like to talk of what lectures or concerts might be available to attend.

“Oh. Yes. It would be good to have a companion for such occasions.

You would, I take it, prefer I not share your secret?”

“There are some situations where my use of male gender would be a fraud, but wearing men’s clothing and making my living as a man is not, according to Mr. Turcotte and Mr. Mortimer. Some people, of course, will make a fuss and claim all sorts of fanciful wrongs. Thus, I do not intend to cause grief by my presentation as a young man, but would prefer to inform people myself.”

“I can understand that, and will welcome your friendship, ... er... Mr. Brown.”

* * *

Perhaps in reaction to her overly-strict parents, Rose Bingham no longer attended church regularly. In place of church, she and Angus took regular excursions in the gig. Rose now was proficient in handling and harnessing Phoenix, who knew the outings always earned her a carrot or apple. Moreover, the gig was well-balanced and easy to pull, and Rose and Angus never pushed her to move at a pace more than she took of her own volition. They did, however, like to explore, and the outings took them all around the nearby countryside.

This day was mild, and Angus had arranged with James that a picnic basket was packed, and they made their way – slowly at times due to the grade – to the Devil’s Dyke, where they found a place to tie Phoenix on a

longish rope, and Rose uncoupled the gig, but left the rest of the harness. She had, thoughtfully, brought a large corked jug of water and a bucket so the pony could drink, as it was by no means certain there would be water available. Devil's Dyke was on high ground and the Downs were known to be made of porous chalk.

"It's a capital view from here, Rose," Angus said, stating the obvious.

"Yes. Despite living all my life in Brighton, this is my first time here. Our outings have shown me many places which I would never have seen otherwise."

"That is good. I am of a strong suspicion that your investment in Phoenix gives you personal joy, but is not what a business would deem profitable."

"That is true as far as the rate of return is concerned. I am not earning a return that a business would like to accept. But I do get this," Rose waved her arm to indicate the panorama. "And even looking at the revenues from the amounts Tony and Joseph give me for use of Phoenix, which I believe cover some work for Mr. Goldman and Maud, I am slowly recovering my twelve pounds. Thus I am not unhappy."

"I could give you some funds – these Sundays with you are very precious."

"You already contribute to the feed and bedding, and we don't pay you back for that. I understood that was to be your part of the bargain."

"Yes, I suppose it was. Sometimes I feel it is ... er ... not enough. In fact, though every moment with you is a joy to me, it does not feel enough somehow. And do not think I am ungrateful."

"Unless I misconstrue your words, I am of a similar opinion."

"It is such a pity I cannot offer you the proper role of a husband."

"Angus, as there is nobody near to overhear, I will say that as I was brought up in a very strict household, I was not given any understanding of what the *proper role* of a husband would be. I will ask you to be specific, please, and do not," Rose said this very firmly, "assume that my sensibilities are so sensitive that I will take offence or have an attack of the vapours."

Angus laughed. "Dear Rose. I so admire how forthright and direct you are.

All right. Have you ever seen dogs coupling in the street?"

"Once, yes. It looked very awkward, with the dog clambering onto the rear of the bitch."

"Well, in humans, some of the men in my regiment talked of that, but as far as I know, the woman generally lies on her back and the man kneels between her parted legs and ... oh ... this is awkward."

"Does he put his member in the woman?"

"Yes.

But you see I cannot kneel. Once conjoined, I might be able to continue, but getting to that point ..."

“And cannot the man and woman lie side by side? Or else the woman on top?”

“I do not think that is common, though sometimes the men of my gun would talk of having a woman up against the wall. But that would not work for me either. And, truthfully Rose, I would want us to have much more ... affection.”

“So would I, though perhaps I would be afraid of a consequent child. Still, I find myself wanting ... I’m not sure what. Does that make me wanton?” This last was not said in a light or flirtatious way, but with an air of concern.

“I cannot think of any woman less wanton than you, Rose. But it does seem that we desire each other. And, if I think on it, I suppose a congress with you on top of me should work. However, that is – and rather appropriately to our outing with Phoenix – putting the cart before the horse.”

“Meaning that we should be married before we do so?”

“Indeed. I may be a rough old soldier, but I recognize the need for respectability.

Am I correct, Rose, that from what you say, you would like to marry me? I know I ache to be your husband, but have ... er ... held back for fear of creating a disaster.”

“Angus. You must know I do. You are extremely dear to me, and I also want a greater closeness.” She kissed him. It was a rather quick kiss, as they were out in the open, and there were other people not far away. Devil’s Dyke was not the popular attraction it became later in the century when visitors might find bands and a sort of carnival there. Still, it was not private, which Rose suddenly wished it were, though perhaps then she might do something unbecoming.

“Now we also should think on whether we can afford to marry,” Angus said.

“Am I correct, Angus, that the school is doing a little better now?”

“Indeed. Captain Fraser has been able to augment our wages a bit. I still have the pension, poor as it is. We would not be rich, but I think we could manage.”

“Unless there were children, I would endeavour to continue to work,” Rose said. “I suppose I could talk to Tony and Joseph to see if I could be involved in the cartage trade in some way. Or to Mr. Turcotte about services to other solicitors or barristers.

You would not object to my doing so, Angus?”

“It is common that women give up employment on marriage, but in our situation I think it might be foolish to do so precipitately. We should take small steps, one at a time.”

Needless to say, Rose and Angus were both in a state of frustrated stimulation from their talk. On the top of the Downs at Devil's Dyke, they were constrained to remain composed. In the gig, returning to Fortescue Road, both were quiet and thoughtful, not out of upset with each other, but the contrary. Each wanted to work out how they could achieve a more intimate partnership.

As Rose helped Angus out of the gig, she said "Angus. When I return from stabling Phoenix, I would like you to come to my small room to talk about things."

Angus, not quite sure what Rose wanted, simply said "Shall I come at four o' clock."

"Yes. That will be perfect."

Angus knocked on the door of Turcotte's office at four. Rose let him in.

"It's quite dim in here, Rose. You've drawn the curtains."

"Indeed, Angus. I have thought on what we talked about this morning. If we marry, I want ... er ... the ... full experience.

I think we should at least attempt to find out if a congress would be possible, though of course I am not suggesting we carry the ... er ... process to completion."

Angus said "What did you have in mind?"

"I thought if we removed our heavier garments, it would be possible to find out if I were to be on top of you, the ... er ... mechanics of a congress could succeed."

Angus was quiet for a few moments, and Rose feared he was upset or offended, but then he said "I am willing, Rose, but I should tell you that ... er ... sometimes men get very excited and there is ... er ... an eruption of seed that is outside their willing control."

"Oh. I have no experience. Do I thus understand that you have ... er ... been with a woman?"

"When I was much younger, I had a sweetheart, and we ... once. It was very nice. But her parents took her away with them to America."

"So you found you were unable to stop the ... er ... eruption?"

"Not then. A little later we had a congress. I moved in and out and eventually another eruption came, in what I understand is the usual manner. But I was on top of her, face to face. It was very special."

"Shall we attempt to see if we could manage the ... er ... approximation ... of our parts?"

"You may not wish to see my leg."

"Angus. I will accept you as you are, but may hope that we can each help the other to find improvements in life. Now, shall I remove my dress. I

have a shift underneath.”

“Then, should I have ... an eruption ... you must avoid my seed.”

“I have a ewer of water and a flannel cloth here.”

Rose took off her dress. Angus could not help but note that her nipples were hard against the thin shift. He balanced against the bed and undid his trousers, lowered them to a level where he could sit on the bed and remove them. He took off his shirt, leaving a singlet and drawers.

“I wear a sort of sock over the stump of my leg.” This was about three inches above the knee of his left leg. However, Rose’s view was drawn a bit higher, where there was a bulge in the drawers.

Rose said “If you lie back, I will crawl on top. I hope I will not be too heavy.”

“Rose, you will not be too heavy.”

Angus lay back and shifted to the centre of the quite narrow bed. The bulge in the drawers was now more obvious.

“I’m sorry, Rose, that my ... excitement ... is so obvious.”

“If mine is not obvious, I can assure you I find myself most stimulated.”

Rose put a knee on the bed, and swung her other leg over Angus. She had to pull up the shift to do this, and Angus saw a flash of hair.

“You have no drawers, Rose!”

“Not in summer. In winter, the kind that are split to allow ... er ...”

“Oh. I had not realized.”

Rose laughed. “That the men and women in this house are so much in conversation and proximity, but we are so much in ignorance of each other. I had no idea a man’s ... er ... member was so large.”

“From times where we swam in the Black Sea and other places, I am in no way atypical in that respect.”

“Angus. I am kneeling astride you, and my ... er ... opening is in proximity to your member. Would congress be possible like this?”

“I would perhaps be able to move a little up and down.”

“So could I” Rose raised and then lowered herself, and in the process they bumped together.

“Oh. I can feel your heat. But up, ... up! I cannot hold ...”

Rose climbed off the bed and got the water and cloth. She could see a wet patch on Angus’ drawers, in fact two of them, one obviously where she had bumped into him.

“Do you want me to turn away while you clean yourself. I feel some wetness myself, but I think it is my own.”

“You should use another cloth, I think,” Angus said. “But I think that we are being quite open with each other, and you need not turn away. However, I hope what you see does not upset you.”

Rose and Angus tidied themselves, but did not dress immediately. Angus was about to push himself up when Rose said “Not yet. Move over as far as you can and we will lie close for a few minutes.”

Without words, Angus put an arm around Rose and drew her against him. They kissed. Angus was not sure what to do with his other arm, the one with the damaged hand. Rose took it and placed it against a breast.

“Oh. Rose. I was wanting to do that, but afraid to cause you ... anxiety.”

“Have we not established that we can manage what is necessary to be man and wife? Perhaps we are a bit ... early in what we are doing, but to be unable to have a proper marriage would be extremely frustrating and I would not abide that.”

“Yes. I ... I will have difficulty waiting until I can ... er ... ”

“Clearly I am of the same persuasion,” Rose said, and kissed him.

* * *

The next morning, Angus spoke to Captain Fraser about his intent to marry Rose Bingham. Fraser simply said “Congratulations Sinclair. Or should I say Angus now. Things really have changed in the time we have been here in Brighton, and for the better.”

“Yes, sir.” Angus could not yet escape the military ranks. “Actually, I was wondering how we might arrange ... er ... accommodation so Rose and I could sleep in the same room.”

“Oh. Of course. I am not thinking of the practicalities. What do you think would work?”

“At the worse, Rose stays in her small compartment in Number 21, and I continue with the fold-down cot here in Number 23. The room is used in the day as a classroom. Miss Bingham will talk to her employer as soon as possible, but today he is not in the office.”

* * *

Archibald Turcotte had a court appearance on the 28th of June, so did not come to the office until Tuesday, June 29, 1858. When she brought in the morning tea and biscuits, Rose said “Mr. Turcotte, might I talk to you about a private matter?”

“Certainly, Miss Bingham. Do you wish to do so now? If so, bring your teacup and we can talk as we enjoy our beverage and biscuits.”

Rose fetched her cup and took a seat on one of the chairs opposite Mr. Turcotte. She said “You are aware that I purchased a pony that I use with Mr. Sinclair so he may have the experience of getting out and about.”

“I estimate that the outings are of benefit to you also, Miss Bingham.”

“Indeed, they are important to me.”

“And now there is a question of how you and Mr. Sinclair could consider a more formal partnership beyond riding in a gig?”

“Oh. ... Are my thoughts that obvious?” Rose was clearly embarrassed.

“No. I am not reading your thoughts. It is simply that when a man and a woman spend time together and there is every appearance that they both enjoy the other’s company, the next step – usually marriage – must at least be considered.”

“Yes...” Rose did not know quite what to say, as Mr. Turcotte had more or less said it.

“Will you and Mr. Sinclair have enough resources?”

“We have both some small savings. I would like to continue in employment, which was one of the matters I wanted to ask of you.”

“While a number of members of society seem to think women should cease employment on marriage, I would lose an entirely satisfactory secretary and assistant. However, I would think children might be an obstacle.

What about your living arrangements? Have you given thought to where you would live?”

“We believe that some arrangement within these houses would suit us best, should it be possible. Angus – Mr. Sinclair – plans to remain with Captain Fraser. The question is mainly where we would sleep. In truth, though it would be unconventional, we could even remain where we are.”

“Many married couples have separate bedrooms, though I personally find there is a ... comfort is perhaps the best word ... in finding a person who is your friend and partner beside you when you wake in the night. But perhaps I overstep the bounds of propriety in so saying.”

“Actually, Mr. Turcotte, I think it may be that aspect of marriage which is most attractive to me.”

“Then, Miss Bingham, I wish you well. I recognize that Mr. Sinclair’s injuries are a ... challenge. But he – and you – deserve the happiness that life can afford.

Would it be helpful if your small closet were a fraction bigger to allow a larger bed?”

“That would, indeed, be extremely helpful, Mr. Turcotte. But is it possible?”

“I believe Mr. Tom Soulton, that ingenious fellow, made the partitions and they are apparently easy to remove, so I presume easy to alter. I suggest you contact him to come and recommend an alteration that allows enough

space for sleeping and for storage of your clothes, but sufficient workspace for the office as well. If you have larger possessions, we can talk to Mrs. Cohen and Captain Fraser to see if there is other space somewhere, but I am, within reason, willing to pay Tom to make the adjustments as a wedding gift, if that is acceptable.”

“Thank you very, very much, Mr. Turcotte. I know there is space, for example, under the water cistern in the kitchen for additional storage. However, Mr. Sinclair and I have rather few possessions, and no furniture, as here we have not needed any.”

* * *

Tom came by that very evening, while it was still light, and made some measurements. It turned out that another yard of width was an easy modification to the small sleeping quarters, and since Mr. Turcotte no longer had two staff but just Rose, the working area of the office was big enough. In fact, if another employee were engaged, the office would still not be more cramped than most offices in Brighton. Mr. Turcotte rented two rooms, both of which had been reception rooms of the house. The one at the front was slightly smaller and used by Turcotte himself, while Rose had previously shared the larger rear room with Henry Mortimer when he was the clerk.

“How soon do you think it could be executed?” Rose asked.

“Couple of weeks at the outside, I should think. And a pound should take care of the materials and labour.”

“Then we should go and see the vicar,” Angus said. “Though I must admit that Rose and I favour the liturgy of excursions in the gig Dan and James made. The vicar may wonder if we are truly parishioners, as we rarely attend Sunday services.”

“Still, probably better than the Register Office,” Tom opined.

* * *

Rose and Angus could have used the gig to get to St. Paul’s, but it was easier for Rose to walk to the Station and bring a hansom. They told the cabbie he could come back for them in half an hour. Rose had already had Dan take a message to the church to arrange to meet the vicar at 8 o’clock in the evening. Given the month was June, and the day the last of the month, it was still light out.

If Rev. Wagner had any concerns that Angus and Rose were not regular parishioners, he made no comment. Instead, he greeted them at the vicarage

door. "Mr. Sinclair, Miss Bingham, Do come in. Let us find a chair for Mr. Sinclair, who I gather is a veteran of the Crimean Campaign."

"That is correct, vicar," Angus said. "Though not all of me came back, I'm afraid."

"But I have heard that you are teaching in the school run by another old soldier."

"Indeed. That is how I met my fiancé."

"I work for Mr. Turcotte, a barrister who has offices in the same houses," Rose explained, leaving out the living arrangements.

"Your family have been long-standing parishioners here, Miss Bingham. And your note did say you wanted to arrange for banns to be read. Do I also take it that you wish to arrange the marriage ceremony?"

"That is so, Vicar," Angus said. "We are wondering if July 24 is possible."

"Let me look in my appointments book. Ah, there are three weddings in the afternoon, but if you were to be willing to be married in the morning, say at half past ten, then there is an opening."

Rose said "I believe the morning might suit us better, Vicar. It takes more time for Angus – Mr. Sinclair – to get around with any form of transport than other people require. Also, if we decide to take a few days of honeymoon, we will want to leave earlier in the day."

"Then I will mark you in the book. And I presume the banns are to be called starting this Sunday."

"Yes, Vicar. If we are to wed on July 24, then we must call them this Sunday and the two following," Rose explained.

"Oh. Yes," the Vicar looked nonplussed, then said "I do hope ..."

"No, sir, there is no apprehension of an early child," Angus said. "Miss Bingham and I have realized that, given our decision to marry and that we have no need to find new living arrangements, there is no reason we should delay. Moreover, the summer allows a longer day, as Miss Bingham has explained, so that we can travel without fear of encountering darkness on our journey."

"I apologize. Your circumstances are ones that I have to struggle a little to properly appreciate.

Now are there any particular questions?"

"I have asked my colleague, Mr. James McDowell, to stand up for me. Unfortunately, he took a ball to the jaw and his speech is difficult for many to understand. Will that be a problem?"

"I don't foresee any. He will be asked to pass me the wedding ring, and to sign the book as witness, but there is no need for him to speak at the ceremony. However, it is common for the main witness for the groom, sometimes called the Best Man, to speak at the wedding breakfast."

"We will work out some arrangement," Angus said.

The Vicar asked “I believe I have only seen your colleague at church a few times. Do his injuries cause him to avoid being in public?”

Angus answered “I am not sure that I fully understand his reasons, but James likes to walk a great deal. I think it is a way to fight the frustration his injuries have engendered, as he has great difficulty in speech. Also in eating, and even in keeping his spit in his mouth. I don’t doubt it is painful to be the object of stares. I can only say the residents and friends of Mrs. Cohen’s houses have been kind to him and made him welcome, as they have me.”

The Vicar said “Again, I find myself inadequate to understanding how others cope with the trials the Lord has sent their way.

In any event, let me congratulate the pair of you and I will call the banns for the next three Sundays and will see you at the altar in about a month. You should consult the verger as soon as possible if you need to arrange for music, flowers or other considerations.”

* * *

On Sunday July 4, 1858, Tony donned a new linen suit and a straw hat – an outfit suggested by Adeline – and he walked to *Fortescue Factory* to collect Janet Nuffield. The two of them then walked to Fortescue Road so Adeline could join them to walk to the Promenade where the Corporation had constructed a bandstand and a public concert was to be provided by a local brass ensemble.

There were folding chairs in the best places to hear the concert and Tony paid the few pennies each for chairs and our three friends sat together to wait for the music to commence.

Adeline asked “Did you read about the stink in London? Apparently Parliament is considering moving to Oxford or St. Albans.”

Tony said “Since the shop gets the newspapers, I’ve read several items on the problem of sewage. But we have a similar problem right here in Brighton, I think. It will take a lot of work to provide good sewers and a proper disposal of the waste.”

“I envy you the chance to see all the newspapers,” Janet said. “Several of us put in a ha’penny so we can share the Times and the Brighton paper, the weekly Herald.”

* * *

Later in the month, Tony read that, on 26 July, Lionel de Rothschild took his seat as the first Jewish Member of Parliament. However, despite his limited formal education, Tony realized that there was a generally negative attitude in society to Jewish people. He found this confusing. The Jewish people he knew, namely the Goldmans and Abraham Cohen, were people of great honour and integrity, who had treated him with more courtesy and kindness than almost all others. There were similar social attitudes towards Catholics, but somewhat different in tone.

The news of Rothschild was just one of several events reported that summer. Tony realized that sometimes the world went through periods when there was a much greater activity and energy, and that this was one of them.

At the start of August, for example, the Medical Act of 1858 regulated practitioners in medicine and surgery. Most people outside the profession likely did not register this change. It was, perhaps, a start to removing some of the quackery from the field.

There was more discussion about the British Empire taking over the properties and governmental role of the British East India Company. It would probably mean a lot of fuss about whether shareholders would be compensated. When Tony thought about things, he realized how strange it was that India had been governed by a commercial society that had its own army, an army larger than that of most nations.

In the middle of the month there was a lot of excitement about the new trans-Atlantic telegraph cable. President Buchanan of the United States exchanged greetings with Queen Victoria. Unfortunately, a weak signal would force a shutdown of the service in a few weeks, with its resurrection several years in the future. That was a great pity, as the rapid communications the telegraph brought were changing the way people saw the world, and themselves in it.

All this news made the world seem larger, the individual smaller. Yet at the same time the individual had more opportunities than before. Even a young woman posing as a man had a fraction more chance for prosperity than a decade or so earlier.

More locally, the wedding of Angus and Rose last Saturday morning had given Tony more cause for thought about how men and women found ways to come together. Dan had driven the gig to bring Rose to the church, while Tony had earlier transported Angus on Moonbeam's cart. The congregation was not large. Rose had just her parents and a friend of long standing apart from Adeline, who she had asked to be her principal witness. This choice had made Adeline very happy, to the extent of tears when the request was made.

Angus had written to his brothers and sister in Scotland to inform them he was marrying Rose. A warm letter of congratulations signed by all of

them came by return, expressing wishes that they would be able to meet in the not too distant future. However, it was summer, and a busy time on the farms.

The happy couple became man and wife before eleven o'clock, returning for a wedding breakfast in the kitchen of Number 21, where the throng overflowed into the yard at the back or the area in front, except when there was a speech by the Best Man. James had written this down and had asked Henry Mortimer to read it.

"Friends and family – and I cannot truly distinguish one from the other – we are here to celebrate the marriage of two fine souls, Rose and Angus. I have known Angus for about a decade. We fought side by side for King and country, and both have suffered injuries. Those wounds have physically healed, but troubled thoughts remain. Rose has come into Angus life and since she has, I believe some of the turmoil of those thoughts has been calmed. Let us wish them both much joy and contentment together. Rose and Angus."

At one o'clock, James led Phoenix with Angus and Rose in the gig to the Station so they could go to London for two nights in an hotel. Meanwhile, Tony and Joseph changed clothes and returned to some commissions interrupted by the wedding. Business had to keep going.

* * *

On the following Wednesday, a sunny late-July evening, Tony was sitting on the sea wall of the Promenade watching people on the beach. Jolly had settled on the wall beside him, her head on her paws. It was good to just let the world pass by for a while.

This reverie was, however, interrupted after a few minutes by Dan Dixon, who came and sat beside Tony.

"Nice evening," Dan said.

"That it is," Tony agreed.

"Wanted to ask you somethin'" Dan said.

"Certainly. Ask away."

"You ever have a problem pissing? Last few days it's like boiling water coming out, and some pus between attempts."

Dan was not in the circle that was aware of Tony's gender. While Tony liked Dan, he did not consider him very discreet. This was not out of any specific examples of behaviour, just a general suspicion, which seemed to be confirmed by events over time.

"Have you been with a woman?" Tony asked.

"Er... You won't tell my Ma?"

"Course not."

“Actually yes. My first time. Been finding it hard to keep my pecker from getting ’ard at inconvenient times. Then I got to know Betty Nixon who’s a barmaid at that pub not far from the Factory. She’s not a whore, but lets it be known that for a few bob she’ll give you a nice time.”

“Was it a nice time?” Tony asked, rather skeptically.

“Yes. It was very nice.

I should tell you, so you don’t find out otherwise, that Jack let me have the key to the shop of a Sunday morning. Didn’t want to be out in the open. Betty said sometimes it was just up against the wall behind the pub. Hello, lift your skirts, here’s your money. I got the feeling she liked a bit of comfort while doin’ it, and not just the money.”

“I suppose everyone does.”

“You tried it, Tony?”

“No. Taking my time. And I’ve read enough that I suspect Betty gave you the clap.”

“What’s that?”

“An illness called a venereal disease. Has a long Latin name that begins with a G. Sometimes called other names. You’ll need to get it treated, but I’m not sure who you should consult.”

“And Betty? She probably should get treated too.”

“If only to avoid giving it to others.”

“Can you ’elp me find a doctor for it?”

“I’ll ask around discreetly. Don’t want folk giving either of us the evil eye.”

* * *

Dan eventually paid out a total of nearly £5 in total for various consultations and treatments, none of which were pleasant. Tony’s enquiries suggested a Dr. Raleigh, who had a busy practice among the women who plied an ancient profession among the upper class but nonetheless diseased men who came to Brighton for entertainment. Raleigh’s practice also included some of those men. Dan became just another victim of an old but persistent disease that would, on occasion, toss up new varieties of itself.

Tony, of course, was a bystander to this aspect of life, but the reality of venereal disease had been a presence during the time he had spent as a child on the street, as well as the quick, crude, outdoor copulations of the cheaper prostitutes that spread those afflictions. Those memories were a sad and constant warning that sex could be dangerous. And the street sex trade was ugly. It was difficult to associate such behaviour with pleasure and joy. Yet Adeline had said her unofficial husband had given her respect and pleasure,

and in the tone and colour of her words in so saying was a depth of truth that could not be unsaid. Moreover, Adeline had talked of this pleasure enjoyed at a time when she would, to most of society, be considered elderly.

Thus it was that Dan's dose of the clap pushed awkward conflicts into Tony's dreams, dreams which bled into each day's thoughts and moods.

The last weekend in August, 1858, Tony and Adeline decided to take a day in Hastings. As a seaside town, it was not really very different from Brighton, though perhaps less encumbered by escapees from London. A somewhat quieter seaside town.

Tony treated Adeline to luncheon at the Stag Inn.

"This is very nice. Thank you Tony."

"I almost feel we haven't had much time for real conversation since we got back from our travels a year ago May. We've been in the same places and talked, but day-to-day activities have taken the priority."

"That's true. It's not from any deliberate intent on my part, and I'm sure not on yours. But we've both been rather busy. After all, you've engaged Arthur to take on the hand-cart and Jack Dixon for the newspaper shop.

In fact, I was going to ask you about Jack's brother Dan. He seems out of sorts lately. When I was walking by the water closet, I thought I heard him sigh in pain. I hope he hasn't got himself a dose of the clap."

"Since you have guessed, I will tell you that that is the case. And I am rather annoyed with him, as he persuaded Jack to let him use the shop on a Sunday with a barmaid named Betty Nixon who seems to dabble in whoring from time to time."

"Is he getting treatment from a physician?" Adeline asked.

"Yes. Dr. Raleigh."

"Oh, him. Makes a good few pounds from the vices of the rich tourists who dally with the poxy lasses of the streets."

"I sometimes wonder if, but for accidents of place and time, those poxy lasses might not have included me," Tony mused. "Ah, here are our plates of roast beef."

Adeline said "I should be more sympathetic to the girls. And my own situation with Albert was as a kept woman. To my knowledge, Albert was true to me and never dallied with another while we were together."

Tony said "I fear I don't understand how the urges overcome reason, but perhaps that is due to my inexperience. Dan seemed to indicate he was somehow pulled out of control. Does that happen to both men and women?"

"I would say it does, though not everyone of course. I never had the inclination that powerfully, but some men and women – people you'd think sensible and respectable – somehow suffer a sort of insanity when their physical self takes them over."

"Do you think the girls in the streets are so affected?" Tony asked.

“There, I suspect, it’s more a matter of wanting to eat and have a roof over their head. Sadly, they often end up with neither and dying young.”

“From what I’ve overheard at Fortescue Road, Mrs. Cohen and Mrs. Yarrow were somehow involved with a house of ill repute. But they seem to have avoided the pox or the clap,” Tony said.

“I think they may have worked, or even run, a place where things were ... oh, I don’t quite know how to put it ... more regulated. Not regulated by law, but by the owners to keep their place seemingly respectable. I think that is how Mrs. Cohen has knowledge of some medical things. And Mrs. Yarrow was the cook. Mrs. Yarrow essentially admitted as much by saying it was a private hotel where she did the cooking. So the girls would have cost the men a lot more, but had fewer clients. And likely the house was more a place where men could eat, drink and gamble, as well as find a woman for the night. But I’m fairly sure there’d be cases of disease, and then the girls would likely be given some money and a quick good-bye.”

“It seems so sad,” Tony said.

“That it is. Be thankful for our good fortune. And this meal, for which I am grateful to you, Tony.”

* * *

As with most people suffering the clap, Dan wanted to keep this information confidential, especially from his employer. However, Alexander Collier happened to see Dan leaving Dr. Raleigh’s surgery that was in a quite fine house. At *B and J*, Collier, who was the assistant to Cassandra, asked her “Have you started some new venture on Marine Parade?”

“No. Why would you ask?”

“I saw Mr. Dan Dixon coming out of a house there. I assumed he was there on some commission for you.”

“How odd.

Do you remember where this house was?”

Collier could not remember the number of the house, but gave the nearest cross street and that he thought it was three or four doors down.

Cassandra walked home via the Marine Parade, which was definitely not on her usual route. It did not take her long to find Dr. Raleigh’s brass plate beside a door in the location Collier had suggested. Raleigh was well known for his treatment of what were sometimes called "social" diseases.

When she got home to Fortescue Road, Cassandra asked Martha to tell Dan to come to the drawing room as soon as he got the request. Some ten minutes later, he knocked on the door of the drawing room and Cassandra called “Enter.”

“Martha said you wanted to see me, Mrs. Cohen.”

“Yes. Mr. Collier asked me today if I had a new venture on the Marine Parade, as he saw you coming out of a house there.”

Dan flushed. He had just had his first consultation with Raleigh and had been given some medicine to take which he was told would likely make him feel unwell. Not knowing what to say, he stayed silent.

Cassandra continued “As far as I can tell, the house you visited is the surgery for Dr. Raleigh, who is known for his knowledge of the treatment of certain diseases that are acquired from interactions between men and women, and those women often share their favours among men for money. Would I be incorrect in my thinking?”

Dan, realizing there was little to gain by denying where he had been, said “No. Mrs. Cohen.”

It did not take Cassandra long to extract the story.

At this time, the ideas of germs had not been widely accepted. Cassandra and her mother, Frieda, had worked in an apothecary shop and had read several treatises on the subject, including Gideon Mantell’s book on animalcules. Mantell had even practiced in Lewes. Her feeling was that, even if it eventually proved to be a false theory in detail, taking precautions against such microscopic infectious agents was worthwhile. Therefore, she banned Dan from the water closet – he would have to use a pot in the shed at the bottom of the yard. And she made him promise to abide by a stringent regime of hand-washing.

“I imagine Dr. Raleigh’s fees will deplete your resources. If you need a loan, I will advance some funds against your wages. However, I expect you will need some days leave during your treatment, which, of course, will be unpaid.”

“Yes, Mrs. Cohen. Thank you.”

“Get along with you. Make sure you take the medicine exactly as instructed. For the clap, some of the treatments are quite toxic. More medicine is almost certainly not necessarily better, and could make you more ill, so take exactly what Dr. Raleigh has prescribed.”

* * *

Two days later, Cassandra encountered Tony and Moonbeam in the street near *B & J*.

“Hello Tony. I’m afraid I have a bone to pick with you,” Cassandra said in a rather cool voice.

This took Tony by surprise. He knew of no reason why Cassandra should be annoyed with him.

“Mrs. Cohen. You have me at a disadvantage, as I’ve no idea how I may have caused offence.”

“I have learned that Dan Dixon took a woman to the room at your newspaper shop.”

Tony was taken aback. “But you surely don’t think I would approve of such behaviour?”

“You can’t have been watching out for what Jack Dixon was allowing to happen in the back of your shop,” Cassandra said.

“Jack has, up to now, not shown any reason I should mistrust him. Moreover, I believe Dan used the fact he is the older brother to be allowed the use of the room for some time on a Sunday morning after Jack had attended to the Sunday papers early. I did not ask Jack if he knew why Dan wanted the room. If I have made any mistake, it is in not asking Jack particularly why he agreed to allow his brother the key.”

“Oh. I should not castigate you, Tony. I am more annoyed with myself for not seeing what was going on.”

“But how would you know, Mrs. Cohen?”

“By being more observant. However, it is no crime for Dan to want to court a young woman. His choice to pay a slattern to go with him does him no credit, but he is hardly the first, and will not be the last. Let us hope he attains a full cure. The clap is an unkind disease, and the pox – syphilis – can be worse. Until he is cured, Dan will be using his own chamber pot and the privy, and we will get a shallow bucket or a hat tub for him to use for bathing. It is not known quite how it is transmitted apart from sexual congress, but there are some claims that it could be passed in other ways, and I want to avoid such possibilities.”

Tony said “I should talk to Jack to ensure he has no symptoms and to suggest he get the bedsheets and towels boiled.”

* * *

Jack was somewhat annoyed to have to boil bed linen and do a thorough cleaning of the back room of the shop, but realized his own culpability in letting his brother use it.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Brown. Should’ve told Dan he couldn’t use the room. ’e said he wanted a nice quiet nap of a Sunday morning and couldn’t get that at Fortescue Road with all the people about. Seemed harmless enough, but I should’ve guessed it weren’t so simple.”

“Well, we’d better make sure things are clean and we don’t spread the clap any further. Mrs. Cohen says there are some people who believe it can be spread by more than a man and woman lying together.”

“I’ll do my best, Mr. Brown.”

* * *

This summer, one of *Best Bonnet’s* major customers did not bring them much revenue. Maud Mortimer was preoccupied with other matters, namely a second child. Early on Monday, September 6, 1858, she gave birth to Joan Eleanor.

The birth led to a parade of visitors to Chorley Terrace to see the new baby. Most of the characters in our tale came by at one time or another within the next fortnight. Maud, naturally, was fully occupied with being a mother for a while. In fact, she did hardly any trading until the beginning of 1859, and even then at a lower level of activity.

* * *

In the middle of the first week of November, Tony noticed several newspaper reports of poisonings in Bradford. Apparently a confectioner who regularly adulterated sweets with plaster – it saved on much more expensive sugar – accidentally got arsenic in the sweets instead. Twenty-one fatalities and over two hundred seriously ill.

“Jack. Who makes the sweets we sell?”

“I think it’s a little factory in the east end. I’ve the address in the ledger. Here it is. *Sylvester Sweets*.”

“I’ll do my urgent commissions then go over there and find out if they make all their own stuff.”

It was about two o’ clock that Thursday, November 4, that Tony arrived at *Sylvesters’*. He had changed into his street suit, as he called it, and walked with Jolly. *Sylvester Sweets* was a modest building with a small shop front at one end.

“Good afternoon,” Tony said to the woman behind the counter. “Are you Mrs. Sylvester?”

“The name’s Hawking, but my father was Sylvester, so we kept that name. Who may I be speaking with?”

“I’m Tony Brown. I took over from Mrs. Macdonald with what we now call *News and More*. Reading the newspapers this week gave us a concern that some of the Bradford sweets might have got into your supply and hence ours, so I thought I should come by to discuss how we – and I include *Sylvesters’* – might reassure our customers.”

“Well, we do make all our own sweets, right here on the premises.”

“And no adulteration?” Tony asked.

Mrs. Hawking flushed.

“Well ... er... not with arsenic to be sure.”

“I’ve heard that sometimes cheap material may be substituted for the sugar, which is above sixpence a pound just now.”

“That is the common practice, or one cannot compete with the rest. It is usual to put a bit of gypsum – daff – in place of some of the sugar, or the lozenges are rather small.”

“Customers are, however, rather shy of purchasing sweets this week.”

“It will hit all of us hard, I’m afraid.”

“I can imagine that it is difficult to know that you’ve got just gypsum and not something poisonous.”

“We get it from a local apothecary. I’m sure he is most careful.”

“Perhaps it would be better to use only good ingredients and offer the product at a premium price with a warranty of its origin.”

“But would people buy them?”

“In the current situation of apprehension, I know I would. And I’m prepared to at least try an order of a couple of pounds of humbugs and the same of barley sugar, assuming we can get a label that declares the origin.”

“How would you state the warranty?” Mrs. Hawking asked.

“Wholesome Humbugs. These humbugs are made only with sugar, peppermint, and ... I’ll let you put in the rest ... by *Sylvester Sweets*, Brighton, under my personal supervision. Then a signature with a name underneath. And similarly for, shall we say, Best Barley Sugar?”

“Might work. Probably cost about double.”

“Make them smaller so per sweet it is less than 50% more, and I suspect they’ll sell better.”

“Let’s see what my ’usband thinks.”

Mr. Hawking was called from the back – the factory where he and two assistants were making sweets. After some discussion, it was agreed that *Sylvester’s* would make a small batch of unadulterated sweets which they and *News and More* would try to sell. Possibly some other shops would also be interested. However, Hawking realized that using the Sylvester name for these would kill the market for the regular, gypsum added, sweets. Hence they were sold as *Hawkings’ Wholesome Sweets*. However, *News and More* did put a sign in the shop window that *Sylvester Sweets* were made entirely in Brighton. No sweets from other sources were on offer.

In that the volume of sales was not huge, these efforts did not have a great impact on revenues or profits, but the premium sweets did not languish, so Sylvesters’ would make such batches from time to time under the new name, acquiring a small but loyal custom for them.

Sunday, November 28, 1858 there had been a dinner in the kitchen reminiscent of those several years before when all the residents except the tenants dined together. Tony, Tom and Vera had been invited, and Rose Sinclair had returned early from her parents, after a morning outing with Angus in the gig. Angus did not accompany her, as they did not wish to use Phoenix twice in the day, and hansoms cost too much for the benefit. The Frasers, James McDowell and Angus Sinclair were also there, so with Adeline and Martha there were a full dozen at table, Dan Dixon being at his parents' house. The group was cheerful without being raucous, and the party did not extend beyond the slow-paced meal.

Adeline mentioned she felt very tired as she got ready for bed. She was, after all, not far from the three score and ten of the Psalm, and those who heard her, mainly Martha and James McDowell, who was helping with the dishes, did not consider the comment to be cause for alarm.

Martha Murphy slept in the partitioned-off area formerly occupied by Mary McNair-Yarrow that was in front of the water cistern closet, while Adeline had Cassandra's former corner similarly set up to provide some privacy.

In the morning, unusually, Martha did not hear Adeline arise. As the time of breakfast approached, she went to the curtain of Adeline's cubby-hole and said "Adeline, are you awake?" With no answer, she repeated this a little louder. Then she moved the curtain aside a little, and could see Adeline in the bed, lying peacefully. Too peacefully. Martha stepped beside the bed and brought her hand near Adeline's face. She could feel no breath.

"Dan! James! Somebody! There's something wrong with Adeline!"

Dan was nearest, as James was not yet on the Number 21 side of the pair of houses. Dan had not encountered death at such close proximity before. However, James came into the kitchen just after him, and Martha explained what she had discovered. James gently took Martha aside and felt Adeline's neck for a pulse. He took out his notebook rather than try to speak and wrote "Dead. Get Mrs. Cohen."

Martha went up to get Cassandra. James, having seen death aplenty in the Crimea, pointed at the table to get Dan to set the cutlery for breakfast. Dan was glad James had the presence of mind to give him something to do. People seemed always to have fears and superstitions about having to be with a dead body, though Dan was relieved he didn't actually feel that way. It was more that he was uncertain about how he should behave. Fortunately Cassandra arrived quickly with a somewhat flustered Martha.

"It is unfortunate that Adeline appears to have died in her sleep, but we should perhaps be thankful that she has had a peaceful death at a time in

her life when she seemed to be happy. I see that breakfast is in hand, so I suggest we close the curtain and have our breakfast before we deal with what has to be done.

Afterwards, I will ask Dan to go to the undertakers. I believe your father went to Conroy's when Archie Temple died and they seemed competent enough. Do you know their premises, Dan?"

"Yes. Mrs. Cohen.

What do I tell 'em?"

"Say there's been a death of a woman of advanced years and there will be a need for a simple funeral. Ask if they will collect the body and tell them they can talk to me either at *B and J* in the forenoon or here after 3 o'clock. Then go and inform Tony. He and Adeline were quite close friends. Tell Tony he can talk to me at the same times, as I believe I should ask his opinion on the details of the funeral."

"Where'll she be buried, Miss?" Martha asked.

"A good question. I believe her husband is in the extension to St. Nicholas' churchyard that is called the *Rest Garden*, but I do not know if arrangements have been made for Mrs. Naismith."

Rose Sinclair came into the kitchen, saw the group of people around Adeline's cubby-hole and asked "Is everything all right?"

Cassandra answered "I'm afraid Mrs. Naismith died in her sleep. I'm getting Dan to go to the undertakers, then to try to inform Tony."

"Oh dear. Well, I will talk to Mr. Turcotte when he comes in. As you know, we let her keep a small box in our safe for her money. I think there may be some papers there too."

"That's a useful reminder. Martha. If I am not here when the undertakers come for Adeline's body, make sure you watch them so nothing is taken but the body."

Martha looked stricken. Cassandra noticed that James was holding her hand. He said something, and Martha translated "James says he'll make sure he's here."

"All right. That will likely be more secure. That is very much appreciated, James. I will leave a note that we will send appropriate clothing for the burial, and for now they should simply take her in her nightgown. They will perhaps want to know a cause of death, but possibly will accept 'old age'."

"I believe Mrs. Naismith ensured she had enough set aside to be buried decently," Rose said. "However, she has said several times she never went along with burying good clothes or good timber and brass, so I anticipate she will want a simple but dignified funeral."

Cassandra said "Dan. After you've been to the undertaker and Tony, better go to St. Paul and leave a note for the vicar if he isn't there. On second thoughts, while you all eat breakfast, I will write to him and to the

undertakers. Martha, as soon as you've eaten, bring me up a tray and take care of Catherine. I'm afraid I've left Abraham – Mr. Cohen – trying to shave and watch her at the same time.”

* * *

Adeline's funeral was surprisingly well attended three days later. Conroy's were disappointed that they did not get to charge the fees for their splendid black horses and shiny hearse. Instead, Tony and Moonbeam with the humble but adequate donkey cart brought the body in a plain pine coffin from the undertakers to St. Paul, then the 700 yards to the Rest Garden, where a newly dug grave was waiting. This was not beside Albert Naismith, whose headstone ended with "and his wife Theresa" and that lady's birth year. Theresa Naismith had separated from Albert some time before he met Adeline. She had died in Great Yarmouth five years ago and been buried there. Still, the inscription made it awkward for Adeline to be buried beside Albert. Moreover, there were some formalities that required the involvement of Theresa's estate. It was easier for a new plot to be arranged.

Rose Sinclair had, with great efficiency and competence, found a letter Adeline had written that expressed her wishes. It was not a proper will, but a discreet enquiry by Rose of Mr. Turcotte suggested that unless there were a claimant to Adeline's small estate, no court would contest her written wishes. These stated that she wished to be buried in Brighton, preferably in the Rest Garden, and that her funeral be a modest one. From the total money she left – a total of £22 4s 11d after Conroy's received £2 5s 2d – Tony and Martha were to receive half each of the remainder. Martha would also have Adeline's clothes and personal possessions, except for her books, letters and daguerreotypes, which were to go to Tony.

The distribution of Adeline's estate was done almost immediately after the funeral. Cassandra had thought to arrange a reception in the upstairs drawing room of Number 21. When the names of those who knew Adeline were written down, there was a need for much more space. After all, there were all the denizens of Fortescue Road for a start. Then there were the residents at Uptons' yard, especially Tony. The Goldmans, Tom and Vera, with Robert and Molly Vance all were friends. And they mustn't forget Winnifred and Frieda and the ladies at the *Emporium*, as well as a number of others. In fact, the church was more full than empty.

However, Cassandra did issue written invitations to Tony, Martha, and Rose, even though Martha and Rose lived in 21 Fortescue Road. She invited Henry and Maud as well, as she felt the equilibrium Henry brought as a solicitor would be helpful to the occasion, as well as his role as Tony's

trustee. Rose, of course, had reviewed Adeline's estate, in that Mr. Turcotte allowed several of the residents at Fortescue Road to keep a box of money and documents in his safe. Rose was even entrusted with the key to this safe.

The mood in the drawing room would have been sombre, but the two three year-olds, William Mortimer and Catherine Cohen, as well as Maud and Henry's daughter Joan, born in early September, prevented excessive melancholy. This particular evening Yolanda Karwowski, the housekeeper and nursemaid for the Mortimers, had previously arranged to attend a meeting, so their children were brought along. Tony, and probably some others, were relieved that they were present, as they reminded everyone that there is birth as well as death.

Moreover, Cassandra had told Mary Yarrow the reason for the gathering – to pass Adeline's legacy to Martha and Tony as requested – and Mary, though she was not invited because the room would be too crowded, had suggested she send some Treats as refreshments. This was a most welcome offering, and Cassandra thanked her friend, especially for her understanding of the situation, and asked to be informed should Mary ever need comparable support.

After tea was poured and the three-year-olds had been settled on cushions on the floor where they soon fell asleep, Cassandra said "You all know that we are here to pass Adeline's modest possessions to Martha and Tony, to whom she has asked that they be given. I think we all found Adeline Naismith a great help and good company here. She will be missed. Rose. I think you should say what is to be done."

"I have looked at Adeline's possessions and, following the wishes of a letter she left entitled *In the event of my death*, I have put all her letters and daguerreotypes in this large envelope, and all her books in that box there in the corner, together with this smaller envelope containing £11 2s 5 1/2 d, for Tony Brown. A similar envelope of money for Martha has been put in her box in Mr. Turcotte's safe. Martha and I went through the rest of Adeline's possessions earlier today and have arranged the disposition of those Martha has chosen not to keep."

Henry said "Thank you, Rose, for such a competent handling of a delicate task."

There was a general murmur of thanks around the room.

Tony said "Mrs. Cohen. Would you mind if the box of books stayed in the kitchen for a couple of days until I can come by to collect it. I did not realize that Adeline was going to leave them to me."

"Of course. If you had not asked, I was going to suggest that. Martha, can you let James and Dan know about the books so there is no confusion."

"Yes. Mrs. Cohen," Martha answered, though with a somewhat uncertain tone. She was rather confused by everything that had happened

concerning Adeline's passing, particularly that she should be a beneficiary of it.

Tony asked that he be excused to leave. He didn't give a reason, but let it be assumed that he had had a tiring day with an early start on the morrow. The truth was that he was near to being overcome. Having lost his mother and grandmother before the age of 6, Adeline had given him someone who provided at least a whisper of a parental voice. She had also become a valued friend.

Before coming to Fortescue Road that evening, Tony had asked Rebecca Upton if he should wear one of his suits. The answer was that it would not be amiss to dress a little formally given the occasion, and he had put on the more common suit, as he did not want to attract too much attention on the street. Jolly came with him – she was permitted to lie down in the kitchen where James McDowell was always happy to have her nearby to pet. Tony also put on his Mackintosh coat and carried the owl walking stick.

Going home along the dark streets, Tony was glad of Jolly's company as well as the walking stick. If it were known, the money now in an inner pocket would be of interest to robbers. However, the insecurity Tony felt was more due to the loss of a friend and confidant.

Back at *Upton's*, where his bed was more or less in a corner of a corridor, with only a recently added curtain for privacy, he undressed and hung the suit, put on his nightgown and got into bed. Throughout the day, with the funeral and then the distribution of Adeline's things, Tony Brown had managed to be a Victorian man and had kept a solemn but steady face. Now, however, Antonia Crown could weep. The tears flowed copiously but in silence. This grief was private and very deep. It was not for others to hear. It was a grief not only for Adeline, but also for a mother and a grandmother, who now were misty, ghostlike memories, and as well a father, Samuel Crown, who in the right clothing Tony closely resembled, but who he had never known.

Sensing something was not as it should be, Jolly came and sat by the cot and put her head near Tony's. Tony moved to one side, patted the bed, and the dog jumped up and lay close. Soon both fell asleep.

* * *

Adeline's books were of sufficient volume that they precipitated another change in Tony's life. As we have noted, his cot was more or less in a corridor at *Upton's*. There were just two bedrooms in the house above and behind the shop. Before James Upton had died in 1852, Valerie and Joseph had shared a room. Valerie was now a young woman, so she and Rebecca shared the

largest bedroom while Joseph had the small one. Tony was, as we have said, in a corridor, and Arthur Anderson slept in the stable with the donkeys, cats, and, on occasion, Jolly.

Tony now had more clothes than easily could be hung on hooks near his cot. Samuel Crown's sea chest and some other odds and ends cluttered the space. Then a couple of days after Adeline's funeral, Tony was at *News and More* to get a report on the operations, and Jack Dixon said "Ma's been complaining it feels lonely at home now everyone's got jobs and moved out."

"Would you prefer to sleep there? I've been thinking my cot at *Upton's* is getting awkward and I should move over here. We could even make sure there's always a palliasse and some blankets here so you can doss down behind the counter if needed."

"Yeah. I think that might please Ma, and I think me too."

* * *

Tony talked to Rebecca that night over supper— it was Friday December 3. He offered to continue to pay 2 shillings a week for his supper and laundry, and it was agreed he could breakfast there on Saturday and Sunday. This was an effective increase in what Rebecca received, but in truth she had been subsidizing his board for some time, while she made money from the stabling of Moonbeam. Of course, Tony would not be far away, as it was only 100 yards to *News and More*, and *Goldmans'* was nearby also.

"I'd better tidy up over the weekend. Be good to paint the back room and put in a bookshelf," Tony said.

"I'll give you a hand paintin' if you like," Arthur said. "Better'n goin' home to the fights that are goin' on."

"Troubles, Arthur?" Valerie asked.

"Dad put a bet on the wrong nag last week and there's nothin' for the 'ousekeeping."

"That'll put the cat among the pigeons," Rebecca said. "Tony, you might as well take the cot and bed-clothes."

"There are two beds – well essentially cots – there. Also a table and two chairs, though no comfortable chairs. Unless you've a need for the cot I've used, then sell it. But I wouldn't mind the bedclothes, as the ones at the shop are pretty worn. Jack's been using both sets to keep warm."

"Is the stove there any good?" Joseph asked.

"Not too bad. Can be regulated down to just a little bit of air and it keeps going all night. I'm going to put in a bookshelf, though, and I'll see if I can get some light-coloured paint tomorrow."

Rebecca said "Valerie. How long have we been meaning to fix up that wing-back chair with the threadbare arms?"

"Well over a year, Ma."

"Then Tony, why don't you have that, and Valerie will tack on some cloth over the arms. Not a proper fix, but at least some comfort."

Saturday morning, Tony and Arthur, after fulfilling a couple of commissions that allowed Tony to buy some distemper from Johnson's ironmongery, started painting, and in fact got it mostly complete. Of course, it needed to dry for a couple of days. Still, by Monday night, Tony was able to sleep in his new room. Word had got about, and Tom and Vera came by on Sunday afternoon with a rather battered wardrobe, which they brought on one of the hand-trucks now being produced in modest but steady numbers.

Vera said "Someone was using this as a target for darts and it's all pocked. You might be able to put on some paper or other covering, but it isn't worthwhile for us to refurbish it as we regularly would. Maud got it for a couple of shillings, so have it as a house-warming present."

"Thanks Vera. Tom."

Tom also helped set up some bookshelves, which were simply some bricks and planks for now. Jolly's pieces of carpet that were beside the cot at Uptons' were moved beside the better of the two beds in the room at the shop. The other bed Tony suggested Tom and Vera take away for resale. This would give more room for the wing-back chair and around the small table with the two hard chairs.

Apart from a few pieces of rug, the floor was bare boards. That might be changed in the future, but for now the plain boards were easier to sweep. Mrs. Macdonald's leftovers included a broom, dustpan and some similar plain equipment. The room was modest, but offered a place Tony could call home. The first home that was his own, in a sense. He had almost no memory of his time with his mother, and he was not supposed to be in the alms house with Josephine. After that, he had been on the street, with Archie Temple, or with Cassandra or Rebecca.

A major change in the back room of the shop was a set of hooks for lamps. Tony wanted good light to read, and in the right places so the pages were properly illuminated. Similarly a pair of hooks were above the table, which was now moved against one wall where a bed had been, so that any tasks could be carried out in good light. Using some heavy wire, Tony had made some hooks that were screwed into the ceiling. When he was at Johnson's to buy paint and brushes, he bought two new lamps and a gallon of lamp oil. There were already four lamps in the shop and back room, but four lamps would barely light two rooms.

A late visitor on Monday afternoon, in fact not long before supper, was Rebecca Upton. She brought some bread, butter, cheese, four eggs, a small

jug of milk, some tea and a little sugar. These could be kept in the small larder in one corner of the room so Tony could make his own breakfast in the morning.

“We’ll see you in a few minutes for supper, Tony. But I congratulate you on the appearance of the room.

Did you know there was a special service today at St. Nicholas church? It happens to be the feast of St. Nicholas. I didn’t go, but one of my neighbours said the vicar said that in America they have taken St. Nicholas and called him Santa Claus, who they treat as a sort of Father Christmas.”

If there were any individual unhappy with the change occasioned by Tony’s taking up residence, it would be Olaf. The cat showed her disdain for the activity in the shop shown by sticking to her basket in the shop window all weekend. She even ignored some morsels of fish put out for her. However, on Tuesday morning Tony found Olaf curled up with Jolly in Jolly’s dog bed.

* * *

Christmas Eve was only two and a half weeks away. There was to be a carol service with the usual nativity scene on the 19th. Last year, 1857, Joseph had appeared with Annabelle, and Tony had agreed to go this year with Moonbeam as in 1856. Ethel had ensured Tony got some of the refreshments afterwards, since he stayed outside to ensure Moonbeam and children wanting to pet her were kept, if not apart, then calm and well-behaved. She did the same for Joseph last year. However, this year she was pregnant, with her confinement expected within the next 8 weeks, so Percy was insisting she only participated in undemanding activities.

On December 10th, Ethel was working – though sitting on a chair – in the factory. She was discussing with Janet Nuffield some possible improvements in how they baked some of the special Christmas Treats. However, having more or less decided what they were going to do about this, Ethel asked “Are you going to the Christmas carol service in just over a week’s time?”

“Yes. I’m planning to.”

“Can you make sure Tony gets some refreshments? For the last two years I’ve taken a well-filled plate out to Tony or Joseph – Joseph and Annabelle were in the Nativity scene last year, but Tony’s going this year.”

“Of course. He mentioned he’d be doing it, but I didn’t think of the practicality that he would stay outside with Moonbeam.”

“The children love the donkeys, but the donkeys don’t like a lot of petting. A little is fine, but if they get upset, they’ll bite, which wouldn’t go well for Christmas.”

“So the donkeymen stay outside and could miss their refreshments?”

“Yes. And we can’t have that, can we?”

* * *

About a week later, after seven o’clock in the evening, there was a loud knock on the door of *News and More*. Jolly gave a quick bark, but she wasn’t prone to continue once she saw Tony react to the knock. He had got home only a few minutes before from supper at the Uptons. Looking through the corner of the shop window, he saw it was Felix, so he unlocked the door.

“Felix. Come in out of the drizzle and into the back where it’s warmer.”

“Thanks. It isn’t too nice out.”

Tony locked the door again and they moved into the back room.

“Some tea?” Tony asked. “I keep a kettle warm, so it won’t take long.”

“All right. But I’ve something a bit awkward to discuss.”

“Better out with it then.”

“You’ve spent some time with Janet this past while, and some people might say you were walking out together. I need to ask what are your intentions. I don’t want her affections toyed with.”

“Well, in one sense I’m pleased Janet has not abused my confidence, but in another it has created a misunderstanding,” Tony said, pushing Olaf off the wing chair and waving Felix to sit in it while he took one of the upright chairs that went with the table.

“Abused your confidence? I don’t understand.”

“Have you looked at Phoebe Hessel’s grave at St. Nicholas?”

“Janet told me you’d showed her, and I went and looked. Interesting. But what does it have to do with you?”

“My mother died when I was four, and my grandmother when I was six, then I was on the street. Girls don’t do well on their own, as you are aware from having to defend Janet in the Workhouse.”

“Are you saying?”

“I was born Antonia Crown. I make my living as a donkeyman. In fact, can’t remember wearing women’s garb.”

“Oh. I’m sorry I made a fuss. And that you had to reveal your secret.”

“Mr. Turcotte and others have advised me not to deny my gender, nor to do anything that could be considered a fraud – marriage would be such an offence. So it’s not such a big secret and quite a few people know, including Constable Shaw, for example. But I don’t announce it, and try to choose who I tell.

Do you take milk in your tea?”

“Yes please.

But if you are seen a lot with Janet, it could discourage real men.”

“I’m afraid I’ll have to leave that to Janet’s discretion. Both of us seem to enjoy the lectures and concerts that we go to together, and those occasions may allow her to meet suitable gentlemen. I can only say that I will try to make it clear that I am not courting her.”

“I suppose if I accompanied you on occasion, people might take it that you and I are the friends, and Janet is coming along with us.”

“It would certainly not be amiss for my association with Janet to be seen for what it is, a friendship through shared interests. If possible, I will try to be with her in company of others, like yourself. I’ve no interest in sparking assumptions that I’m walking out with her, but I do appreciate her friendship.”

“For yourself it must be difficult to not have someone. A partner?”

“Possibly. I think quite a lot on that. But I enjoy my work. My life would be much diminished if I could not be out and about with Moonbeam. And, truthfully, the world is much more welcoming to a man on his own than a woman similarly.”

“That, sadly, is true,” Felix agreed.

* * *

Tony was invited to the Mortimers for Christmas dinner. This was Maud’s first time as hostess for the meal. Tom and Vera were there also, so there were two infants under a year old, plus William Henry, now three and a half. Ethel and Percy made up the party, which included Yolanda Karwowski, the housekeeper, who was treated as a family member, unlike in a majority of households. However, Maud remembered her time in the Workhouse, and Henry, though now a solicitor, was from a family of modest means. Henry’s family lived nearby, but Maud had decided that they would entertain them in the evening of the following Saturday, which was New Year’s Day, 1859. Though not a public holiday in England, it was this year a Saturday, which would allow of a more relaxed evening. Only Henry’s parents were now living in the area, his sister Elizabeth having married and moved away to Bristol with her husband.

The Christmas meal was to be at three o’clock, but guests were asked to arrive around one. Tony wanted to contribute, and Maud suggested he bring some cider, so he brought three bottles, plus one of sherry, the last essentially a present for Maud and Henry.

Gifts for Christmas were becoming more common, but Maud had let it be known that providing gifts could be a hardship for some of those attending. However, it had been decided to have a Christmas tree, following the example of the Queen and Prince Albert of a decade earlier. Henry had, however, put

his foot down and forbade the idea of candles on it, but had suggested that the guests might each bring a decoration for the tree.

Tom and Vera actually brought several decorations that they had made from scraps of wood and cloth, plus a little paint. There was even a model of the hand-cart. Tony, after a conversation with Valerie and Rebecca, made some simple angels of paper and scrap cloth with some thread or copper wire.

The drawing room at Chorley Terrace was crowded and cosy. The company was all in a good mood, and the meal excellent. The cooking had been directed by Yolanda as the housekeeper, but with all the dishes, Maud and particularly Ethel had helped. Tony, after discussing the matter with Henry, took charge of drinks, which freed Henry to welcome everyone and generally enjoy being the host. While no candles were to be allowed near the tree, with buckets of water discreetly placed in two corners as a precaution, the gas light had been turned up and some candles placed where light was needed.

Tony had brought Jolly, having ascertained she would be welcome. He carried a small satchel with a rag to dry her paws and a bag with some food for her. Before he could ask for a water dish, she went to one of the buckets. Then, no longer thirsty, she settled carefully behind a chair, knowing that with a crowd someone might step on a tail or paw. Tony also had a lantern for the walk home, which was about a mile. He would be glad of Jolly's company for that, as well as the walking stick. Brighton had a number of streets and squares lit by gas, but there were plenty of dark corners.

That walk home was straightforward as a perambulation. Nobody accosted Tony. In fact, there were only a few people doing, he assumed, the same as himself and returning from a Christmas dinner. Jolly trotted a few feet ahead of him, as she was familiar with the way, only stopping at some key intersections where they might have diverted to one or other of their regular stops.

However, the walk was, in other ways, clouded by confusing thoughts. Henry and Maud, Tom and Vera and now Percy and Ethel were growing their families. As life was unfolding, Tony would never be in such a situation, though that knowledge was in conflict with the realization that Tony did not feel any strong desire to parent. Feelings either maternal or paternal were absent, even as Tony's interactions with children were warm. There was no artificial play acting or any special voice to talk to them. Affection was genuine without being effusive.

What did this portend? Was Tony Brown to remain an apparent bachelor? It did not seem at all attractive to transform into Antonia Crown, a young woman at the age when most such persons sought a husband and family. That would mean abandoning the outdoor life with Moonbeam and Jolly. But it was a bit daunting to have to live that life so alone.

It would be difficult to find someone who could fit in well with the un-

orthodox nature of Tony's situation. Jolly was just not enough, though she filled a large void. As Tony reached the door of *News and More*, the realization that he would like to seek a suitable person with whom to share life was solidifying.

* * *

Boxing Day was a Sunday. Tony probably would not have gone to church given that he had been there a couple of times in the last few days, but decided that being part of the local parish would present at least some opportunities to meet people from different stations in life. It would be a start on seeking a special companion. If no particular individual emerged, the interactions with others would at least provide a wider circle of acquaintance that could be helpful in both social and business life.

This Boxing Day morning, the congregation was decidedly thin. There was no trouble in finding a place in the free seating. Rev. Wagner had been encouraging. Many vicars were of the view that pews should be rented, thereby giving the church revenue. Wagner felt it was important that all God's men and women were welcomed. They were, of course, expected to put coin in the collection plate.

Tony did, however, see Joseph on the other side of the church, sitting beside the dark-haired girl he liked, Mary Lawrence. When the service was over, Tony found them waiting outside to say hello.

"Tony. I wanted you to meet Mary Lawrence. Mary, this is Tony Brown who shares the *Best Bonnet* business with me."

"Very nice to meet you Mr. Brown, and Merry Christmas."

"Thank you, Miss Lawrence. May I wish you the same.

Are you walking back to the yard?"

Joseph answered "Not directly. We're taking a turn along the Promenade, unless it proves too cold. But Mother has invited my uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley for Boxing Day dinner. As Uncle Colin is a curate over in Hove, he was rather busy on Christmas Day, so we are celebrating today. I asked Mother if Mary could be invited to join us."

"Then I will not detain you. And I hope this breeze is not too brisk for you both, but I see you have your scarves and gloves."

As he turned away, Tony realized that yet another of his friends was, possibly, finding a partner with whom to share life. He took out his pocket watch and noted it was still not quite a quarter to twelve. He was expected at the *Goldman's* at one o'clock, where he had been invited for dinner. But that was just round the corner from his shop. Hmm. He was thinking of it as his own. Would or should it become his home? In a bit over a year he'd take

full charge of his legacy. Not a rich person, but one with a modest fortune, and a house.

He should talk to Henry, and possibly Mr. Dwyer, about the possibility of selling Ezekiel's house and finding another for himself. Would he want the building he lived in? The upper two floors were tenements, and not likely very pleasant. The privy at the back was shared. Tony used a chamber pot in preference to the filthy place. Still, it might be worth enquiring how much it would cost to acquire the property, though there was no good access to the rear yard. *News and More* could, of course, move. Somehow that was a new thought. A new and interesting thought. It was time to start looking for new places nearby that would suit for the longer term.

Walking along North Street towards the old town area where he lived, Tony decided to detour to the Old Steine Gardens to look at the properties around there. To himself he said "Nice to have a shop front, but enough room for a decent bedroom, a large kitchen where it's warm and friendly, and a decent reception room. Do I need an office? Probably want space for a servant, also for a companion."

He must have been muttering to himself, as a middle aged gentleman said "Did you say something to me, sir?"

"No. I'm sorry. I must have been thinking out loud."

"Well, a Merry Christmas to you, sir."

"Thank you. And to you also."

Tony had stopped to answer the man, and as he turned to walk on – he was still short of the Old Steine Gardens – he noticed some movement of what looked like a pile of rags in the lower level area of the house he was beside. In a gap in the rags, he saw a pair of eyes.

What he saw caused Tony to catch his breath. A dozen years earlier, this was the image that his juvenile self would have presented. Tony stopped, thought for a moment, then said "Are you cold? Hungry?"

An almost inaudible "Yes" came from the pile of rags.

"You can warm up in my shop, and I'll give you something to eat if you come with me."

"Ma says never go with no gen'lemen."

A sudden realization caused Tony to say "You're a girl and they might interfere with you?"

"Yeah. Why she puts me in boys' clothes."

Tony thought it might be a stretch to categorize the rags as clothes, but that was not pertinent immediately.

"I know your situation. I've a ... friend ... who dresses as a man for the same reason."

"Oh ..."

Tony continued "Why aren't you with your Ma?"

“She’s got a man what’ll pay ’er for Well, she told me to get out while ’e’s there. Probably can’t go back till Monday.”

“I realize that I probably can’t prove to you that I’m harmless, but you can come to my shop and sleep there tonight and have some food if you wish.

If you do come, I will have to trust you not to steal from me, though my dog might hinder that. She’s quite protective, but also friendly to those who are honest and kind.”

There was a pause, then the bundle of rags slowly transformed into a young person of perhaps 10 to 12 and climbed the steps. They started walking on along North Street.

“I’m Tony Brown, by the way. What’s your name?”

“Roberta Pope. Ma calls me Bobby ’cos it can be taken as a boy’s name too.”

“How old are you, Bobby?”

“I’ll be 12 at the end of February.”

“You have any work?”

“Ma ’as me look after ’er place. Do the washin’ for ’er and ... some other women. Cook a bit. Nothin’ with a wage.”

“Can you read and write?”

“Not proper. One of the other ... women taught me a bit, and Ma made sure I knew money. I do the shoppin’ and collect the washin’ money. I sometimes draw things to make notes. But I can do numbers, and money.”

There was a pause for a couple of minutes, then Tony said “Here’s my shop.”

“I know. I’ve seen you with your donkey. *Best Bonnet*. An’ you engaged Arfur.”

“Well, I’m glad I’m not a complete stranger. Better come in.

Jolly! Come meet Bobby.”

The call was unnecessary, for Jolly came out of the back room, then cautiously approached and sniffed Bobby.

“Better come and get something to eat.”

Tony shut the door, putting the key in the hole and turning it. This was habit, but a necessary one to stop people from coming in when there was nobody attending the counter. Jolly followed Tony and Bobby into the back. Tony waved Bobby to one of the hard chairs, put more coal in the stove and opened the vent.

“Better wash your hands in the sink there.”

From the larder, Tony took out a loaf of bread that was almost complete, some butter, cheese and a jar of pickles. He cut three thick slices off the loaf and put it away, then set the plate of bread with a knife on the table, along with the cheese which was already on a board, with the butter in its own dish. He set a spoon beside the pickle jar.

“Hope this is all right.”

“Thank you, Mr. Brown. It’s more than all right. But you ain’t eatin’?”

“Friends have invited me to dinner. But you can stay here. Out the back door there is the privy, but you may prefer to use the chamber pot under the bed, then empty it in the privy. There’s some old newspaper for ... well, the obvious.

If you are going to stay here tonight, I’ll want to check for nits. The palliase that my shop-man uses sometimes is under the counter in the front, but don’t use it until we’ve done that. I surely don’t want to get lice there. I’ll suppose you’ve no other clothes.”

“Wearin’ most of my clothes to keep warm. But it’s cosy ’ere. I could wash some while you’re away, and do some sweepin’ for you.”

“All right. There’s also the shallow tub hanging there on the wall if you want to wash top to bottom while your clothes are off, and there’s a dressing gown on the hook there. There’s plenty of coal. The coal bin is outside the back door and the key for the padlock on that hook. Make sure you lock the padlock so the people upstairs don’t pilfer coal. The key to the back door is in the lock. I’ll take a front door key with me and lock it on the way out. The key to the front door is hanging by the till.

People from upstairs sometimes come down outside to use the privy, so if you are undressed, close the curtains on the window, or pull the curtain in front of the bed and go behind it. In fact, I will do that now as I need the pot.”

Bobby ate the bread, cheese and pickles, and cleared away. Tony was about to take the pot to the privy when Bobby said “I can do that. You’ve been real kind to me, Mr. Brown.”

“Then I’ll be along to my friends. Mr. and Mrs. Goldman. Not far away.

Oh. There’s some scraps in a covered earthenware pot at the bottom of the larder. You can give some to Jolly and Olaf – that’s the cat, who’s also female despite the name – some of that each and some water in their bowls near the doorway there. The white ones are Olaf’s. I haven’t seen Olaf for a while. Probably curled up in the shop window.”

* * *

Tony did not mention Bobby to the Goldmans, nor to Cassandra and Abraham who were also present with Catherine. The conversation was about other things. In fact, about everything and nothing.

“How was your Christmas dinner?” Tony asked Cassandra.

“I think it went well. We held it in the kitchen and the Frasers and James McDowell and Martha were there. Rose and Angus came for a little while, though they ate with her parents. I gather a very quiet Christmas at that house, especially compared to the energy at Fortescue Road. And Dan came by for a while. Oh. Mary and Michael and Elizabeth were with us too.”

“We decided we wanted a quiet afternoon so we didn’t attend,” Rachel said. “It is, after all, a Christian celebration. That’s why we wanted to have a small gathering today.”

“How is your venture with the hand-cart to Hove doing, Tony?” Joshua asked.

“Quite well. The income took a while to settle down, while the costs were, as usual, always present. But we seem to be averaging over 9 shillings per month profit, even allowing for the carts and sundry items, with a range plus or minus of about one and six. So it’s not too up and down. We don’t want all quiet then rush, rush, rush.”

“It won’t make you rich quickly, but it is not to be sneezed at,” Abraham contributed.

“Joseph and I are happy with it, and we’ve managed to give Eric Winters employ. Even a 5 shilling Christmas bonus, as he’s been able to increase business by approaching shopkeepers around his route.”

“Are you comfortable at the shop, Tony?” Cassandra asked.

“It’s not as comfortable as it was on Fortescue Road, especially when Mrs. Yarrow and Ethel were preparing the meals. And I have been taking my dinner with Rebecca – Mrs. Upton. Though I am starting to wonder if I should not be a bit more independent, though it would mean consideration of a cook or housekeeper, and probably a larger residence.”

“Well, I gather you own, or will own, a house in a year or so,” Abraham said, realizing that perhaps that information was something he was not supposed to know.

“It’s rented out, but possibly could be sold so something more ... er ... suitable could be found. I don’t think I would be very comfortable in Great Uncle Ezekiel’s house, and I’m told by Mr. Dwyer that it is rather dark and old-fashioned.”

“Such features can often be easily changed by a little redecoration or renovation,” Cassandra offered.

“Yes. Painting and rearranging the back room of the shop made it much more comfortable for me.”

Cassandra said “Michael Yarrow said that when he and Mary bought the house they were renting, they found that a bit of paint or wallpaper did wonders. It’s rather putting one’s own stamp on things.”

Rachel said "Let us move to the table. Has everyone got a glass of something to drink. Joshua. Please ensure everyone is well supplied. Cassandra, perhaps you can assist me to bring in the capons and the vegetables."

The party devolved to enjoying the meal, which, given that the house was Jewish, did not include a suet pudding. Instead there were a number of delightful and exotic pastries. These had, of course, been introduced to Fortescue Road on previous occasions, and Mary had persuaded Rachel to share some of the secrets. Adaptations of the pastries now appeared in the *Treats for the Tongue* catalogue, though outsiders would likely overlook the similarity. Items that must be shipped via the Railway need a different shape and sometimes a different texture so they survive their journey with its bumps and jerks.

* * *

Tony was not late returning to the shop. Indeed, with young Catherine in tow, Cassandra and Abraham wanted to leave shortly after six o'clock, and Tony said he might as well save letting more cold air than necessary into the house by leaving with them. Thus the party generally began to prepare for farewells. These, inevitably, took quite a time and it was a quarter to seven when Tony unlocked the shop door, came in, and extinguished his lantern.

"Bobby! I'm returned."

There was some noise from the back room, and as Tony entered, he found Bobby standing in the shallow tub trying to reach a towel.

"Let me pass you the towel," Tony said.

"I only just stepped in," Bobby said. "I washed me clothes, then it took a while to get more water 'ot. I didn't think you'd be back so soon."

"Let me take off my suit, and I will help you bathe, then check for nits. Once the suit is off, I think you will realize you have nothing to fear from me."

Bobby looked scared, but once Tony had removed the suit and shirt, the bumps under the tight vest revealed the truth.

Once Bobby was washed, including her hair, and sitting in one of the chairs in Tony's dressing gown, Tony put on a pullover and some trousers against the waning heat of the stove, and the fine-tooth comb came out to check for lice.

"I'm not finding any nits, just some tangles."

"You cuts your 'air short. Maybe I should too."

"If you like. Should I do it now? It might be a little ragged. I'm no barber."

"Go ahead. It'll dry quicker," Bobby offered.

“Can you avoid telling others about my ... er ... choice of garb?” Tony asked.

“Course I can. It’ll be my garb too.”

After they finished the haircut, Tony said “I’ve got these pyjamas that are a bit old. I was planning to turn them into rags, but they’re just faded. And this pullover will help keep you warm tonight.”

“Where’ll I sleep?”

“Jack was sleeping behind the counter in the shop. It’s out of sight, and reasonably cosy. He would just pull out the palliase and lay a blanket and sheet down so he could fold them over himself. That way he has sheet and blanket below and above. Then there’s the counterpane to pull on top.”

“I’ll do that then.”

“I see you’ve been tidying and dusting.”

“Yeah. It was real good of you to give me some food an’ a warm place. I’m afraid I took an apple from the bin in the larder, and another two slices of bread with the drippin’ in that bowl that’s in there.”

“That’s fine. I appreciate that things are all tidy. And I see you worked out how the clothes lines work around the stove.”

“Sorry that they are a bit in the way when we wanna move about the room.

Before I leave in the morning, I could make some porridge. I saw the oats, and there’s a jug with milk an’ a jar with raisins.”

“Bobby. Rather than go back to your mother, would you consider staying here as cook and housekeeper? We could for try for a couple of weeks at, say, half a crown plus food and bed.”

“That’s ’arf a crown more than Ma gives me. Yes! I’d like to try. I can cook plain stuff.”

“At the moment I generally eat my supper with Mrs. Upton. Rather than upset that arrangement, I’ll take you round there in the morning and we’ll arrange that you come with me to eat and I’ll pay her a bit extra, but also I’ll suggest you give her a hand with shopping or cooking if she wants. We try to help each other out where we can to make life easier all round.”

“All right.

P’raps I should make the bed in the shop and get some kip, but I’ll use the privy or the pot first.”

“Yes. We’ll say goodnight. If you don’t mind, I’ll shut the door between here and the shop. It’s my habit, as Jack Dixon has a key to the front. My key will be in the till when I don’t have it with me. And remind me to give you some housekeeping money in the morning. Knock on the door if I haven’t opened it. Jolly usually sleeps in here near me. Olaf chooses one of several places, but she might want to lie beside you, but push her away if she’s a nuisance.”

* * *

Tony was in bed not long after this conversation, but sleep was slow to arrive.

One of the first thoughts was whether he could really afford Bobby. Clearly if he dipped into his savings, it was feasible. However, Tony liked to keep his savings increasing. This was not the way of many, but the terror of poverty was ever present for anyone who had struggled on the street. And Bobby was Tony a few years ago.

Another concern was for security. Tony did not continue the use of the loose floorboard where Mrs. Macdonald had hidden money which Adeline had discovered. Instead, there was now a strongbox inside the wardrobe. Tony had talked to Cassandra at one point last year and asked her ideas on securing important papers and money. She had recommended Mr. Cranmer's shop, and also the use of long screws, possibly through the bottom of a piece of furniture like a wardrobe into the beams or floorboards. Moreover, the screws were angled like a V so the box was more difficult to pry up.

Tony remembered what Cassandra had said, and when he moved to the shop a month before, decided to get a strong box. The visit to Cranmer led, as it turned out, to another client for *Best Bonnet*, as Cranmer received shipments of locks and related materials via the Railway, and generally had to arrange that he or an employee go to the station. Since *Best Bonnet* was there on a daily schedule, he joined the growing group of regular customers, saving himself some costs while giving Tony and Joseph revenue.

The presence of the strongbox was not a grave concern for Tony *per se*. It was more that someone with a connection to Bobby would want to extort something of value. This was a vague and unfocused fear Tony had. He wasn't sure whether it was real or a function of his own insecurities, the same insecurities that meant the walking stick lived beside the bed.

Well, caution would not be amiss. It remained to be seen how the fortnight probation would evolve.

* * *

“Good morning Rebecca, Valerie. This is Bobby Pope, who I've engaged on a trial basis for the next two weeks as a general helper and cook. Since I eat supper here Monday to Friday, I wondered if I could augment my payment and have Bobby eat with us. He'll prepare other meals for us and he can do some shopping and related tasks for you as well, rather than have two people traipsing the streets.”

Valerie stared hard at Bobby, recognizing some of Tony's old clothes, including some pinned-up trousers. "Should be all right, shouldn't it, Ma?"

"Extra bob a week? I won't mind having him do some of the shopping, then I can be looking after the shop here." Rebecca said.

"That's fine by me," Tony said. "I'll leave Bobby with you to get your list, as Moonbeam and I have some commissions from the sheet Valerie just gave me. I'll see you all at supper."

Tony left. Rebecca went in her kitchen and made a list of what she wanted from the shops, and gave Bobby a large canvas bag and a basket.

"I'll give you some money for the groceries, but I want a reckoning and my change," Rebecca said, addressing Bobby.

"Mr. Brown gave me five bob and told me to keep a list of what I spent and you'd repay me. I don't really write, but I draw things, so I can keep track."

"All right. Tony's good that way. We'll see you in a while. Don't let the greengrocer give you any rotten stuff. When you get back, we'll 'ave a cup of tea and a biscuit."

"Thanks Mrs. Upton."

Bobby left, looking a bit dwarfed by the bag and basket.

Rebecca said "What did you think of 'im?"

"Or her?" Valerie replied.

"Yes. I think you may be right. It would fit with Tony's situation.

Actually, I think I've seen Bobby with one of the harlots off North Street."

"When there's a chance, I'll ask Tony on the quiet how he found Bobby."

* * *

By the evening of December 27, Tony had been able to take Bobby to buy some clothes, spending almost 4 shillings so Bobby would have a change of outfit. Tony remembered the sense of comfort that came with easily being able to get out of sweaty, smelly and soiled garments. The clothes were second-hand boys ones: trousers, shirts, underwear, socks, and a pair of sturdy shoes.

"Mr. Brown. I'll 'ave to owe you for these," Bobby had said when they were shopping.

"If you end up staying as my – I'm not sure what we'll call you – but someone who keeps the shop and room running and does some odd jobs, then consider it a uniform. If you don't end up staying, it will be my loss, I suppose. I think the only case I would pursue you for theft would be if you left and sold them for money."

"Oh. ... I ... er ... wouldn't do that. It wouldn't be right."

“No. It wouldn’t. But we’d better not put you in a situation where you do something like that because you need the money. Or where someone else would want you to do it for them.”

Bobby looked stricken. Tony said “You look upset. Did I say something?”

“Last year, Ma had this friend – a man. Most only stay a day or so, but ’e was comin’ round for a couple of months. And ’e gave me this pen-knife, thinkin’ I’m a lad who’d like it. I did. But after ’e and Ma ’ad a row, ’e left, she went and sold it without askin’ me.”

“Sorry. I know that people can be very cruel sometimes like that.

Will your mother be looking for you?”

“Dunno. Never seems to care if I’m there, ’cept when she wants me to do somethin’ for ’er.”

Tony had wondered whether Bobby’s mother should be informed that Tony had hired him/her. However, in a sense it was Bobby’s choice. Tony was well aware of the reputation of the women who lived where Bobby had lived with his mother. It was quite likely Bobby was the result of a casual, and commercial, transaction. At least Tony had been conceived by parents who loved each other and who fought, albeit largely unsuccessfully, against forces trying to keep them apart. Still, they had married, and now Tony would inherit what was rightfully his.

“Tomorrow wash those clothes, then you can start wearin’ them.

Lets get ready to go to Uptons’ for supper.”

* * *

Tony returned to Uptons’ yard on the evening of Friday December 31 at about five o’clock. It was almost half past five when he got to the shop. Of course, it had been dark out for some time by then. Tony had started out opening the shop from 8 a.m. until noon six days a week, with an hour on Sunday morning. Now he and Jack opened at half-past seven to half-past noon, and again from four until seven in the evening on weekdays. On Saturday they did a full morning, but kept just an hour on Sunday. These were shorter hours than most newsagents. Jack covered them, sometimes sleeping in the shop. They’d need a new palliasse for him now.

While the hours were shorter than most shops, the newspapers were delivered in the morning within a local area using the hand-cart, usually by Arthur. Tony and Joseph had both noticed that their costs for lamp oil went up now they or their staff needed to be out in the dark. Indeed, in winter it was dark much of the working day. They, too, started earlier in the day for

the early collection at the Railway station, and often made a second pick-up in the afternoon.

“How’s business, Jack?” Tony asked.

“Fairly quiet, but that’s normal, ain’t it. Since I opened at 4, just a coupl’a customers for humbugs or barley sugar, and one to arrange a new subscription, though half a dozen have been in to pay to make sure the Times gets delivered all January.”

“There’ll be a bunch more soon. And we’ll have to deliver reminder notes tomorrow for those who haven’t paid yet.

How’re you getting on with Bobby?”

“Fine. Nice that ’e asks me if I want a cuppa. And ’e’s tidied up and dusted more’n I would, but prob’ly like it should be.”

“Good to hear. Bobby’s had a hard life, I think. It won’t be an easy life here, but hopefully sufficient to allow some contentment.

Is he about?”

“Went to get some soap for the washin’.”

At that moment, Bobby came in, carrying a paper package which presumably contained soap for the laundry.

“Good evening, Mr. Brown. I was just out to get some washin’ soap.”

“Is there enough money in the housekeeping box?” Tony asked.

“Still just over 2 shillings with the change I just brought back. And I’ve written all but the soap in the notebook beside it.”

“We’ve an hour or so until supper at Uptons’. I’m going to read for a while.” Tony said.

“I’m going to finish adjusting those trousers we got the other day,” Bobby said.

They went in the back room where just one lamp was alight and lit two more so each would have light either for reading or sewing. However, not more than ten minutes elapsed before there was a commotion in the shop. A voice yelled “Where’s Tony Brown. ’e’s got my Bobby.”

Bobby said “It’s Ma. I don’t wanna go back with her.”

“You don’t have to. You work for me here. Unless you want to leave, you can stay. But I’d better tell her.”

Coming out of the back room, Tony confronted a rough-looking woman in clothes that would have been fancy were they not so dishevelled.

“You’re Brown? You took my Bobby away.”

“Mrs. Pope, I presume? And I have hired Bobby as my ... caretaker here at the shop.”

“Is that what you call it? Wickedness with a child is what I’d say!”

“Bobby. Are you happy to stay here and work for me?”

“Yes. Mr. Brown.”

“’ow much is ’e payin’ ye?”

"2 and 6 and bed and board, plus some clothes. More'n you've been givin' me. An' I won't get tossed out when you get a man in."

"Ungrateful child! I'm your ma. You've got to do what I say until you're of age."

Tony said "What does Bobby's father say?" knowing full well there was no father around, and very unlikely that he was Mr. Pope.

"e's dead. At least I 'ope 'e is. But 'e ain't around."

"Can you even prove you have parental rights over Bobby?" Tony asked.

"Never 'ad to since the last day of February 1847."

"So where did you register the birth?"

"Whad'ya mean, register?" the woman asked.

"Births are normally registered. Used to be in the parish records, but more recently in register offices. It is unfortunately not compulsory, so many children don't have the benefit of a public record of their parentage, nor can parents show their relationship to children." This last clause was, of course, the critical one that meant Mrs. Pope could not easily establish parentage.

"Never registered the birth.

Bobby. You really wanna stay here?"

"Yeah Ma. Mr. Brown's givin' me work. Food's all right. Place is cosy. Look at these shoes. Keep my feet nice and dry. An' good socks too."

"An' e's not diddling you?"

"No. Ma. An' 'e won't."

This exchange had Jack Dixon looking puzzled. He wasn't privy to Tony's gender. Tony recognized that Mrs. Pope was mainly unhappy that her free labour had departed, but expecting Bobby to stay outside in the cold and wet when Mrs. Pope entertained clients was unconscionable.

"E better not.

Well. If you're not comin' back, I'll get rid of your cot an' make the room more comfortable. So don't come beggin' for me to take you back."

Mrs. Pope stormed out.

Tony said "Jack. Keep an eye out for Mrs. Pope. Bobby shouldn't be alone with her unless he wants to be.

Let's tidy up then go for supper, Bobby."

In the back room, Tony quietly handed Bobby a handkerchief from a small collection on a shelf in the wardrobe. Bobby was crying quietly. It had to be painful to know your mother wanted you mostly as free labour, and begrudged your presence when it was inconvenient. Tony knew his mother and grandmother had loved him. That they died so early in Tony's life was a great source of sadness, but their love was blocked by death, not selfishly withheld.

"I didn't see any handkerchiefs in your belongings. You'd better keep that one. You can embroider an R or a B on it, so we know it's yours."

“Thanks Mr. Brown. Sorry for weepin’.”

“We’re not made of stone, Bobby. Sometimes tears are all we have.”

Tony went back to the shop.

“Jack. I think you can close up. Put up that sign that says to knock for service. I’ll change it to the closed sign at seven.”

“Thanks, Tony.

Oh. I know I call you Tony, because we’ve known each other for ages. But Bobby calls you Mr. Brown. Should I do that?” This last exchange was whispered.

“I dunno. If customers are in the shop, definitely. You’ll be Mr. Dixon then too. But like this, just Tony and Jack. We’ll let Bobby adapt over time. ’ave to see how things work out.” Tony didn’t whisper his response, but his voice was low.

Tony raised his voice to say “Bobby! Time for wages.”

The door to the rear opened and Bobby came out.

“Here’s five sixpences for you, Bobby. I know it’s not quite a week, but doing the arithmetic for the partial week is messy. Can you record that in the account book, Jack? And I assume you did your own wage and commissions.”

“Right away. Can I leave then?”

“Yes. As I said, put up the "knock for service" sign. Probably won’t get anybody. Next week I’ll have you show Bobby some of the things we do around the shop so he can take over for you or help out if things get busy.”

“Yeah. I’d like that. Sometimes I ’ave to put up a note that I’ll be back in a few minutes if I get a need to use the privy.”

Jack made the notations about the wages in the account book, found his coat and scarf, hung the sign and departed.

* * *

New Year’s Day was not a holiday in England. Supposedly it was just a plain Saturday. In that, the *Best Bonnet* staff and animals went about their usual activities, but there was, as always in human life, a recognition that something had changed or moved on.

Saturdays’ workload for collections was generally a bit lighter than the rest of the week, but there were sometimes a few more deliveries, usually of items wanted for the Sunday, such as a fancy bonnet or shawl, or some special food or beverage item for a Sunday dinner. January 1, 1859, was no exception. Nevertheless, Tony was back at the shop before five. The short winter days meant being out in dark streets. The risk of robbery was probably smaller than the risk of tripping on ice, rubbish or uneven pavement.

Still the darkness increased the effort of remaining alert to all these dangers, which was tiring.

“Bobby. Have you got something for supper? I’m eating with Mr. and Mrs. Soulton tonight.”

“Yes. I got a pork pie. I hope you don’t mind that I did.”

“Why should I mind?”

“Porridge is a lot cheaper. Ma never let me ’ave a pie to meself. If any, just a tiny slice.”

“Miss Match, now Mrs. Cohen, always had decent food. From my experience at Fortescue Road I know how a belly with enough good food in it adds to one’s contentment.”

“Ooh. Thanks. Mr. Brown.”

“What will you do tonight?”

“I want to put me initials on the handkerchief, and I’ve some more sewin’ to do on my clothes. An’ I’m gonna try to read that book you showed me of tales and legends.”

Tony had found an old copy of the 1843 collection *Popular Tales and Legends* when he was learning to read with Adeline. It was rather dilapidated, but he had kept it as he regarded the volume with affection.

“Good idea. The stories can be read individually. If you find some passages difficult, put a small pencil mark in the margin and we can talk about them tomorrow. That’s a good way to learn.

Bobby. I might not come back until the morning. Saultons’ Workshop is about two miles and I can sleep there. One way in the dark is enough, and there’s no street lamps out by the Workshop.”

“Yes. I’ll make sure there’s plenty of oil in the lantern.

Will Jolly go with you?” Bobby asked.

“Yes. Fuzzy – the Saultons’ dog – is her brother.

I’ll have a wash and put on some clean clothes then perhaps simply hang up the closed sign. It’s a quarter to seven now already,” Tony said looking at his watch.

* * *

“Tony! Come in quickly and don’t let the warmth out,” Vera said.

“No fear. Despite an extra cardigan, I feel like I want to sit on the stove.

By the way, Jolly’s gone in the kennel with Fuzzy.”

The cottage was, however, warm and filled with enticing odours of the stew Vera and Molly had prepared, as well as the bread they’d baked. Tom was sitting with David in his lap.

“Where’s Robert tonight?” Tony asked.

“He wanted to spend a few days with his family,” Tom answered.

“Oh. I would have sent greetings with him to his family. Haven’t seen them for must be going on four years.”

“They came to see Robert last year, but it was just a flying visit. I think you were away with Adeline.”

“I’m sorry I missed them. If I’d known they were coming, I might even have changed plans.”

“Yes. Our meeting with the Vances when we went on our little holiday was fortuitous. It led to a lot of good things for us both, I think.”

Vera said “Somehow that trip and the Vances have done you both a lot of good. Of course, meeting Tom has been good for me too.”

Tony noticed that Vera had filled out and was now somewhat matronly, but her overall appearance was, he thought, more attractive than the thinner woman she had been before David arrived.

Molly said “Should I serve the stew?”

“Please,” Vera responded.

Vera took David from Tom and put him in a bassinet. In Tom’s lap, he had already been napping, and he didn’t fuss as he was laid down. On the table, the bowls of stew were steaming. Tom poured some cider and set it out.

“Joseph says you’ve engaged a young person as a sort of housekeeper,” Vera prompted.

“Bobby’s mother had a client with her – a man – and so I found Bobby in a few rags in the lower area of a house on North Street because it wasn’t ... er ... convenient for her. Bobby knows how to clean and cook, so I’m paying him half a crown a week with board and some clothes.”

Vera pushed a little. “Joseph suggested that Bobby is actually a girl, dressing as a boy since it is a bit safer.”

Tony only said “Yes, that’s true.”

Molly looked uncomfortable, but in fact avoided awkwardness by asking “Does anyone want some more stew?”

The topic changed to various aspects of business.

“Are the hand-carts selling all right?” Tony asked Tom.

“Going well. If things stay steady, we’ll make about £25 a year on them.”

Vera said “We’ve already got more than enough to cover our final payment to Mrs. Cohen at the end of September. Then this place will belong to us.”

“If you have the money now, do you think Mrs. Cohen would let you pay sooner, hopefully at a bit of a discount?” Tony asked.

“Hadn’t thought of that,” Tom said.

“Nor me,” Vera added. “I should work out what might be a reasonable discount. But I don’t know if I know how to do that properly.”

Tony surprised them by saying “I found this old book that showed how to calculate interest. But you want to know the effective rate for the sequence of payments. Do you know how much Mrs. Cohen invested?”

“Oh yes,” Vera said. “We were involved in estimating how much she put in, including the labour of Tom and, I suppose, myself. We agreed £200. Then we said we were willing to pay £60 every year for five years. We set October 1, 1854, as the start date and then made payments in 1855, ’56, ’57, and ’58. If we make another on September 29 this year, that’s it.”

Tom said “We’ll need to make sure we have the documents. But Henry wrote up the contract, so we should be all right.”

Tony said “Was the interest rate worked out?”

Vera answered “Ten percent. We’re going to pay £300 on a £200 investment, so that’s 50% over 5 years or 10% per year.”

Tony knew this wasn’t how to calculate the rate when there was a sequence of payments.

“I don’t think that’s right, because you pay down the principal as you go. After dinner, we can try to see how the balance would be using 10%. Perhaps even try other values, but it’s quite a bit of reckoning, though it might not be too bad if we only do rough estimates.”

“I’ll feel a bit of a mug for offering the £60 payments if the rate is a lot more,” Vera said.

“You mean Mrs. Cohen didn’t give a percent rate?” Tony asked.

“No. It’s never been mentioned.”

“Then I doubt she did the sums either. I think she mostly looks to see there’s not going to be a loss rather than working out how much gain, then trusts she’ll do all right if all the pieces are making a bit of money.”

Tom said “Hadn’t thought of things that way, but now you mention it, that does fit with ’ow Mrs. Cohen does things. And we can’t really moan too much about the terms of the contract. She kept paying our wages, including Vera’s, when we were fixing up the cottage and workshop, even when I cut me ’and so badly.”

“And she went out and got the leeches and maggots,” Vera added. “It’s more our own fault, or perhaps ignorance is really the word. We did offer the £60 a year.”

Vera helped Molly take a steamed pudding out of the top of a pot, and they stirred some custard that had been keeping warm on the hob. For a few minutes there was just the sound of eating.

“Tea?” Vera asked.

All agreed, and Molly cleared away and moved the kettle to the hotter part of the stove and put in some more coal.

“Let’s put the lamp on the table and try that calculation,” Tony said. “I’m afraid I’m now very curious.”

Vera didn't put a lamp on the table, but used an ingenious system of hooks Tom had devised that let them raise or lower the lamp easily, as well as take it down to refill the oil reservoir. While she did this, Tom went to a small writing desk – Tony realized that it hadn't been there until recently – and brought some paper and a couple of pencils. Chairs were moved so Tony was bracketed by Tom and Vera.

“If I can have you watch my arithmetic. It's easy to make mistakes,” Tony said. “Now we start with 1854 and £200. On the next line, we'll put 1855, but beside it we'll put the result of 200 times 1.1. 1.1 is 1 plus 10% over 100, and the value of the £200 at 10% after 1 year. Then we'll subtract 60 for your payment and have the amount owing at October 1, 1855.”

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1854 \qquad 200 \\
 1855 \qquad 220 = 200 \times 1.1 = 200 + 20 \\
 \qquad \qquad 60 \\
 \qquad \qquad \text{====} \\
 \qquad \qquad 160
 \end{array}$$

“So we owed £160 at the start of the second year?” Vera queried.

“Yes. Now we repeat the process.”

Tony wrote down

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1856 \qquad 176 = 160 \times 1.1 = 160 + 16 \\
 \qquad \qquad 60 \\
 \qquad \qquad \text{===} \\
 \qquad \qquad 116
 \end{array}$$

“Now I see how you're working it out. Makes sense,” Vera said. Tom was quiet. He was fine doing payments and change, but that was addition and subtraction. Multiplication was a challenge for him, and he could see the next step was a little more difficult. In fact, Tony worked at the side to do the multiplication in pieces, then filled it in.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1857 \qquad 127.6 = 116 \times 1.1 = 116 + 11.6 \\
 \qquad \qquad 60 \\
 \qquad \qquad \text{=====} \\
 \qquad \qquad 67.6
 \end{array}$$

“Oh. You've used decimals on the pounds. Shouldn't we work out the shillings and pence?” Vera asked.

“Not necessary for the calculations, since there's no payment to be made. The Americans use decimal currency. It does seem simpler for this sort of calculation. Wonder if we ever will. Shillings are easier to split into 2, 3, 4 or 6 parts, while with decimals it's just 2 or 4 or 5. Let's try 1858.”

	1858	74.36 = 67.6 + 6.76
%		60
		=====
		14.36

“Oh my. Did we owe less than 15 quid last October?” Tom asked.

“At 10% yes. But I suspect the rate that your contract implies – though as you said you never actually worked out – is higher. But let’s see what the final amount would be.”

	1859	15.796 = 14.36 + 1.436
		60
		=====
		-44.204

Vera exclaimed “Oh. That is a big surprise. Minus means we don’t owe, right?”

“Yes. At 10%, the investment and the stream of payments leaves £44 in your favour. But that’s a calculation, not the contract.”

“Yes. I realize that,” Vera said rather sadly.

“As Tom pointed out, the contract isn’t an unfair one. You were able to have a good house and workshop right from the start.” Tony didn’t want the contract to seem unfair, and, given the way Cassandra had let Tom and Vera get the property in shape, it was a reasonable agreement. Thus he was happy that Tom added “Can’t see that anyone else would’ve given us the chance, and it hasn’t been ’ard to meet the payments.”

Molly had brought them tea while they were working on this and she did the washing up.

Vera said “I’m going to try to see what 15% will do. The 5% extra is half of the 10, so I can modify Tony’s calculations with another number on each line.”

“That means you and I better tidy and get things closed up for the night, Tony,” Tom rejoined.

The two of them helped Molly with putting away the washing up, then laid out a palliasse and blanket for Tony, who’d brought a nightshirt. Molly’s cot was in a corner, with a pair of curtains that slid on cords. The stove was banked up and the vent almost closed. Tom took some scraps and offal out for the dogs and there was a bit of cheerful barking for a moment.

Molly refilled the teacups.

“Just half for me,” Vera said. “Otherwise got to get up in the night.”

That started a sequence of the occupants going out to the privy, which was in the back of the workshop still. Tom and Vera were thinking of putting a water closet in the cottage, but where and how were still under discussion.

Vera was the last to go out, and before she did, she said “I’d like Tony to check my sums, but I think that at 15% and the payments made, we’d be owed about £2 5 shillings at the end. If that’s right, it shows how tricky interest can be.”

Tony said “Yes. Not many people realize how things grow and decline like that. But your calculation suggests that there was about £50 outstanding at 15% last October. The value of that over 9 months would be ... 7.5 pounds times three-quarters. Well £6 is three quarters of 8, so you have a rough estimate. Though Mrs. Cohen may prefer to wait for the full £60 in October.”

“Can only ask her,” Tom said.

* * *

Our friends woke at a reasonable time in the morning, so decided to go to church. Tony did not linger over breakfast, as he wanted to change into his best suit, and he and Jolly progressed quickly to the shop.

“Bobby! I’m back.”

Bobby stood up behind the counter.

“Sorry, Mr. Brown. I was getting some extra kip.”

“That’s all right. I just wanted you to know I was back. I’ve had breakfast. If you want, have the egg I was going to have.”

“Never ’ad two eggs at once before. Thank you, Mr. Brown.”

“I’m going to dress for church. You can come too if you wish, but better be quick with breakfast.”

“I’ll stay ’ere. Never been to church. Wouldn’t know what to do.”

“Another time, then. I’ll help you learn how to act so you can fit in.”

The service was less well-attended than usual. People flocked to the Christmas service, but most were not so devout otherwise. Still, it turned out that Cassandra and Abraham were there, though they did not bring Catherine. Vera and Tom had left David with Molly. Vera had hoped to meet Cassandra, and was very happy to find Cassandra and Abraham waiting for them.

“We haven’t seen you for some time,” Cassandra said. “Have you time to come for a cup of coffee or tea?”

“Certainly,” Vera said. “Thank you. We’ve been slow to invite people too.”

“A baby does tend to devour one’s time,” Abraham volunteered.

“We’ll have to have a celebration when David’s one year old,” Tom suggested.

Tony stepped forward and said hello, but realized that Vera and Tom wanted to talk to the Cohen's.

"I'll be getting back to the shop. Bobby can use some assistance in reading and writing. We need to be able to send notes and have them properly understood."

Cassandra nodded, "I commend your zeal, Tony. But perhaps you'll come by sometime and introduce Bobby to us properly. We've hardly seen you since Adeline's funeral. Send me a note when you might come, but give me enough time to respond should the day and hour not be convenient."

"I'll do that. Thank you, Mrs. Cohen."

The two couples began their promenade to Fortescue Road, the ladies leading.

Vera said "It's fortuitous that we met. I wanted to talk to you about the possibility of making the last payment on the property early."

"Then you've done well. Good for you both. I think I'm agreeable, but I'd like Abraham's opinion too. Presumably, you'd hope for some discount?"

"Oh. I feel embarrassed to say so, but yes."

"Yes. One worries about giving offence, but the realities of business mean we should be as straightforward as possible.

Until we have our refreshments, let us talk about other things. Has David managed to avoid the gripe?"

Martha and James prepared some sandwiches to go with the coffee that all decided to drink. It would be an early luncheon. As the plates became empty, Cassandra said "Vera and Tom have sufficient funds that they could pay off the contract. Abraham, do you have any objections?"

"No. Good for you two. Well done, indeed. But no doubt some sort of allowance for early payment is in order, and working out the amount could be demanding of some arithmetic."

Vera responded "Last night we mentioned the idea of early payment when Tony came to dinner. He surprised us by his knowledge of interest and principal calculations. When I made the suggestion that we pay £60 a year for five years after you said the investment would be about £200, I took £300 as 50% more. And dividing 50 by 5 I got 10% per year."

"That's more or less what I thought, too," Cassandra said.

Abraham intervened "I knew it didn't work quite that way, but I confess I didn't do any reckoning.

Vera, have you worked out the interest rate."

"Not exactly, but I can show you a calculation that suggests it is closer to 15%."

"Really! That almost seems like I've taken advantage," Cassandra said.

"You paid my and Vera's wages all through the summer when we were workin' on the place, getting it livable," Tom said. "And I'd the cut to

my hand that you and Mrs. Baldwin 'elped put right. Vera was normally working here, but you let her work on the cottage. We don't feel hard done by."

Cassandra said "But you've done well enough that you could pay things off early.

Ah. You have the paper. Perhaps you can explain it."

"Yes. Tony showed us how to do 10% on this sheet. You'll see it's quite clearly laid out."

Abraham looked closely at the sheet Tony had prepared. "Oh, that is rather nice. It's very clear how it works, and 10% is an easy calculation, of course. I'm surprised how far from zero the final balance is, and it would seem to be in the favour of Tom and Vera."

Vera responded "This is the 15%. Not quite so easy in the reckoning, but not too bad. It gets close to nought at the end of the five years, so I think that's pretty close to what the interest rate would be."

Cassandra said "If that is the case, then some discount is in order. I see about £50 as the suggested balance as of last October.

Abraham. Does it seem about right to say £55, assuming we settle before the end of the month?"

"Let me think. There was about 50 owing last September. Nine months or three-quarters of a year at 15%. A year would be seven pounds ten. Five pounds probably a bit in favour of Tom and Vera, but not unreasonable."

"I think we'd be more than happy with that," Vera said. Tom just murmured and nodded. He found himself very uncomfortable in these negotiations.

"I'll send Henry a note that I'm willing to close the contract now for £55 and ask him to let us know when the documents are ready."

Vera said "In that we asked for an early payout of the contract, we'll pay Henry's fee."

Cassandra said "I must be getting old – I'd forgotten about that. The solicitor always has to be paid."

* * *

Change generates attention, while everyday routine can be overlooked. Except everyday routine can allow people to slowly get to know each other. The death of Adeline Naismith along with the evolution of life for the Soultons, brother and sisters, with their burgeoning families, left Fortescue Road with a changed retinue of occupants.

In particular, the kitchens were now directed largely by Angela Fraser, but she also administered the somewhat informal school that she and her

husband David ran. As we have noted, this catered to those of modest means who could be said to want to improve their education. The instruction was, however, much more directed to skills in arithmetic, clerical tasks, quick and effective reading, as well as clear writing, both in content and penmanship. That the students were able to see clear progress in a short time period made the Fraser Academy, as they called their operation, reasonably popular. The efficiency of the training, however, meant the students passed a shorter time with the Academy, so the revenue they brought was correspondingly less.

The Academy had initially been intended for children, but turned out to attract older students, some even in their middle years. The Frasers and Angus Sinclair taught all the offerings, and though they lacked formal qualifications, there were few complaints from those who paid their modest fees. Fortunately these fees were sufficient in total to allow comfort and dignity to the Academy staff.

Angela Fraser was thus preoccupied with the Academy and its operation. Her nominal direction of the kitchen devolved to looking over the plan for the meals with James McDowell and Martha Murphy, and generally it was James who did the real work, both in the planning and cooking. Dan retained his role as handyman and gardener, indeed emulating Tom in some small projects in the back shed, while he also did a lot of the shopping and errands related to the two houses.

One difficulty in the kitchen was that James, due to his facial injury, was quite difficult to understand, though Captain Fraser somehow did quite well, as did Angus Sinclair, but Angela often had to get him to write on his notebook. Martha, on the other hand, could understand the various noises that passed for his speech. They got along well. Martha was from a poor Irish family that perished in Liverpool of cholera after her father died from being kicked by a horse. Charlie Chipman, a petty crook, told her his wife needed a servant. Actually, Chipman only wanted a bed-mate and was unmarried. When they got to Brighton, he abandoned Martha, who, aged only 14, he left with child. Some three months later, Ethel and Adeline hired her from the Workhouse. During that time she suffered a miscarriage, which may have been a blessing.

Cassandra had noticed that James took the hand of a much-upset Martha when they had discovered Adeline had died in the night. Despite James' difficulties with speaking, he and Martha communicated quite well. There was, of course, a considerable age difference. Martha was just 18, while James was nearly 33. In Victorian England, this was not, of course, an unusual difference.

Given James' injuries and Martha's experience of coercion amounting to rape, they were both circumspect. Nevertheless, there was a growing affection between them. It was not manifested in obvious ways, but on occasion they

would find their hands joined, or a small gesture would convey a private message.

The friendship between Martha and James took another step on January 9, 1859. Martha was, as one might expect of a young woman from a rural part of southern Ireland, a Catholic. While the way in which she learned about the St. John the Baptist Church has been lost to memory – quite possibly she learned of this via Yolanda Karwowski who was a regular attendee – she had mentioned to James that she would like to go to Mass again.

James told her to tell Mrs. Cohen that she wanted to do so, as it would be much easier if their employer were agreeable. Cassandra had no objections. Indeed, she herself had started attending at St. Paul's to participate in the local community.

James knew Martha was nervous on her own in the street, and offered to come with her. He let her know he wasn't a Catholic, but would do nothing to cause embarrassment for her. Martha realized, of course, that his face was, to some, a source of great embarrassment, but it was to those who viewed him with horror that the embarrassment was attached. They would see if St. John's parishioners followed Christ's direction to be charitable.

A few of the congregation came to greet them that first morning. Among them was Yolanda Karwowski, who they had encountered off and on in interactions between Fortescue Road and Chorley Terrace. After Mass, Martha asked the priest if she might speak with him to tell him of her situation, and the priest, a Father Jacob, asked them to wait while the congregation dispersed, then invited them back into the church.

Martha said "Thank you for speaking with me, Father Jacob."

"How may I help you, my child?"

"Well, Father. My name is Martha Murphy. I was born in Ireland and raised Catholic. My father died of a horse kick some five years ago. My mother, brother and me were booked to go to Bytown in Canada, but we got the cholera in Liverpool. I survived but Ma and Patrick didn't. A Mr. Chipman said he needed a servant for his wife in Brighton. But he weren't married and ... er ... oh ... it's not nice..."

"He violated you?"

"Yes. Though I probably should have fought back, I somehow couldn't. We were in a hotel – hotels actually, as he ... did it more than once. I didn't know what to do. I'd no money. I had to pay for Ma and Patrick to be buried, and there was nothing left."

"Was there a child?"

"No. P'haps for the better. Chipman abandoned me here at the Station and I ended up in the Workhouse. Some weeks later I had pains and bleeding. The word miscarriage was said. Then two women who worked for Mrs. Cohen came and hired me, and I've been working there since. They treat me well.

Mr. McDowell is part of the household and does a lot of the cooking. He was wounded badly in the Crimea, and you'll need to be patient to understand his speech, or I can help interpret."

"But what is your question, Martha?"

"Well. It's been almost five years that I've not been to Mass. That's a mortal sin. And Mr. McDowell isn't Catholic, but he's said he'll accompany me to church as I'm ... nervous ... in the street on my own. We don't want to cause any trouble in the church."

Father Jacob said "The only trouble will be to those who do not welcome willing souls who come to Christ's house. You are here. You want to worship with us. Even if Mr. McDowell is not a full participant, we will offer him our welcome and our prayers. That you have missed Mass is noted but I do not believe would be counted as a mortal sin. However, perhaps you wish to have absolution, in which case I can hear your confession now should Mr. McDowell be willing to wait here in a pew for a few minutes."

"Please, Father. That would give me much ... consolation."

"There is a confessional just here, but please allow me to unrobe from the Mass vestments. I will be but a minute."

* * *

"Indeed, James," Martha said in response to what would be unintelligible to others, "Having Father Jacob hear my confession was a huge weight off my mind. I like church. It gives me much solace."

James said that he was glad.

Thus began a regular excursion each Sunday. By March, there were several parishioners who they knew by name and would exchange greetings with. Of course, there were others who shied away. People are people. But on the first Sunday in March, with Lent about to begin the next Wednesday, a woman who they knew as Mrs. Sackville invited them to join the church volunteers for a cup of tea after Mass. Mrs. Sackville's warmth somehow overcame their reluctance.

Father Jacob came over to where Mrs. Sackville was introducing Martha and James to a pair of quite elderly women who laundered the altar cloths.

"Ah. Mrs. Humphries and Mrs. Kildare, I see you've met Miss Murphy and Mr. McDowell." Martha was quite impressed that the priest remembered both names. "Mr. McDowell is, I am told, a veteran of the Crimean campaign."

James tried to say something, but the obvious puzzlement on the faces of the three parish ladies led Martha to say "Mr. McDowell says that is where

a Russian musket ball smashed his jaw. I seem to be able to understand him better than most.”

Mrs. Humphries said “We civilians owe you and the others who suffered wounds a great thanks, Mr. McDowell. I am ashamed at the way old soldiers get treated, and hope you have decent employment.”

James managed to say something, of which "cook" and "horse" were comprehensible.

Martha said “He says that he runs the kitchen – and I can attest that he does it well – where I am the nursemaid. And he also used to look after an old horse, pony really, for Mr. Goldman, and now a new pony owned by Mrs. Sinclair. He was a sergeant in the cavalry during the war in Crimea and beforehand.”

Thus Martha and James widened their community. In fact, 'cavalry' was not quite right, or not a complete description. James had been in charge of caring for the horses that pulled guns and limbers. The mobile artillery was often attached to the cavalry, but that role was not commonly understood.

* * *

We have jumped over some happenings in the first part of 1859. There was, perhaps fortuitously, no major public disaster. On the positive side, Tony read in the *Times* that the *National Portrait Gallery* had opened on the 15th of January. He made a mental note that it might be interesting to take a trip to London to visit it. The trains were not quite as convenient as one would like, but a day trip was feasible. He would ask Janet Nuffield if she wished to go.

The same week that the item appeared in the *Times* announcing the opening of the *Portrait Gallery* in Great George Street, Tony got a note inviting him for Sunday dinner with Cassandra and Abraham. He had not had chance to share more than a few pleasantries with them since moving into the shop, so accepted with alacrity.

With his gradually rising status, Tony had learned that etiquette argued that the guest bring a small gift for the hosts. He therefore purchased a bottle of hock. His knowledge of wines was, as yet, almost nothing, but he took the time on a day when Mr. Moss, the wine merchant, was not busy, to ask some questions about different wines. This Mr. Moss was no relation to Winnifred Moss who was part owner of the *Brighton Ladies Emporium*.

“Mr. Moss. I confess I am a novice concerning wines.”

“Not surprising. Young fellow like yourself, Mr. Brown. And I’ve seen you about for a few years now, gradually improving your business and yourself. Rumour has it you helped the children of Mrs. Macdonald along with

Mrs. Mortimer, the solicitor's wife, besides taking on that run-down shop of hers. Would've been a nuisance for me to have to set up my subscriptions again somewhere else. Did no 'arm to rescue Miss Crouch from the sea a coupl'a years ago, either. "

"Shop's doing all right now. Touch and go for a month or two. Not large profits, but not losing either, and I've moved there to live so it's occupied at night. Even got myself a young caretaker now."

"Good for you. You and young Mr. Upton, and 'is mother and sister too, you'll do all right I think."

"Can you give me some hints on safe choices in wine, Mr. Moss?"

"Yes, I suppose 'safe choices' are a good approach. Have a few choices that won't get you into trouble.

Well. Her Majesty has a fondness for white wines. And what we call hock here in England is a family of quite light white wines from the River Rhine area. Some can be quite expensive, but the inexpensive ones are generally drinkable. They are sometimes called Reislings, and tend to the sweeter side. Piesporter wines are from the River Moselle and are very similar. Some hock and piesporter can be too sweet for my taste. I like the drier ones, myself. But I doubt you'll go too far wrong with a middle priced version of either."

"Are there other white wines?"

"Oh golly yes. There's nice dry Bordeaux wines. They also do Sauternes from the same region – far too sweet for me, but some ladies love 'em. To me it's just sickly.

Champagne, of course, with its bubbles. I find it an affectation, and it seems to give me a headache afterwards. Rather drink a good dry cider myself, and some cheap champagne may be mostly cider. The blenders try to make an extra few pennies by mixing in what they shouldn't."

"What about red wines?"

"Bordeaux does a number of reds that people here in England refer to as claret. Bergundy does some nice reds too. I probably favour the Medoc wines from the Bordeaux area, and I've a personal taste for the Volnay wines of Bergundy. But, truly, a lot is personal taste.

I'll tell you, Mr. Brown. A lot of wine is about snobbery. There are some wonderful wines with no reputation at all, but finding them, is, of course, a matter of luck and perseverance. If you buy from me, I'll make sure you get drinkable stuff. But of course, if you're out and about, or in an eating house, it's a bit more tricky. If the place is decent, you probably can simply ask them to recommend a suitable table wine, red or white as per your preference. A good establishment won't want to ruin the meal with rubbish, though they might try to have you take more expensive stuff. Which is why you say table wine. Some places may even buy it in the cask."

"Wouldn't one get very drunk trying all kinds of wines?"

Moss laughed. "Prob'ly why some men claim they're wine experts."

"Well, for today, give me a hock that you think is reliable."

"I've had no complaints – nor from my own gullet – with this one," Moss said, taking a bottle off the shelf. "It's not expensive compared to others, and seems to be liked by almost everyone. The suggestion is that it should be served a little chilled, so keep it somewhere cool if you can."

"Can I ask why it seems that people often prefer sherry or port?"

Moss answered "They're fortified wines, meaning spirits are added to increase the alcohol concentration. So people can get drunk easier. But the tax is the same, so they make for cheaper inebriation."

"It's not the taste then?"

"Well, yes, with decent stuff and people not after oblivion. Getting drunk on sherry or port will leave you swearing off drink, you'll be that sick. But a nice dry sherry before dinner. Just a bit more than a thimble full is enough. After dinner, some port or cream sherry. Again, just a few sips per person are enough."

* * *

Tony walked back from church with Cassandra and Abraham on the 16th of January. He was in his street suit, as he called it, and carried his over-the-shoulder satchel in which was the bottle of hock. As the trio came into 21 Fortescue, Martha and James were entering the area door to the kitchen on returning from Mass.

Abraham said "James is accompanying Martha to St. John the Baptist. He's not Catholic, but Martha has missed the services, but is anxious in the street alone, and it's a fair walk to get there. If we'd have known she wanted to go to Mass, we'd have arranged something earlier."

Tony asked "Who looks after Catherine while you go to church?"

"The Frasers and Sinclairs offered. They decided to have a long breakfast – well, breakfast with reading and watching Catherine – in the kitchen of 21. It's what they mostly do anyway, and they eat later than we do on Sunday, so James and Martha prepare breakfasts for the four of us, and Catherine can get two breakfasts if she wants. Sometimes Rose goes and gets the gig so she and Angus can have an excursion, but not today as I think they felt it too cool."

Tony said "Oh. Before I forget. I brought a bottle of hock. Supposed to be a nice one."

The wine was nice, and the whole bottle disappeared steadily over the course of an hour. Though the food was the same as in the kitchen, the three of them ate in the drawing room on the excuse that they wanted to

talk about business, though it was more a matter that Cassandra wanted to allow Tony to share his feelings. Adeline's death was not long ago. A lot of changes in Tony's life were unfolding, and the Frasers' presence would inhibit any discussion of emotions. Moreover, Cassandra and Abraham were privy to Tony's gender, while the rest of the household were not.

Cassandra said "I'm afraid we've seen little of you lately."

"That's true. I should have made more effort to come to see you. Moving to the shop has kept me rather busy. Christmas seemed to have quite a few events also. But if I had given more thought, I would have come by. I'm sorry."

"Don't be too repentant. We could have sent a note and come to see your redecorated shop," Abraham said. "When we talked to Tom and Vera the other night, they said you did a good job of quickly making it comfortable."

"I quite like it. It is, after all, the first place that is my own, so to speak. Jack Dixon was sleeping there, but he prefers to live at home with his parents. And with my increasing wardrobe and books, the space at Uptons' was getting rather jammed. After all, I was more or less in a corridor. However, I still pay Mrs. Upton to eat supper there five times a week."

"You seem enthusiastic about the place," Cassandra said.

"I am, and I'm gradually making small improvements to make it more comfortable."

"Does that include your new assistant? We heard via Tom and Vera about Bobby."

"Cassandra, you are being rather ... inquisitive," Abraham said.

Tony laughed. "I'm not offended. Yes. I was walking home from church on Boxing Day when I found Bobby like a pile of rags in the kitchen area of a house on North Street."

"Vera suggested Bobby may be a girl, but you have dressed her as a boy, rather like yourself."

"Bobby's mother, who seems to make her living as a harlot, and who I suspect does not know who Bobby's father is, nor perhaps care, already chose clothing that was masculine. I've simply provided better garments, and those I had of my own were already those of boys or men. In the tasks I will ask Bobby to do, some are more easily accomplished as a boy, such as carrying notes. However, if Bobby wishes to dress as a girl, I will support that choice."

"Is it still your own choice, Tony?" Abraham asked.

"I must confess, when I see the evident affection between my friends, of whom the pair of you are examples, along with the arrival of children, it does give me cause for thought. However, as much as I am pleased to be with children, and I believe my comportment with them is congenial to both them and me, I don't find myself with any strong parental feelings."

“But perhaps the want of a true partner to share your joy as well as your sorrow?” Abraham suggested.

“Yes. That is it, I think.”

“There are the ... er ... more physical aspects,” Cassandra observed cautiously.

“Adeline and I talked about that. I recognize that if I remain in male garb, I am almost certain to miss that particular physical aspect of life. I think a lot on the topic, but more because I don’t seem to experience the pressure or perhaps pull of it. Around me I see a lot of misery which that force creates. Look at Bobby’s life so far.”

“You are right, Tony,” Cassandra said, thinking also of Dan’s case of the clap. “And also right to think carefully on your life and what you want. It seems you are doing that. Nobody can or should decide for you, though there are many who might try.”

“Yes. Interestingly, I was on my way to walk in the area of the Old Steine Gardens when I found Bobby. I wanted to see what the properties there were like. The *News and More* location is a terrace, with no easy access to the rear yard, and an odd arrangement of the rooms on the floors. There is no access from inside to the upper floors, for example. *Bartlett and Jones* didn’t have access from the street to the rear yard until you arranged access via the *Brighton Ladies’ Emporium*, so you will be aware of such concerns.”

“You are thinking to try to buy a house or shop?” Abraham asked.

“In just over a year, my inheritance will come into my control, though in fact I suspect if I make a reasonable proposal now the trustees would approve.

I cannot see that I would be happy in Ezekiel Crown’s house. What I have seen and learned of it does not appeal. Even the location is less than ideal. So I would aim to sell it and find something more suited to my needs and wishes.”

“Good for you, Tony. Did such thoughts about property lead to the calculation of interest that Vera and Tom showed us. It was very clearly laid out.”

“Actually, I found a book on that some time ago and somehow remembered how to do the sequence of amounts still owing on a loan or investment. But it is quite difficult to work back to the interest rate from the list of transactions. Mainly there is a great deal of multiplication, which takes more care and effort than addition.”

Cassandra agreed “Yes. I don’t think many people are comfortable with long multiplication or long division.”

* * *

Tony had cut Bobby's hair when they had first met, but his own hair had been kept tidy by Adeline Naismith. Given she was now dead two months, his hair was getting long. After he and Bobby returned from supper on the last night of January, 1859, Tony said "Do you think you'd be able to cut my hair?"

"Could try. Might make a mess of it though."

"Lets set up some lamps, and you can try just trimming the ends first, then we'll take a look and maybe do a bit more."

"I can do the same for you, though we did cut some off when you came here."

"Feels good to 'ave it shorter. And no nits."

While neither did an excellent barbering job, the haircutting exercise was deemed a success and would become a regular monthly event.

* * *

In the middle of the day on Wednesday February 2, Ethel's waters broke. Unfortunately, she had a long and troubled labour, and the baby girl that was born on the morning of February 3 did not take a breath. Yolanda and Maud, who came to assist along with a local midwife, realized that after the birth Ethel was losing a lot of blood. Mary Yarrow, being in the factory, had the sense to send a message with Felix to Cassandra at *Bartlett and Jones*. Quickly consulting Frieda in the Emporium next door, they rushed to the Factory, stopping only at an apothecary to get some of the ergot needed to make a tea of it. This labour tea, as they called it, caused Ethel's womb to contract and the bleeding to slow and then stop.

The mood in the apartment at the factory was, obviously, very dark. The unhappiness oozed through the walls and everyone working on the baking was quiet and sad. It was fortunate that Cassandra and Frieda were still present, as they chivvied everyone but Ethel, who was exhausted and in a stupor aided by a dose of laudanum, to return to their tasks while they cleared the detritus of the still birth. The midwife asked if she should arrange the burial of the dead baby. It went unsaid that this could not be in consecrated ground.

Mary Yarrow, after a quiet word with Cassandra, said to leave the small body where it was in a corner. They would arrange a burial. When Percy Jones came home that evening from his work at the Railway, he, Mary, Felix, Janet and Mary buried the infant's corpse with a prayer for unbaptized souls in a tiny grave that Felix and Percy dug next to one of the columns of the London Road Railway Viaduct behind the factory. This minor ceremony

took place in the February evening darkness under a steady drizzle. Even the weather wept for the lost child.

* * *

Despite the general sadness, on the mid-February Sunday, Tony was invited to dine with the Mortimers. Henry had sent the invitation, and included mention that he thought they ought to review the accounting for the inheritance, though the main intent was social. He mentioned that they should avoid talk about Ethel and the lost child, as both Maud and Yolanda were quite upset, but were putting on a brave face so as to avoid upsetting the children.

Tony got to Chorley Terrace just in time for the start of dinner at half past one. Jolly was made a fuss of by Martin and Angela, then settled at the corner of the fireplace on a piece of rug Maud had set out for her.

Yolanda and Maud brought in a ham and Henry undertook his carving duties. There were baked potatoes, and some interesting red cabbage. Tony could taste onions, vinegar, and – was that right – something sweet. Sugar? Apple? Yes. That was it.

Yolanda said “I hope you like the red cabbage. I had to ask to find it, and one grocer said it wasn’t grown in England, but an old lady said she had made a recipe from a cookery book by a Maria Rundell from the time of the Napoleonic wars. She even invited me to take a look at her copy of that book, which I did.

Another greengrocer had the red cabbage. I think I’ll shop there from now on.”

Martin and Angela, the Macdonald children, were seated opposite Tony. They were surprisingly well-behaved.

Tony said “Angela. How are you this afternoon?”

“Very well, Uncle Tony.”

“And you, Martin?”

“Also well, Uncle Tony. Papa Henry took us to the front yesterday. The waves were crashing on the beach.”

Angela continued “It was quite cold, so we went to a café and had a cup of tea and a currant bun.”

Tony said “Currant buns are good on a cold day with a hot cup of tea.”

For a few minutes there was not much talking as everyone ate. As Yolanda cleared the plates, Henry said “I hear you have hired a young man as a servant.”

“Yes. Bobby will be ... I think "caretaker" is the name I will use. He was huddled in the lower area of a house on North Street when I came home

from church on Boxing Day. His mother ... well with the children present I need not say anything about her occupation, but she had asked him to stay out while she was busy.”

“How old is he?” Maud asked.

“Bobby will be 12 on February 28. But Bobby actually stands for Roberta. We felt it might be safer to use boys’ clothing.”

The significance of this was not wasted on Henry and Maud. Tony was not sure if Yolanda were aware of his own situation, but she said “It is not easy to be a girl coming to maturity alone. If the appearance is convincing, it will reduce unwanted attention.”

Maud said “For dessert, we have a Polish apple cake called szarlotka. But I have convinced Yolanda that in England we might like to have cream or hot custard with it.” As Maud was speaking, Yolanda entered from the kitchen with a tray having the cake, which was rather unusual to English eyes, along with a jug of custard. This was the relatively modern Bird’s Custard, made from a yellow powder with milk and sugar. Tony had read that Alfred Bird developed the sauce because his wife would get violently ill if she ate eggs. One evening, possibly by accident, the guests were served the new concoction and were most favourable to it.

In any event, on the present occasion, almost all of a good-sized cake and all of the custard were consumed. As Yolanda collected their bowls, Henry said “Tony. Shall we take tea or coffee in my office, and I can show you the account book?”

Yolanda said “Tea or coffee, Mr. Brown?”

“Coffee please. I don’t often get the chance for it.”

“I’ll organize the children, then join you,” Maud said. “I hope the fire is going in there, Henry.”

The office wasn’t very suited to socializing, as Henry’s desk dominated, though there were two quite comfortable armless upholstered chairs on the opposite side to Henry, and Tony took one of these. Indeed, there were no other options except remaining standing. Jolly had followed them into the office, not wanting to stay alone in the parlour.

Henry said “Here’s the accounts, open to the start of 1858. For Ezekiel’s house – perhaps I should give it another name if you wish – you’ll see the rent entries, the rates, and a couple of items for minor repairs. Those were to re-putty some windows and to tighten the hinge screws on the front door. We also had the steps re-mortared and one of Brougham’s men came and checked the roof slates and the chimney. We had the chimneys swept, but the tenant paid for two of those. They argued they never used the third chimney, and Dwyer and I concluded that it would be less work to agree and the tenant would be happier. However, you’ll see we did get that chimney blocked off.”

“Would that be a lot of work to reopen?”

“Not at all. Just that we didn’t want the tenant using it after saying they didn’t. There are two bedroom fireplaces. They’re back to back, so the blocking is actually at the top – a metal hat on the chimney pot. If it’s removed, the absence is visible from the street. Just look for the middle chimney pot.”

Tony commented “With the blockage at the top, the tenant would have to use a ladder or more to unblock the chimney. That’s good thinking.

I see two positive entries for Consols.”

“They are the 3% Treasury gilts, that is, government debt. Not a huge interest rate, but secure.”

“There’s also two payments each from ‘Hayworth’ and ‘Gormley’. We talked of those before as loans Ezekiel made to two gentlemen so they could finance their estates.”

Henry answered “Yes. They have been paying the agreed sums twice per year. The interest rate is 10% which is quite steep.”

“I recently calculated the progression of such a loan for Tom and Vera. It was quite interesting. Have you got the calculation?” Tony asked.

“There is a page for each at the back of the accounts.”

Tony turned to these and saw that the calculations resembled the one he had carried out for Tom and Vera, but with amounts converted to pounds, shillings and pence. He said “Gormley still owes over £200, but Hayworth will close out before I gain my majority.”

“Yes. That’s true. By the way, we could try to find a buyer for Gormley’s loan if you wanted more liquid resources, for example, to buy a property.

If you open to the page marked by the red ribbon, you will see the statement of assets.”

Tony opened the page to the ribbon.

“The house is valued here at £300. How is that determined?”

“To be honest, we looked at the last sale on the street. Your house could be worth a bit more. I think it unlikely it will be much less, in that it is larger than most. I would ask £400 if I put it up for sale, I think, and hope to get at least £350.”

“I see I have about £400 in Consols. Are they not only paid out if that is the discretion of the government?”

“It is true that the government decides when to pay off the debt and terminate the contract. But they can be traded on the exchange. They are also safe, though there is some fluctuation in what you can get for them, plus there is a trading fee.

You will see the £210 with Gormley and £45 with Hayworth, and you have over £140 in two different Railway companies. The stock of the local company has generally been declining. I was going to talk to Dwyer about

selling that as I think the railways have passed their prime as investments. Your Indian railway stock is guaranteed, which is good as there was considerable nervousness with the Mutiny and its aftermath.”

“I see a value of £65 and £82 respectively. Is that up to date?”

“I’m embarrassed to say that the evaluation was made last December. We should look up the current value. There were, of course, the dividends which are recorded in the journal pages.”

“Oh. Yes. I did see them, but should have commented.”

Henry added “And you’ll see an amount for ‘Cash’ of just over £38. That is actually in a bank account that I have for clients’ money separate from my personal account. Unfortunately, it earns no interest. However, Dwyer and I wanted to make sure there were some funds available, though for the last year you’ve not asked for any.”

“I’ve been able to manage on the proceeds of *Best Bonnet* and *News and More*.”

Maud, who had just come in carrying a tray with coffee said “Well done, Tony.”

Henry said “Yes. It is well done. And the Crown estate is worth almost £1200.”

Maud said “When Tom, Ethel and I were in the Workhouse, that would seem like all the riches in the world. It’s not, of course, but it is a tidy fortune for a young ... person.”

“As Henry mentioned before you came in, Maud, I could sell Great Uncle Ezekiel’s house and buy some other property.”

“Have you anything in mind?” Maud asked.

“Not yet. Actually I was on my way to sniff around the Old Steine when I found Bobby. I should actually go to do that soon.”

“If you do so when I can come with you, I will be happy to do so,” Maud said. “I always like looking about to see what is changing, and what’s for sale.”

“I hope you don’t buy anything without consulting me, my dear,” Henry said.

“Of course not. Tony. What sort of property do you think would suit you?”

“You know that *News and More* is in a terrace. The rear yard has no access to a street or lane-way. It’s rather like *Bartlett and Jones*, and you’ll recall how Mrs. Cohen got a gate into the *Emporium* and to the street that way. But I doubt there’s much chance of that where I am now. Also there’s the upstairs rooms with odd stairways, but none of the stairs are available from inside.”

“You mentioned the Old Steine. Is that where you think you might want to establish the shop?” Henry asked.

"It's close enough to where I am now that customers can still come to get their newspapers and magazines, but the houses are nicer. Still, I'd want to be able to get in the back yard from the street."

"Yes. That's a nuisance here. If we'd known beforehand, we might not have bought this house," Maud said.

"Really. That confirms my feeling that it is important to be able to get to and from the street. Otherwise it's not very easy for builders to work, or bring in coal."

"Or empty the cesspit," Maud said, and they all laughed, but it was tinged with the realization of what a nasty job that could be without a direct route to the street.

"If you can get to the street, then Moonbeam can be brought in. The cart too if the house is on an end or there's a wide enough entrance."

"Yes. Though I've wondered if I should look further out. Something like Tom and Vera have would be nice. I might actually like to breed and trade in donkeys. Probably not a great business, but I have an affection for them."

"In that case, would you move *News and More*?" Henry asked.

"Probably wouldn't make sense. And having two properties would be a lot of work. So far I'm just exploring possibilities. I'll need to do a lot of reckoning before I spend money."

"That makes sense," Maud agreed. "Is *News and More* actually making money?"

"Yes. Not lots, but not losing as far as I can estimate. I'm not sure how much to set as a charge against the business for Bobby. Some of what he does is looking after the house and meals, but he also runs errands and sometimes handles the shop if Jack has to step out and I'm not around."

Henry said "If he's providing security, then somewhere between a quarter and a half of the costs for him. I presume food and bed is part of his remuneration."

"Yes. Plus a half crown a week and some clothes. In fact, so far, clothes and boots have been the biggest expenditure, though I don't begrudge that at all. I want him to look respectable when taking messages, or even small deliveries."

"I think I'd allocate his wage against the business if that's the case, and treat his food and clothing as your personal expense," Henry said. "That would hardly be out of line compared to the cost of a night watchman."

"I doubt you'd get a night watchman for that little," Maud offered. "It's always tricky to apportion costs and rewards. Right now Mrs. Cohen and the *Emporium* are looking for someone to translate the Paris fashion magazines. I mentioned Yolanda speaks excellent French. Better than Adeline did, certainly. But if she does that, then there'll be less of her time for this house, though I rather think she should do the translations. So we'll have to

work out a compromise, possibly hiring someone a few hours a week to do cleaning and perhaps some food preparation. I don't think the cooking, but peeling potatoes and getting vegetables cleaned and chopped."

"How much is the rent on the shop," Henry asked, deftly changing the topic.

"Mrs. Macdonald was paying 6 shillings a week."

"That's a bit steep for such a pokey little hole," Maud said.

"Yes. I thought so too. Peregrine Withers came in almost as soon as Jack and I had taken over, and before the coroner ruled. Said we owed 15 shillings for a week outstanding and the next week. But the account book showed the rent paid, and only 6 shillings. So I said so, and pointed out Withers was standing on the bloodstain of the murdered woman. Turned out he was superstitious. I said that with a murder, business would drop off badly, and I'd only offer 5 shillings, and here was a half sovereign for the next two weeks. He took it and I made sure he signed the account book as a receipt."

Maud and Henry were laughing. "Well done, Tony," Henry said.

"You're definitely learning!" Maud echoed.

"Well, I've seen you do similar, like when we went to that fellow over the east side of town. What was his name? Carshaw. That's it."

"Oh. Yes. Owed the bookmaker, and said bookmaker's assistant came along to collect. Absolutely huge man. Like an elephant. His name was ... let me think ... Horner."

"And Maud said she'd pay what Carshaw owed to Horner if they'd each sign the appropriate receipts. But they were slow-witted and it took them a while to realize Maud was giving them both a way out of an awkward situation."

"But I was doing all right for me – Maud Mortimer – in the process."

Henry said "Withers has a number of properties under his control. I don't know if he owns them, but none are particularly well-kept. I can understand why you'd want something a bit better. I suppose the question is whether to have something central with the shop or move to the edge of town and have a stable."

Maud said "You might make sure Joshua Goldman knows your interests. What if he were wanting to sell up and retire?"

"I suppose," Henry mused. "How old are they now? Almost in their sixties I would think."

"I could ask Abraham," Tony suggested. "But perhaps simply telling Mr. Goldman what I'm thinking is not a bad idea. He may suggest something himself, and he'll know I'm not trying to work around him."

Anyway. I'm going to look at properties for the shop, though for the moment things are all right. At worst I could probably set up a counter at

Uptons' to handle the newspapers and magazines, or contract out the task to Valerie and Mrs. Upton."

"Yes. That might be sensible anyway if you really want to move to the outskirts."

"Well. I don't want to be miles away. But something like Tom and Vera have would suit."

"It could be that there's something along that road," Henry said. "The properties are a bit irregular. Some belong to the big estate across the road from Soultons. The roadway separates them from the rest of the estate, which makes them less easy to work as part of the estate, so they've been selling them off if they can. There might be a property that would work for a donkey stable, but it wouldn't be very large."

"How would I find out if anything's available?" Tony asked.

"Sometimes solicitors like me hear things, but it's more likely that somebody like Mr. Arbuthnot, the estate agent, would have better information, though I must caution that sometimes things are sold without any public information before the sale is complete.

You know, Arbuthnot or another estate agent could also provide information on property near Old Steine. You can and should take a look. I think Arbuthnot is someone you can inform quite honestly that you are just wanting to learn about the market for now. You can say I recommended you talk to him. If he is concerned you might be wasting his time and pretending to have money, he can contact me."

"At the moment I've very little idea of the prices of property. I need to learn before I venture into purchasing one."

Maud said "I'll estimate you can't yet choose which of old town or the outskirts you prefer."

"That's true," Tony said. "I'll need to explore both and learn the advantages and disadvantages that are invisible to me at the moment. I can't buy both."

Henry said "You probably have the money to buy more than one property. Obviously that isn't advisable unless you have a plan to ... well ... use them in a way that can be sustained."

"I'd need enough staff to secure both and keep them running. Even for one, I'm likely to need one or two people to support me."

"Well, you've Jack and now Bobby," Maud said. "Of course, a business has to do more than just meet the costs of its staff."

"When it's just me, I don't worry so much." Tony said. "I'm the only one to suffer if I make mistakes."

"It's like that with children too," Maud said. "By the way, Henry told me you'd given him £5 to help with Martin and Angela. I wasn't expecting it until August, as you gave us money last year around then."

“I’ll try to give you money at the beginning of each year. As they get older, your costs may be more. When I have access to the inheritance, I’ll give more if it’s needed so you don’t have to scrimp.”

“Thanks. We’ll see. Costs may increase for a while, but a decade will see them about as old as you are now, and you’re independent. Tom, Ethel and I were too.”

“That’s true,” Tony responded.

“We’re thriving at the moment,” Henry said. “Martin and Angela call me Papa Henry and Maud is Mama Maud. Yolanda is Aunt Yolanda. They both do chores around the house, mostly without complaint. I’ve instituted a penny a week pocket money as long as there is no misbehaviour.”

* * *

Tony did not wait long to consult Percival Arbuthnot, and after an exchange of notes, they met at Arbuthnot’s office late on the next Friday afternoon.

“Mr. Brown. We have, of course, encountered each other many times, but I do not believe we are truly acquainted.”

“That’s true. It has been largely that both of us have common connections, mainly through Mrs. Cohen, at least in my judgment.”

“I concur with that assessment. But now, what can I do for you?”

“Mr. Mortimer, who is a trustee of an estate I will inherit in a little over a year, has suggested that you may be able to assist me to gain an understanding of the value of properties I may wish to purchase either for my own use or as investments. The estate is not huge, but Mr. Mortimer has suggested it might allow for the purchase of a decent house. I will not pretend that I am going to make a purchase very quickly, since I am not in charge of the monies, though if an exceptional opportunity were to arise, the trustees could conduct a transaction.”

“Nevertheless, Mr. Brown, I know you and Mr. Joseph Upton have been steadily augmenting the *Best Bonnet* business, and now you have taken over a little newsagent shop too. I think it very likely you will eventually be purchasing and selling properties. That is very much in the interest of an estate agent.

Why do you not tell me what sort of properties would interest you at this time, and I can keep my eyes open for possibilities and you can go to view them and learn something of what is available.”

* * *

Prior to seeing Arbuthnot, Tony had met Joshua Goldman.

“Good day, Mr. Goldman,” Tony said, coming into the pawn shop late on Tuesday afternoon.

“Hello, Tony. It’s been a while since we’ve had a chance to say hello. What brings you here today?”

“Essentially that. We haven’t had a conversation for quite a long time, and I thought I should rectify that. There’ve been changes for me, which you may have heard about, and perhaps for you and Mrs. Goldman, about which I know I have heard nothing.”

Goldman chuckled. “Not much change here. But things are fine. Business is steady. Almost boring, but boring and profitable is good. Remember that! Excitement usually means there’s trouble and risk. Well, excitement that is for things outside of one’s control.

But tell me about what you’ve been doing. Second-hand stories usually have a lot of errors.”

Tony told Joshua about his move to the shop and finding Bobby.

Joshua said “So you now have a place of your own, and a servant – you used “caretaker” which is a good title. It covers all sorts of duties, but lends more gravity and responsibility to the post.”

“Yes. The shop is, of course, a rented place.”

“At what rent?”

“I’m paying 5 shillings a week.” Tony then explained how he had managed to reduce the rent.

Joshua was laughing heartily when Tony finished the story.

“And I’m the one supposed to be shrewd. You did well there Tony, but I’ll say I don’t think 5 shillings is all that much of a bargain. Not above the market, but not below either.”

“It bothers me that the building is not really of a piece. Moreover, it is quite narrow, with no access to the rear yard. I’ve started to look for properties nearby that are better appointed that I might be able to buy. I’m fairly certain I won’t want to live in Great Uncle Ezekiel’s house. Henry says I can likely get a decent enough price for it that I can buy something that suits better.”

“It’s rented now?” Joshua asked.

“Yes. Henry and Mr. Dwyer have been managing the estate.”

“That is their duty, but many solicitors are rather cavalier in the execution of it. Could the house be sold even before you inherit?”

“Henry did imply one of the other investments could be, and I know that the house could be sold if both trustees approve. However, it might be simpler to wait. In just over a year I’ll have control of the estate. In the meanwhile I will try to learn what is possible and the prices.”

Joshua said “The key factor may be finding a property that really does suit your needs. Have you thought what you might be seeking?”

“I have been giving that question a lot of thought.

For the purposes of *Best Bonnet* and *News and More*, I’d like something nearby. Also I see too many properties with no or rather poor access to the rear, and Henry and Maud confided that they might have not bought their house if they had realized how the lack of access to the back yard would complicate possible additions or repairs. Both you and Mrs. Upton have the stalls at the rear and a way to get to them.”

Joshua answered “Yes. That is a concern in many properties, Look at how Mrs. Cohen had to arrange a gate in the wall to the *Ladies’ Emporium* plus pay a yearly fee for such access.”

“I’ve also thought that I might, alternatively, like a property more akin to that of Tom and Vera. That would not suit a newsagent shop nor the administrative office of *Best Bonnet*. I’m wondering if I should think of breeding and trading donkeys. I’m very fond of Moonbeam and Annabelle, and of the work I do with them. But I’ve got to learn more about the breeding and trading business before I venture in that direction.”

“At least you recognize your ignorance. And in using the word *ignorance* I am only implying a lack of knowledge. A lot of people get carried away by their daydreams. Businesses need careful, sometimes painful decisions, else you end up in the debtors’ prison.”

“Sometimes, like Mrs. Macdonald, there are other reasons things go wrong.”

“Indeed. Your actions there are commendable. As is the charity the Mortimers have shown to the children.”

“They are well-behaved, fortunately, but I am immensely relieved they didn’t end up in the Workhouse. I’m contributing a small amount to their care.”

“Good for you!

To divert the subject, your talk of thinking about the future has made me realize I should talk to Mrs. Goldman and Abraham about this business. I am 58 this year. Not so old, but not so young either. The pawnshop business takes a lot of my time, as the hours must be long to allow for custom, and it needs an astute eye for false goods and over-valued ones. Also a care against robbery, which fortunately we’ve not suffered here, touch wood. It is a major reason I employ Mr. Hoyle.”

“Have you thought what you might do instead of the pawn shop?”

“I’m really not sure.

The pawn business needs somebody, in fact, more than one somebody, who can be here taking pledges and redeeming them, or selling those items that were unclaimed or that we have purchased for resale. That all takes,

as I've said, knowledge of the value of items. Rebecca Upton does quite well, and Abraham is experienced and eminently capable, though I suspect he much prefers trading in furniture. Still, the pawn shop hours are long. I also have space in the back where Moses was stabled, and now Phoenix. It's where we store the cart, the gig, and some of the furniture, with the rest at Uptons'. The house part of the building has rooms where now I store some of the pledge items that I am fairly certain will not be claimed. That is simply because Rachel and I only need one bedroom, and we rarely use the parlour now. There are, in fact, four rooms that could be used as bedrooms, with Mr. Hoyle in just a corner of one. There's a decent kitchen and parlour. It is a comfortable house but largely unused as such. Perhaps we should look for something where we could enjoy the years remaining to us. My investments in *Fortescue Factory* and other things are more than enough to live on. I must ponder on what I wish, just as you are having to do."

"I hope I haven't caused you upset, Mr. Goldman."

"Not at all, young man. You have simply pointed out that we should all review regularly our situation and prospects. In that it may mean I do not wish to continue personally in the pawn business, this property may come available. From what you said, it might suit your needs."

"That is true. It is near to the current shop, and already set up for trading. Whether I would want to continue the pawn business I do not know. That would need some thinking."

"For Abraham and Mrs. Upton too, as well as my dear wife. It does not do to act without talking with those with whom we share our fortune."

* * *

As he walked home the short distance from *Goldman's*, Tony realized Joshua was not among those who knew his real gender. Or did he? It was possible that Cassandra had told Abraham, and Abraham had told Joshua. Still, there were no obvious signs from Joshua.

There was also the recognition that in talking about his thoughts for the future, Tony had, as Henry implied, started Joshua considering whether he wanted to stay in his current premises. They would serve very nicely for *News and More*, but also would be too big for just that operation. The stable behind had really just two stalls, but did have room for Joshua's cart, some storage, and even a lean-to where the two-wheeled gig was kept dry. The yard was cobbled and well-drained. Also, the house was quite large. How would Tony use the rooms? It bore some consideration. Even if *Goldman's* was not the eventual property to be acquired, thinking about how one would

use the space for both profit and comfort were important as an exercise of the type he would need to perform proficiently to get a good deal on a property.

* * *

The last Sunday in February, Rebecca Upton invited Tony and Bobby to dinner. Normally Sunday they took care of themselves for supper, but Rebecca said “Bobby will be 12 the next day, so I thought a bit of a celebration was in order.”

Rebecca didn't add that she'd also invited Jack Dixon, so with Valerie and Joseph, there were six round the table. It wasn't nearly as many as for the tea at Soultons' Workshop the Sunday previous when David's first birthday had been marked by almost two dozen friends. Then Vera had not offered a dinner, just some tea and snacks

Tonight Rebecca had roasted a joint of beef, baked some potatoes and Valerie had made Yorkshire pudding and gravy. There were parsnips cooked with the roast and Brussels sprouts to round out a substantial main course. A bread and butter pudding with raisins was for dessert.

After the dishes were cleared away, Rebecca put a pair of small packages in front of Bobby, plus one large paper bag.

Rebecca said “We thought that as you are 12 tomorrow, you might need these things, which are from all of us.”

Bobby simply said “Oh ... I've never 'ad a ... birthday ... er... dinner before.”

Tony prompted “You can open the packages.”

“Oh. Yes. And thank you. Thanks all of you.” Tears were coming down Bobby's cheeks.

The small packages contained a pen knife and a leather money purse. The latter was the type with a cord that gathered the leather together. The cord could then be tied to a belt, and the purse put in a pocket. The paper bag contained a heavy pullover. The small items Valerie had found at *Goldman's* pawn shop, while Rebecca had knitted the pullover for Joseph a couple of years ago, but in the time she took to do so, he had outgrown it. Thus the cost of the presents was small, but their value to Bobby was priceless.

* * *

Tony's birthday was, of course, the Ides of March, namely the 15th. This was a Tuesday, and a good day for the celebration he wished, which was to

visit the new National Portrait Gallery. He had talked to Janet Nuffield about this in January, offering to pay all the costs as it would be more enjoyable to share. However, Janet said she could pay at least her train fares and entry to the Gallery, though she might be stretched to cover any meals, as she felt she would have to spend some money to improve her attire.

When Mary Yarrow was informed of Janet's wish to take the Tuesday in March as a day of leave, Janet was surprised that Mary was very supportive, and offered to help her shop for new garments. Moreover, the request initiated a series of conversations – at this time entirely informal – about the idea of being able to request leave. For Mary, Cassandra, Abraham and Joshua, there was no desire to oppose the idea, but questions flowed on how such leave would be arranged. It was important that the work of the factory not be interrupted.

Of course, Adeline had taken time to travel with Tony in the spring of 1857. Tony had his own business, so could manage his own time. Adeline had simply talked to Cassandra, who now, a year later, realized that such a request to take time off for a matter that was not a family or other emergency was quite unusual.

The workers did not expect paid leave. That concept was far in the future. For them it was the possibility that one might take a day or two to do something special, even if it meant loss of some wages. *Fortescue Factory* was, fortunately, still a modest operation, so after the owners had had a chance to talk about the matter, Mary asked the staff to gather in the main area of the factory one lunch time – the workers normally staggered their break to be able to keep watch on the ovens – and made the following brief announcement.

“I had a request for a day's leave from one of you to undertake an excursion that would be both recreational and educational, and was happy to grant it. However, it did cause some thoughts about how we should regard such requests going forward. I've talked to Mrs. Cohen and Mr. Goldman and we believe that we should be favourable to our staff wanting to do things that improve their general well-being. From the point of view of the directors of the factory, we obviously want no disruption of production. It is also likely that those of you in the staff do not want one member's leave to mean significant extra work for the rest. Fortunately, our workforce is small enough that we all know each other and hopefully we can negotiate a happy result.

That's really all I wanted to say.”

Ethel, who was now back at work, and more or less recovered from the ordeal of the still-birth, said “Thanks, Mrs. Yarrow. I think this news will be well-received by the staff. I remember when we all went to the Great Exhibition, and I can see people very appreciative if they can do things like that.”

Though it meant an early rising, Tony and Janet took the 7 a.m. train to London Bridge. Before 10, they had found a hansom. Tony asked the cabbie to go to Great George Street via London Bridge and the north side of the Thames, offering him an extra sixpence to do so. The alternative was through the streets of Southwark and the Westminster Bridge.

At the Portrait Gallery, our companions found that they spent less time there than they might have, as the collection of paintings and drawings was as yet quite limited. By a quarter past one they were on the street and looking for somewhere to have a meal.

“With the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey over that way, we may be better to walk in the other direction to find something,” Tony said.

This they did, but it was several hundred yards before they found a chop house.

Inside, they were shown a slate with the fare of the day. The waiter, dressed very well in a sort of minor livery, asked what they wished.

“Does your curry follow the Indian tradition of spiciness?” Tony asked.

“Yes sir. But for English tastes we do not make it overly hot. It is served with rice and some chutney. I can recommend it.”

“Then that for me, please.”

“And for the lady?”

“Might I have the lamb chops, please.”

“Certainly, ma’am.

And to drink.”

“Do you have a white table wine that the house recommends?” Tony asked, remembering Moss’ advice.

“We have a nice choice from the region of the River Moselle. A Piesporter. However, we only offer it as a full bottle.

There is also a white Bordeaux wine we have in a cask which we offer by the glass.”

“Then a glass of that for me. Janet?”

“Please. I have never had Bordeaux wine, and would like to try it.”

Our friends enjoyed their meal, which was very good. Tony was much taken with the curry, but having only a single previous basis of comparison, now two years before, was uncertain how it would compare with the offerings of other restaurants.

When the waiter came to remove their plates, Tony asked “Is curry a quite recent addition to eating-house menus?” By this he meant on restaurants that were not specifically for Indian dishes. However, the waiter said

“No sir. There have been curry houses for some time. The first was on Great George Street – The Hindoostan Coffee House – right near the new Portrait Gallery, and it opened in 1810 but did not last long. However, with many people who have spent time in India now living back in England, there is an appetite for curries, which can vary in their composition and level of spicing. Also Her Majesty is known to favour curries.”

It was not yet half-past two when Tony and Janet left the eating-house. They walked back to Westminster Abbey and spent a half hour exploring that monumental church. Then they walked onto Westminster Bridge and for a few minutes watched the traffic of boats on the Thames.

Janet quoted “Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty”

Tony said “That seems familiar, but I cannot place it.”

“Wordsworth’s *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*.”

“Ah. Very suitable. But I think it is starting to rain.”

Tony had on his Mackintosh coat, and Janet had a cloak with a hood, but they hurriedly left the Southwark end of the bridge and looked for a hansom. All such vehicles seemed to vanish the moment the precipitation started. Walking quickly along the street, they found a row of shops, among them a bookshop.

“In here,” Tony said.

Once inside, Tony noticed it was packed with volumes, mostly second hand. A man of late middle age was behind a small counter. Tony asked “Sir, is there a place we might place our wet garments to avoid damaging any books while we peruse your offerings?”

“I thank you for asking, sir. Many do not. I have a small room in the rear with some hooks. If you give me your coat, hat and walking stick and the lady’s cloak, I will hang them up.”

The rain fortunately did not last, but the collection of books was eclectic. For some twenty minutes Tony and Janet looked about – they were at the time the only customers. Tony found a very tattered copy of a version of *Markham’s Masterpiece of Horse Care*. He was about to go to the counter with it when he heard Janet say “I’d like this please.”

“That’ll be fourpence ha’penny madam.”

Janet reached in her reticule and took out a sixpence and the man gave her a penny and a ha’penny change.

“What is the price on this, please?” Tony asked.

“My goodness, that’s been there a while. Thru’pence will be enough.”

Tony paid the man, then said “I think the rain has stopped, so if we can have our garments, we will be on our way.”

The man returned, handed the cape to Janet and the Mackintosh, the hat, as well as the owl-face cane to Tony.

“A very fine walking-stick, sir.”

“The result of some very good work by a friend and associate. The brass was originally a door-knocker.”

“My word. How nicely done. Let me put some paper around the Markham. The cover is almost off.”

Janet had put her purchase in her reticule.

Coming out of the bookshop, Tony spied a hansom and waved it down.

“Do you want to explore some more, or shall we take the train at a quarter to five. It’s an express, and only takes two hours. The last train is at half-past six and the journey time is longer.”

“We started very early. Let us try to take the earlier train.”

It was just before four o’clock and the hansom was able to get to London Bridge with a few minutes to spare, though not enough time to buy any refreshments. However, once the train had started, Janet reached in her reticule and took out a small packet which contained some Treats.

“These were breakages yesterday,” she explained. Whether broken or whole, they were welcome, though a lack of drink meant they would be rather thirsty by the time the train pulled into Brighton.

After they had finished their biscuits, Tony asked “What book did you purchase?”

“Oh. I’d nearly forgotten. It is for you – a gift for your 20th birthday – a copy of a collection of Wordsworth’s poems, which includes *Westminster Bridge*.”

“Thank you, Janet. That is most generous.”

“But you paid for the hansoms and my meal. Also the wine. That Charlotte Russe was remarkably fine.”

“My Bakewell Tart was extremely good also. And I found I very much liked the curry. I will have to learn how to make it.”

Janet asked “What was the book you purchased?”

“*Markham’s Masterpiece of Horse Care*. It is rather old and I suspect out of date, but it will be a start. I want to learn more about horses and donkeys. Particularly donkeys.”

“That is your trade, Tony.”

“I’m thinking that I might get into breeding and trading donkeys. But I’ll need to know a lot more about them.”

“Yes. You could go very wrong if you had animals that got sick or worse.”

“Or bought old and infertile ones,” Tony added.

“Indeed. Much to learn.”

* * *

Tony came in from his rounds on Saturday March 19 feeling rather sluggish.

Bobby was finishing cooking supper. "I've made a cheese and onion pie."

"Hope I can do it justice. Feeling very tired."

Bobby said "Not getting sick, I 'ope."

"Nah. It's just the time of the month."

Bobby. Do you know about how women have a couple of days a month that aren't so good?"

"'Cept Ma and her friends always thought it was great. Soon as there was a bit of blood they was ready to celebrate, 'cos it meant they weren't with child."

"For the rest of us it's less joyous. And can be a bit messy. I suggest you have some rags ready. If you want, I'll show you how to make tampons and sort out a T bandage. Unless, of course, you've started already."

"Nah. Not yet. Ma thought it'd be when I was fourteen likely."

"Yes. Varies quite a bit."

* * *

On Sunday morning, Tony still had cramps and decided not to go to church, which was a pity, as he and Maud were planning to look at some streets around the Old Steine afterwards. Bobby was sent early with a message to Chorley Terrace that if convenient, the outing would be postponed until the next Sunday, March 27.

Thus a week later, Maud sent Henry home alone and joined Tony in a promenade around what was being called Kempton. Martin and Angela were looking after William and Joan for the short time between the adults leaving for church and Yolanda's return from early Mass.

"It's surprising how few houses have obvious access to the rear," Maud said.

Tony answered "The large doors will provide a sort of tunnel to the back wide enough for a cart, but many have just a pathway wide enough for a person, or nothing at all. In those, everything goes through the house. But sometimes it's hard to tell if a door leads into the house or else into a lane to the back."

"Very few for sale, too."

"Or few that have a sign. I'll see what Mr. Arbuthnot comes up with."

"What are you putting in your notebook?" Maud asked.

“Noting addresses of houses that seem to have the right sort of access and seem large enough and well-maintained. I don’t expect them to come up for sale, but I’d like to have some examples. I’m sure I’ll be told that what I want doesn’t exist, ...”

“And you want to have real examples to refute such nonsense,” Maud said, finishing Tony’s sentence.

* * *

April 17, 1859

Palm Sunday saw Martha and James walking back to Fortescue Road after Mass. Martha had her arm through that of James and they had passed near the Station when Martha stiffened.

James made a noise that was asking what was wrong.

Martha just said “Chipman” as a man approached carrying two carpet bags, one in each hand.

“My, my. If it ain’t my Irish Colleen. Filled out nicely, but you weren’t bad even when I found ye on yer uppers in Liverpool.”

“Leave me alone, you evil man!”

“Well, looks like you’ve got yourself a right knight in armour now, though ’is face is surely the worse for wear. Ow’s about coming with me for a bit of what we ’ad a few years ago?”

James certainly had a terrible injury to his face, but he worked hard every day. He walked miles as an antidote to some of his frustration, or even in going to exercise Moses or Phoenix. The food at Fortescue Road, for which he was mainly responsible, was of better nutrition than the vast majority of Britons ate at the time. With the frustration of his disability and his anger at the violation of a woman he was coming to be very attached to, he landed a vicious punch to Chipman’s stomach. The latter dropped his bags, which clanked and one popped open to reveal some silver candlesticks and other items. Chipman vomited in the gutter, spluttered and then tried to speak, finally saying to a young man on the other side of the street “Call a constable. I’ve been assaulted.”

The young man was, in fact, Bobby. By this time he’d been to Fortescue Road with Tony and had met Martha and James.

“Yes. Get a constable, Bobby. It looks like he’s got some property that likely doesn’t belong to him.” Martha was suddenly feeling a lot more confident, though she worried James would get into trouble. On the other hand, it would do no good to run away, as that would seem an admission of guilt.

It was Constable Shaw who came back 10 minutes later with Bobby. A small group of gawkers had gathered round. Martha and James stood a few paces away from Chipman, who was sitting on the kerb, one hand on his stomach.

“All right, all right, what’s going on ’ere?” Shaw asked.

“That ugly bastard punched me in the stomach.”

“And you’d be?”

“Charlie Chipman.”

“Oh. Yes. Been on the lookout for you. And I think this is James McDowell, a veteran of Crimea, where he was badly wounded while guiding the horse carrying his gravely wounded commanding officer off the battlefield.” Martha had not heard that part of the story. “And I know the young lady only by seeing her at Fortescue Road. May I have your name?”

“Martha Murphy.”

“Do you know Chipman?”

“Er. ... He met me in Liverpool where my widowed mother and brother had died of the cholera. I nearly did too. I was ... without resources and Mr. Chipman said his wife in Brighton needed a maidservant, but on the way here ... oh ... he ...”

“Took advantage of you, I suspect,” Shaw completed her sentence. “Well, there’s too many spectators here, so I’m going to suggest the three of you come down the station so I can fill out a report. Perhaps Bobby can take a message to Fortescue Road.”

“All right. I can do that, Constable Shaw. But who should I tell, and what?”

“Perhaps first go and tell Mr. Brown before going to Fortescue Road. The message will be that Mr. McDowell and Miss Murphy are helping us with our enquiries but will be home as soon as they can.”

Shaw had to help Chipman up and he and James each took one of the bags, which Chipman had closed again. The police station wasn’t far, fortunately. Shaw got a colleague to find some extra chairs for a small room with a table where Shaw had pen and paper.

“Now Mr. Chipman. I think you had left the Railway Station and were going south along the Queen’s Road when you encountered Miss Murphy and Mr. McDowell.”

“Yeah. That’s right.”

Shaw wrote on the sheet of paper, then dipped the pen in the ink well.

“Did you greet them?”

“I complimented Miss Murphy on her appearance.”

Shaw wrote some more, then dipped the nib again.

“Did Miss Murphy respond?”

“Wished me good day.”

“That’s not true. I asked him to leave me alone.”

Shaw scribbled some more.

“And, Mr. Chipman, did you say anything to Mr. McDowell?”

“Just ’ow sorry I was for his injuries that messed up ’is face. Then ’e hit me in the gut.”

Shaw scribbled, and again dipped the nib.

“Perhaps Miss Murphy can confirm that. I’ll go over details with Mr. McDowell after we get through once, since I know we may need to use a notepad. So, Miss Murphy, was that how things happened?”

“Mr. Chipman was rude. Said I’d found a knight in armour who was the worse for wear and that I should come with him for a bit of ... oh ... it’s so nasty.”

Shaw asked “So you’re saying Mr. Chipman tripped on some uneven pavement and ran into Mr. McDowell’s fist as Mr. McDowell tried to stop Mr. Chipman from falling into you?”

Martha said “What? No. ... Oh. Yes. I see. Yes you could say that.” A smile spread across Martha’s face.

“Bunch of lies! This is a fix-up,” Chipman yelled.

Shaw scribbled again.

Martha said “And one of the bags popped open. They’re full of silverware.”

“Are they, by Jove. Then we’d better ’ave a look.” From lifting the bags and from police intelligence about Charlie Chipman, Shaw had a pretty good idea of the contents.

“You’ve no right.”

“Ah. There was a burglary last night. There’s always a burglary somewhere. So we can hold you on suspicion until we get a warrant to look in the bags. ’Course it’s Sunday. Be tomorrow morning before the request for a warrant is filed. Might not get on the docket until Tuesday, perhaps not be heard until Thursday if the docket’s full, or the Magistrate’s had too much wine the night before.

I think I heard you agree we could look in your bags, Mr. Chipman.”

The silverware inside the bags was monogrammed and from a large house in the Midlands. That provided *prima facie* evidence of possession of stolen goods. Chipman worked with burglary gangs moving goods around the country away from where they’d been stolen so they could be fenced or else melted down. The police were aware Charlie was up to no good, but this was the break they needed to stop his, and some other, operations.

* * *

On Maundy Thursday, which was April 21 this year 1859, Tony came home to the shop at around half past five. Tomorrow would be a holiday, but he hadn't made any plans as yet. Jack was behind the counter and said "Bobby came across a hand-bill that might be worth lookin' at."

Hearing his name, Bobby came out from the back, where he was doing some washing and mending.

"Yeah. I remember you sayin' that when I managed the stories all right, I might want to read some of this Dickens bloke's work. Well, 'e's got a new magazine going and there's gonna be his new book *A Tale of Two Cities* in the magazine in parts. There'll be other things too, though."

"Can we take subscriptions for the magazine?" Tony asked.

Jack said "Not sure. They give an address to order the magazine, and you can subscribe through W H Smith. But they're at the Station. Means people 'ave to go up there."

"I suppose we can write and ask. If they say W H Smith has the monopoly, then we won't be able to supply our customers except at a loss. Well, the loss of our time and effort, since we could subscribe and then distribute. I'll write the letter now.

Do we have any stamps?"

Jack said "There's some in a folded paper in the till."

* * *

Tony's letter did get a reply, but it said that W H Smith was to be the official agent, though orders of six subscriptions would be priced at the value of five ordered individually. The margin was small, but Tony and Jack decided to take a chance and subscribe for six, which would be delivered to Smith's at the Station. It was a gamble of tenpence a week for a possible profit of just tu'pence.

On the 30th of April, 1859, a Saturday, the first number came out. Jack – using Bobby to fetch more copies from Smith's though there was no profit – managed to satisfy those customers who asked for the magazine and were willing to prepay six weeks. Subscriptions settled down to 10 after three weeks, but the extra issues *News and More* had to buy mostly sold to non-subscribing customers, sometimes several weeks late, by which time Tony, Jack and Bobby had had a chance to read them. The venture was a resounding success from the point of view of the learning and literacy of our trio running *News and More*, if a rather poor financial investment.

* * *

On Tuesday, May 10, 1859, Joseph was looking very anxious when Tony and Bobby came in the kitchen at Uptons' for their supper.

Tony asked "You're not looking happy, Joseph."

"Annabelle stepped on a twisted nail. I got it out right away, but she's limping. Had to get Arthur to do some of the commissions and find a hand-cart myself."

"After supper, we'll go and take a look. Do we have plenty of sand or sawdust?"

"Both. You're thinking a softer floor for the stall, but not one that she might eat, like straw," Joseph answered, and Tony nodded, as his mouth was full.

Tony and Joseph dressed the donkey's hoofs at the start of every month using a rasp and occasionally a clipper. This was more frequent than the six weeks generally advised, but they felt it better to be able to trim the hooves more conservatively by doing so more frequently. And each evening Tony and Joseph used a brush and a small stick to ensure no bits of stone were caught in the soft tissue of the hooves. The animals seemed to like this attention and would raise their hoof nearest Tony or Joseph when one of them said "hoof" and touched the appropriate lower leg.

On this occasion, the front left hoof had suffered the nail. When Tony got Annabelle to lift the hoof, it seemed a bit swollen. Gently touching the centre of the hoof where there was no hard material, Tony noticed Annabelle stiffen and the area was hot. In Annabelle's hay shelf, Percy the cat was watching reprovngly. Percy and Annabelle had an unusual rapport, and the cat would ride under the seat of the cart.

"Easy Annabelle. Let's get you some softer bedding."

They decided to use sawdust tonight, and made sure the donkeys had water and hay.

* * *

In the morning, Tony was up early and so was Joseph. The news was not good. Annabelle's hoof was swollen, and there was a small amount of pus oozing from where the nail had penetrated.

"She's not going to be able to work today, Joseph."

"Given how she's favouring that leg, I wouldn't have tried anyway.

But what'll we do?"

"I'll send Bobby with a note to Mrs. Sinclair and ask if Phoenix is available."

"Quicker if I go meself," Joseph said. "I'll go now, before breakfast."

“Ask if there are any plans for Phoenix, because we’re likely to be looking at needing her for about a week I think. And if you see Mrs. Cohen, ask her where she got leeches.”

“Leeches?”

“When Tom cut his hand, she used leeches to reduce the swelling, then maggots to clean the wound.”

“Eughh!” Joseph said.

“I agree it’s not a pretty thought, but it seemed to work. We could also try a warm salt water bath for the hoof. In fact, I’ll try that now while you’re gone, then I’ll get ready for my rounds. If I can, I’ll get through them quickly so I can pick up some of yours. I’ll try and let Valerie know.”

“Let me know what?” said the person named.

“Tony’ll explain,” Joseph said, and left at a trot.

Tony explained, and Valerie helped him get a wide bucket, clean it thoroughly, then put in some boiling water from the large kettle Valerie brought in. He added a couple of handfuls of salt and stirred with a clean stick, then added some cold water from a large tub they kept in the stable and filled from the pump regularly. He checked that the water was not too hot by putting in a finger. The bucket was about 2/3 full.

“Annabelle, hoof.”

Annabelle rather slowly raised the hoof and Tony placed the bucket so when Annabelle put the hoof down it would go straight in the water.

Annabelle seemed a little surprised, but did not kick or shy. Then the warmth of the hot water and the effect of the salt seemed to provide her some comfort.

Tony used the ten minutes he planned to leave the hoof in hot water to harness Moonbeam, who was clearly paying attention to what was going on with Annabelle. After the bucket was removed, Tony used a clean piece of rag to dry the leg, and put some fresh sawdust down for the injured hoof. For now there was not much he could do, so he bid Valerie goodbye and went out of the yard with Moonbeam. Only later did he realize that he had forgotten breakfast. Fortunately, Bobby went to Valerie, who knew where Tony would be so Bobby could bring him some sandwiches and ale for lunch.

* * *

Best Bonnet was lucky that the bookings for Phoenix this week were all under their own name, and not second-hand commissions. Thus they were able to adjust the times and locations where the animals and humans would work. Apart from *Fortescue Factory* work and two furniture sales on Friday, the main commission was a house move from Southwick to Hove. The intent

had been to use both Phoenix and Annabelle, which would likely have meant just two trips in convoy. While a single day with two trips would have been possible, they had planned one trip with two carts each on Wednesday and Thursday. A single day would have been possible, but it would have been a long one. With Annabelle unavailable, three trips with Phoenix hitched to *Goldman's* cart were needed, two on a long first day and one on the second, but less demanding, day. The journey to Southwick was, unfortunately, a fairly long one before work could start. With just a hand-cart, Eric could take the train for his regular rounds.

The travel times from Phoenix' stable to, from and between the particular Southwick and Hove locations could not be reduced without risk of over-exerting Phoenix. The only time-consuming activities in the move that could be reduced were those of transferring items from house to cart or vice versa, extended by the requirements to secure or release the load. To help speed up the work, Cassandra loaned Dan Dixon to *Best Bonnet* for parts of the two days. Goldman sent Ian Hoyle for a while. While Joseph would be in charge, Tony got Bobby to recruit a youth he knew – Matt Moore – who was not much more than a child. At the originating house, Dan disassembled and prepared items. Joseph and Ian loaded and secured the cart. Matt was used for "fetch and carry" of small items or to convey messages to coordinate the work. Matt also was set to mind the cart, protecting Phoenix from being bothered by children or led away by opportunistic thieves.

Before he left on his rounds, Tony called back at the shop.

"Jack. Annabelle is not able to work. She got a nail in her hoof. Bobby. I want you to go to Mrs. Upton each hour and be ready to convey messages as needed. We will have to adjust our work without Annabelle over the next few days at least."

Arthur, Eric and Tony carried out the scheduled rounds that first day, then added some extra commissions that would have been handled with Annabelle and her cart. With some juggling, and Bobby running with a message, Phoenix did one unscheduled commission on the way back from Hove which was but a subtle detour from her route home.

On Thursday afternoon, when the move was over, Joseph paid off Matt the agreed 10 pence a day. After supper Friday night, Tony and Joseph added up the revenues and costs.

"With Annabelle lame, we're probably losing money, or at least just making a tiny profit that will not be enough to sustain the business in the long term," Tony said.

"Still, we need to avoid losing customers," Joseph answered. "But we'd better not take on new work until we know Annabelle is better."

This prompted them to go and take another look at the donkey. The hoof was still swollen, and Annabelle seemed listless.

“She’s not doing too well, Joseph. This morning I had her put the hoof in hot, salty water. She seemed to find that soothing. Shall we try it again, and also change the sawdust?”

“I’ll get Valerie to put the kettle on, then come back and we’ll see if we can sweep the old sawdust out and put down fresh without having her move much.”

“I’ll give her a bit of a brush, and Moonbeam too,” Tony said. Moonbeam was watching them carefully. She knew her companion was not well.

When the two donkeymen started to clear the sawdust, they saw that some was stained with fluid that had come from the injured hoof. They used a broom and gently swept the old sawdust away and disposed of it on the dung midden. Annabelle seemed to know what they were doing and moved enough that they could clear the material under her sore hoof.

Valerie brought the kettle and some salt, and Tony prepared the bucket. Annabelle could see him doing so, and as he moved the bucket near her hoof, she raised it before he did anything to prompt her. Having put her hoof in the bucket, she gently raised and lowered it, which possibly ensured the wound was irrigated. Percy the cat, as before, watched the proceedings closely.

Joseph said “She seems to find that comforting, and it surely can’t do her any harm.”

“That’s my thinking. Did Mrs. Cohen say anything this morning about leeches and maggots.”

“Oh. Forgot to tell you. She said that with the wound where it is, both will get crushed, unless we can build some sort of shoe to provide a place for them under the wound. She didn’t think it worthwhile to try leeches or maggots for that reason.”

* * *

Thursday Annabelle’s hoof was still swollen, but there was no sign of pus on the sawdust bedding. Valerie said she could give Annabelle the hot water bucket. Joseph went to *Goldman’s* and left with Phoenix to finish the house move. Tony, Eric and Arthur departed on their rounds independently – they each knew their tasks. However, late in the day, Tony had asked the other two to check if there were some emergency tasks, if necessary paying someone to carry a message.

Friday, both Abraham and Maud had planned to attend different sales. Maud was going to a location not far from Chorley Terrace, and it was decided to get Dan to take a hand-cart and to meet her at the sale. It was likely that her purchases would take more than one trip with the hand-cart to get them to Uptons’ yard. They would stage things there before taking them

to Soultons' workshop, whereas the normal procedure was to go directly to Soultons'. If there were items too big for the hand-cart – though it could take surprisingly large ones if properly strapped – they would arrange a special trip with Moonbeam or Phoenix.

Abraham was going to Falmer, about four and a half miles. He would take Phoenix and *Goldman's* cart, and Joseph would go with him. Joseph had not actually driven a pony cart, so they used the occasion to let him try this, and he had no difficulty. As they made their way to the sale location, Joseph said

“I wonder if Phoenix would fit to Annabelle's cart.”

“Because it's lighter than this cart, and just two wheels so smaller and can fit in smaller spaces?” Abraham asked.

“Yeah. Almost like the gig, but able to carry stuff.”

“We should give that a try. I would guess that Phoenix is large enough that the shafts are too short.”

“Shouldn't be too hard to strap on an extension. 'ave to see when we try.”

When they returned from the sale and delivery of purchases to Soultons', they walked Phoenix to Uptons' yard and tested Annabelle's donkey cart. Indeed the shafts were about 18 inches too short for easy harnessing of the pony, but they had already talked to Tom, who had suggested that extension with metal U straps screwed to them could easily be bolted to the shafts. Two such straps would allow the extension to be positioned to the appropriate length. Joseph immediately started to prepare the extensions, as they would allow flexibility. Indeed, they were needed as Annabelle did not recover for another week.

* * *

When they returned from their tasks on the Thursday following, the 19th of May, Joseph and Tony decided to see if Annabelle would take some exercise. Tony went to her stall with a carrot in the back pocket of his trousers. He saw Percy in the hay shelf, and picked him up and petted him.

“Come on Percy, let's go outside and see if Annabelle will come with us.”

Annabelle was watching. Tony left the bar that crossed the back of the stall open. Once Tony was out of the stall she backed out and followed him and Percy into the yard. Seeing the carrot, and with Tony walking very slowly – he did not wish to rush and re-injure the hoof – she quickly used her teeth to "steal" the carrot, which was, of course, Tony's intent.

Joseph, who had been watching, said “Seems to be walking all right. Not favouring that 'oof. And she took that carrot smart-ish.”

Tony set Percy down and attached a short rope to Annabelle's bridle. "Come on Annabelle. Let's go for a little walk."

Choosing the shortest route, it was only a couple of hundred yards to the front, and that is where they went. Percy did not accompany them, as he would have to walk, which he did not deign to do. A short way along the Promenade there was a ramp to the beach, and, without Tony leading, Annabelle headed there. Then she walked down to the water. She seemed to want to go in, so Tony held the very end of the rope and let her. She seemed to just want to feel the water, and after a half minute came out and started to head back to the ramp, then to Uptons' yard. Well, that was the amount of exercise Tony had envisaged, and it was well that the donkey shared this plan.

Tony told Joseph "She did just what I'd intended without me doing a thing. Odd that she wanted to step in the water."

"P'rhaps it feels good on her hoofs."

That, at least, was what they had to assume. In any event, Joseph harnessed Annabelle to her cart the next morning, but for the next week only used her at half-duty, carefully checking her hoof and continuing the hot water baths each evening, which the donkey seemed to like.

* * *

The second Saturday in June, after finishing a scheduled route, Tony unharnessed Moonbeam, put on her saddle and they walked to the Promenade. He was near to where they would descend to the beach to offer donkey rides when he encountered Mr. Turcotte.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Brown."

"Good oh, it is afternoon already," Tony said, looking at his watch. "I had thought it was earlier."

"Must you away to the beach, or have you time for a few minutes of conversation," Turcotte asked.

"Always time for you, Mr. Turcotte. And I was simply surprised that I had lost my sense of the clock. It is still relatively early in the season, and also a day that is a little cool, so trade will be slow, I'm afraid."

"But I do hope you are prospering."

"We have been making a profit on the different aspects of our enterprise, though in some cases the margin is very small. You may have heard that we needed to hire Mrs. Sinclair's pony when Annabelle picked up a nail and became lame."

"I overheard some talk about that. No doubt the health of the beast was most worrying."

“It was, and the matter dominated our thoughts for better than a week. She seems better now.”

“Did you need to treat her hoof?”

“There are some farriers will try to intervene, but the general view, as far as I can understand it, though I am no expert, is to try to allow the injury to heal, and give the animal bedding for the stall that is clean but not something that the donkey will eat. Apparently, as they may have originated in countries where the vegetation is dry and coarse, they will eat straw and other such stuff. Thus we put down clean sawdust and renewed it daily. I also recalled myself finding a bowl of hot, salty water helpful to an injured foot, and used a wide bucket to provide the same for Annabelle.”

“And did that work?”

“I am not sure. The nail wound and the inflammation it caused may have healed anyway, but Annabelle seemed to like putting her hoof in the bucket, and would do so without our prompt.”

“Indeed, after a long day in court where I was on my feet for some hours, and in shoes designed more for looks than comfort, I confess I have used a bowl of hot water. Adding salt might be an additional benefit.

But what of yourself, Mr. Brown? Have you any new plans or ideas with your inheritance less than a year away?”

“None that are in any way firm. I have given much thought to my way of earning a living, and will, at least until and unless something compelling intrudes, continue with the donkeys. I now, as I think you know, live at the newsagent shop, and have a young caretaker named Bobby. Or perhaps you don’t know, since we have not talked for some time, though we have encountered one another at such events as the marriage of Miss Bingham.”

“I had heard. You must certainly be aware that there is a ferment of gossip at Fortescue Road. Fortunately, it is a gossip that is ... what word should I use ... affectionate. Definitely not malicious. So I had heard about your move.”

“My move was precipitated by the realization that I had acquired more personal property than would easily fit in the space at Mrs. Uptons’. But I like having my own ... home, I suppose. The first that I have had. And I have the newspapers and magazines to keep me informed of the world.”

“The events large and small. Enterprise and disaster. You saw that Brunel’s Royal Albert Bridge opened, but that its builder had to be wheeled across it as he is very ill, yet his age is inferior to my own.”

“Yes. There were some pictures of the bridge in some of the magazines. A striking design.

I also saw something about a very old legal case that has been resolved.”

“*Thellusson v Woodford*. A scandalous case of some of the legal profession keeping a dispute alive until all the value has been stripped out for fees, much

like vultures on carrion. The case was brought in 1856 and took three years to decide. However, the real issue was that Thellusson, a man of wealth, foolishly instructed that his legacy was to be accumulated – that is, invested and the proceeds ploughed back into the capital – until the death of the last child, grandchild or great-grandchild alive when Thellusson died. Then whatever had accumulated was to be divided among the living descendants.

The House of Lords deemed the bequest valid, but there have been so many awkward disputes over such accumulation bequests that there have been several acts of Parliament to curtail them. For example, it was not clear if the capital could be tapped to pay debts, or to support dependent children left orphaned, and myriad other technical challenges. Moreover, the witnesses and executors would themselves be deceased when it came time for distribution.

The residue of the bequest, I read, was no greater than the original capital. So the whole exercise only enriched the lawyers. Since I am one, I suppose I should not be so critical, but I fear it does no-one any credit.”

“I did have some difficulty understanding what was written, and perhaps the newspaper reporters were not clear either. I thank you for explaining.”

Turcotte, returning to more local matters, asked “Will you stay at the shop, do you think?”

“I am not convinced it is well-suited to my needs or wants. Ideally, I would want to have good stabling, but still be near the centre of town to be able to supervise the newspaper and magazine business.

Also, it has occurred to me that I might like to breed and deal in donkeys, but there is much to learn about both the animals and the business, and I will not rush, though if a decent property became available, I would explore the opportunity.”

Turcotte was remarkably well-informed, for he said “There are few central properties with big enough yards and good enough access. Uptons’ and Goldmans’ together probably constitute half of the existing ones, and both of them are really only large enough for a couple of beasts, yet they are essentially the best that one could hope for.”

“I actually talked to Mr. Goldman, much as I am talking to you, and he echoed your sentiments. However, he said the conversation would cause him to ponder his own plans for the future, as it might be time to consider alternatives. However, were I to take that property, there would be many other considerations besides newspaper and magazine subscriptions and donkeys or ponies.”

“For a young person, that is a great deal to consider. Most of your cohort are looking to much less grand steps forward in their lives, saving of course that most are also exploring the courtship of a partner. In that, you have an additional burden.”

“Yes. I give it plenty of thought, but must say the work with Moonbeam and *Best Bonnet* please and reward me. I doubt I would be happy without that. Nevertheless, to the extent that I can, I try to put myself in society and maintain a participation in public lectures and concerts. Even if I do not find partnership, I may still gain companionship with the accompanying social and mental stimulation.”

“That is well put, Mr. Brown. I commend your choices. They will no doubt alter with time, but they are sensible and considered. You will not go far wrong to follow such a course, though I will not say that it will be an easy path.”

“Thank you, Mr. Turcotte. It has been a somewhat turbulent time for me ... personally ... in the last half year.”

“That is hardly surprising. Mrs. Naismith was, I am certain, a very valued and important friend. But we cannot halt the clock. I am having to consider my own future. Rose Sinclair’s marriage has made me realize that a few years have passed more quickly than I realized. But that is how the world is, and we are better to work with rather than against it.”

“Indeed, and I hear the half hour chime, Mr. Turcotte ...”

“My goodness, yes. I must away also. Have a good afternoon, Mr. Brown.”

“You also, Mr. Turcotte.”

* * *

Tony returned to the shop that evening quite late, having done surprisingly well with giving donkey rides. A class of boys from a preparatory school were on a seaside outing and most wished to ride Moonbeam. With the long evening, he stayed on the beach until there were no customers, which was around half-past seven. It was almost half-past eight when he came in the shop.

Bobby said “There you are. Good job supper is a cold pork pie and some salad.”

“Had lots of custom. Took over 5 bob.”

“That’s good. In one afternoon, too.”

“Yeah, but a long one. I gave Moonbeam a good brush, checked her hoofs, and put a couple of carrots and some slices of dried apple in her hay shelf. Last year’s fresh apples are all gone or all rotten now. But she deserved a treat, as it was a long afternoon. There were a lot of folk about, including a group of boys from a boarding school. They all wanted a ride, so I said a penny ha’penny for 5 minutes rather than thru’pence for 15. There were about thirty boys, so I split them up so they didn’t have to wait, and told

some to paddle in the sea or do other things and roughly when to come back. It took almost three hours to give them all their rides. And I insisted some other people get to ride between the schoolboy groups, but they were happy with the penny ha'penny ride, so I think I'll keep that rate. As I said, over 5 shillings in one afternoon."

"But I've also seen a card somewhere that says tu'pence for 15 minutes," Bobby said.

"When it's quiet early or late in the season, we lower the rate."

"Makes sense. When there's a demand, you might as well raise the price."

* * *

Certainly Tony and Moonbeam had had a busy afternoon. Tony always walked with Moonbeam when she had a passenger riding, so he retired as soon as he had finished the pie and salad. He didn't even have any sweet, but put on a nightgown and pulled the curtain to close off his bed. Bobby was still washing up when he fell asleep.

The next morning, Tony woke quite early. Given the hard-working afternoon previously, he went to Uptons' to see how the donkeys were doing. Arthur was still asleep, and Tony did not wake him. The donkeys did not bray when Tony came in, but it was clear they liked being brushed. Given the recent nail injury, Tony checked the hooves carefully.

When Tony returned to the shop, Bobby had fried some bacon and made tea. As they ate, Tony said "I'll get dressed for church after we eat. What are you going to do today?"

"Do you have to do anything special in church?"

"There are prayers and hymns, but you can just listen. There is a collection for the benefit of the church. I'll give you tu'pence to put in the plate.

Let's make sure you're dressed decently."

* * *

Best Bonnet, by agreement of Joseph and Tony, did not always offer rides on the beach on Sundays, but today after church Tony asked Bobby "Do you want to come with me to give beach rides? If you do, we'll take both donkeys and I'll give you sixpence."

"You needn't bother with the sixpence, but I won't refuse it. I'd love to help with the donkeys."

“We’ll need to treat them gently today. Annabelle’s hoof may still be weak, and Moonbeam worked hard yesterday.”

“If there’s people wantin’ a ride, how’ll you rest the donkeys?”

“We’ll take them up to a water trough at regular intervals, even if they don’t need a drink. And we’ll take some feed for them in a sack. We can take one donkey at a time to rest them, and stay away from the beach long enough that they aren’t overworked. If necessary, we’ll even quit early. We need to look after them so they are content working.”

“Yeah. I’ve noticed how careful you and Joseph are to let them go at their own pace. An’ you hardly direct them at all.”

“They mostly know the way for the regular routes, and a lot of the occasional commissions are from people who use us more than once.

You’ll find Annabelle’s saddle is pretty strange, with a raised edge that makes it easier to stay in. Both can be ridden side-saddle, so we could welcome ladies too, but only the very smallest of them. Some boys and very young girls ride astride. We don’t allow men or larger ladies to ride, as the donkeys should only carry up to six stone. Joseph and I never ride them, though we sometimes sit astride them to check the saddles.”

Bobby asked “Are we charging a penny ha’penny for 5 minutes?”

“Yes. We’d better take the sign that says that.”

“How do we do the time?”

“I have a watch, but we use it to work out a circuit on the beach using landmarks like steps or certain posts so that it takes the donkeys a certain time to walk.”

“Oh. That’ll make it easy.”

“Well, it is if the donkeys cooperate and walk at the same pace all the time.”

* * *

That Sunday, with the two donkeys, Bobby and Tony brought home 13 shillings, having given a little over 100 rides shared by the two donkeys from noon until half-past seven in the evening. It was a long day, but the donkeys worked on average less than 60% of the time. On the way to the beach, Tony suggested Bobby give 5 rides on Annabelle, then use 15 minutes to rest. This would allow each donkey to henceforth do 9 or 10 rides then take a break, with the breaks not overlapping.

As they walked back, Bobby said “I really enjoyed giving the rides today. Would you let me do it again?”

“Of course. You did well. I’m wondering if we should try to get another donkey, though I don’t know where we’d stable it. Annabelle’s injury showed

that we don't have the capacity to satisfy our customers if one of the beasts is injured or ill."

"Can you afford another donkey?"

"Probably. The awkward situation is that we want to have another donkey to provide a margin of safety in case one is unable to work, and also to be used for rides when not otherwise working, but then we don't want the beast to be idle much of the time or our investment in purchasing the animal along with feeding and stabling would be wasted."

"How do you work that out?"

"Well, you saw today how we worked out the timing of the rides. Rather like that. We add up the costs, estimate the revenues, and see if the latter exceed the former. If we have more cost than revenue, we will eventually fail."

"I'm going to have to learn how to think like that," Bobby said, sensing that it was simple as a concept and complicated in its application.

* * *

It was late enough that evening that Tony and Bobby went immediately to a nearby tavern for their supper once the donkeys were fed, watered, brushed and had their hooves checked. They both had some bread, cheese and pickles for their supper, along with a bowl of broth.

Tony was quiet while they ate. Indeed quiet enough that Bobby asked "Is everythin' all right, Mr. Brown."

Understanding Bobby's concern, Tony said "Yes. Yes. Just thinking about what I could afford for another donkey and where to look to buy one. I'll have to ask around. Perhaps if you meet someone who might know, for example, someone driving a donkey or mule, you could ask if they know of anyone who sells donkeys."

"If I see 'em, I'll make sure I ask, an 'ope they don't think I'm impertinent."

"Sometimes you can't help that people take offence. There seem to be people who go through life as if their job were to get upset with whoever and whatever is around them."

Bobby laughed. Then yawned. It was time to get home to bed.

* * *

At two o'clock on the afternoon of July 1st, Tony, having finished the regular rounds with Moonbeam, was at the Station with instructions to meet

a Mrs. Harper. He had a sheet of card on which he had written *Mrs Harper* in large letters with a piece of charcoal he had found in the stove after it went out when he had closed the vent too tightly. This came from a thick twig in some brush he had picked up to burn. With the vent open, such green twigs would burn up as long as they were not the only fuel. With the vent closed, they turned into charcoal of questionable quality, but suitable for writing on card or paper for the present need.

A well-proportioned woman of perhaps thirty years and dressed somewhat unusually approached. It was a relatively warm day, and she had on a skirt and blouse, but the skirt was much less voluminous than most women were wont to wear. Yet it was concurrently loose fitting enough to allow for easy entry and egress to a hansom or train carriage. The blouse was neither tight nor loose, but quite plain in style. The current fashion was for decoration. Tony also noticed that the woman had very short hair, not much longer than he and Bobby had.

“I am Mrs. Harper. Who do I address?”

“Tony Brown, at your service, Ma’am.”

“Well, Mr. Brown, my trunks and other baggage are here with these two porters. I presume you would like the most weighty first to keep the cart well-balanced.”

“Indeed, Mrs. Harper. Thank you for your thoughtfulness.”

The luggage was loaded onto Moonbeam’s cart, and Tony got out some straps to make sure all was secure while the porters were paid.

“Are you planning to take a hansom, Ma’am? If so, I should confirm the address for delivery.”

“You will need the address anyway, but I am happy to walk. Too many women spend their lives in unsuitable garb to be able to get a few yards on their own legs.”

She took out a small sheet of paper from a pocket in the skirt and passed it to Tony. Most women had loose pockets on strings, but these were clearly part of the skirt.

“That is not far, though far enough that you have not wasted your money to hire *Best Bonnet*.”

“May I walk near you and ask some questions about Brighton, Mr. Brown?”

“Certainly, Ma’am. Shall we go?”

“Yes. I have no reason to tarry here.”

“Come Jolly. Walk on, Moonbeam.”

Jolly took station just a little ahead of Moonbeam and to the pavement side of the road. The route went past Fortescue Road, so Jolly and Moonbeam followed that line.

“Your animals are well-trained, Mr. Brown.”

“Jolly and her brother were owned by a man who died. A friend took Fuzzy and I took Jolly. I was lucky that she seemed to not need any training, or none that I noticed. And Moonbeam was acquired second-hand, so already trained, though she had to learn her way about the town, having been with a man over in Hove. But in the present instance, we are following a well-trod path to the house of several friends on Fortescue Road. Both dog and donkey will probably expect to stop there, and I will have to urge them on then.”

This indeed was what happened, though the urging was not in any way severe. Moreover, as they passed Fortescue Road, James was coming in from some shopping. James made some noises of greeting, which were directed as much at Mrs. Harper as Tony and Moonbeam. Mrs. Harper said “My goodness, it’s Mr. McDowell. And your wounds have at least closed and scarred over. I hope you are well.”

James said something which might have been *yes*.

Mrs. Harper said “I would like to meet with you when I am settled. I have a nursing engagement that is apparently near here, and I will note 21 Fortescue Road. Do I take it you live here?”

James acknowledge this, and said something that was probably “Good afternoon.” He bent and gave Jolly a pat, and Jolly gave a small bark of appreciation.

“Walk on, Moonbeam.”

Mrs. Harper said “It’s a long story, but the short of it is that Mr. McDowell was in a sort of hospital where I worked just outside Balaclava.”

“He works for a woman who rescued me from the gutter and let me purchase Moonbeam and this cart from her. Sometimes we pay her so *Best Bonnet* can have James work with us if we have a big commission. He is very good with horses, and one of our group will rent us a pony and cart.”

“I will have to arrange to meet some of these people, Mr. Brown. I intend to offer my services, and possibly those of some others, to nurse such persons who are ill or injured who can afford to pay for good care. It would be good to be acquainted with people involved in the local society.”

“I believe you have the address of *Best Bonnet*. They will be able to contact me. I also live and have employees who mind a newspaper and magazine shop called *News and More* not far from North Street.”

“My word, Mr. Brown, I cannot think you are yet above 20, yet you already have two businesses. Here am I, thirty years old this very day, and I am just starting my business, though I have had a private engagement with a retired army colonel, sadly recently deceased, since I came back from the Crimea, and now another engagement with an elderly gentleman who has an infirmity and can use my assistance.”

Tony wanted to ask where was Mr. Harper. His curiosity got the better of him and he said “I did not see any baggage with a name other than Mrs.

Harper. Are there other members of your household coming to join you?"

"No, Mr. Brown. And I think better so. I was married at sixteen and widowed at twenty, without children thankfully. My husband was much older than I, and left me with some resources, such that even now I could probably live comfortably even without working. However, I like to be active and in the world, but not doing rounds of tea, conversation and frilly attire. Nursing provides a respectable way to be out and about and to earn some money which might allow even more ... independence. Generally one is hired to work and live with the invalid, so no servants need be engaged by the nurse, since the hiring household supplies them, accommodation and food. Still, I may want to be an agent for nurses either instead of or as well as doing the job myself. I have written to some of the ladies who worked as nurses with me or nearby in the Crimea to see if they are interested in working in a group rather than individually, since one can find the situation of being the only nurse in a household very ... constraining, since one cannot plan one's free time, or even really have any free time. I will be most interested to talk with you, and the lady you said gave you a start, so I can learn more about the society here in Brighton."

"Her name is Mrs. Cohen. She is well-liked by those who know her."

"And I suspect disliked by her competition, or those who cannot keep up with her energies."

Tony laughed. "Probably not far wrong there, Mrs. Harper. Here we are at your new address. Whoa Moonbeam."

* * *

It was Eric who gave Tony the information that led to the acquisition of Jessie. He had almost finished his daily round from Hove to Southwick, and was about to go to the Southwick railway halt to get the train back to town when he saw a line of four donkeys moving down the road, their bridles linked to a single long rope by which a man was leading them. Eric called out "Good day, sir. Are you by any chance a dealer in donkeys?"

"No. Just have the job of walkin' them to Eastbourne. Fellow there plans to give beach rides."

"May I ask where they came from. My ... employer is looking to acquire a donkey."

"There's a farm over near Tangmere – took me two days from there so far, 'cos these beasts don't all go in the same direction at once. 'ad to whack 'em once or twice."

Eric knew that Moonbeam and Annabelle were never hit, but decided not to react to the man's admission of violence to the donkeys. Instead he

asked “Perhaps you can give me more precise information as to the location of the farm?”

“Can’t read or write, but I can describe ’ow to go from the centre of Tangmere.”

Eric took out his notebook and a pencil. “Very well, give me the directions, presumably from the Railway.”

“Yeah. I guess that’d be how you’d go there from ’ere.”

The man gave some rather vague but probably usable directions. Eric scribbled these down as quickly as he could, then asked “Does the farm or owner have a name?”

“Yeah, it’s Kosterman. Somebody said it was spelled funny ’cos the people were Dutch, or the father was. Look, I gotta move these beasts. It’ll take me another night before I get to Eastbourne.”

“My employer finds offering them a carrot generally helps.”

“Pity. Ain’t got none.”

* * *

That evening, Eric passed on the information he had learned to Tony, who over supper, discussed with Joseph his thoughts.

“I figure if we can get a youngish donkey – I think Archie Temple said you can’t work ’em younger than 2 years, and really not properly until they were 4 – and the cost up to the time it’s ready to work is, say, £10, then I can afford it. Ideally, we want a 4-year old, but I’m guessing we’ll be lucky to get either one that is two or three, or else somewhat older.”

“Probably best to get an older one that can work right away,” Rebecca said. “You’ve not really got the space to just let it graze. If it can graze, it wouldn’t cost much, but feed would use your coin.”

“True,” Tony agreed, then added “I’m thinking of going to look tomorrow. Do you think I should go to Fortescue Road and ask Mrs. Cohen if I can borrow James to replace me, probably for Wednesday too if I buy a beast? Ideally I’d take Joseph along to help me check that an animal is sound.”

Rebecca said “Why not have Valerie do the regular rounds and possibly one or two extras if they’re close, and have Bobby come and help me here in the shop?”

“That’d work,” Tony agreed. “I’d better sort myself out so I have everything I need, including some money and enough clothes and some food in case I’m walking an animal home, which will take, I think, a couple of days unless I’m really pushing.”

Tony took the earliest train he could that stopped in Tangmere. Asking the Railway agent at that station, he confirmed – actually with some minor corrections – the way to Kosterman’s farm. When he got there, he found a modest cottage, a decent barn, and some fenced meadows of which two appeared to belong to the establishment, as they had a handful of donkeys in each.

It was around nine in the morning. Tony knocked on the door of the cottage, but nobody answered. He called out “Hello. Anyone home?” but was still at the front of the cottage, so followed the lane-way round towards the barn and called out again. This time, a woman’s voice called out “I’m in the barn.”

Tony walked to the barn and saw that a grey-haired woman was trying to push a bale of hay off the platform of the upper level, but she was not really strong enough to do so.

“Perhaps I can help you, then we can talk?” Tony said.

“Oooh, if you would, it would be a help. I need to have hay available in case one or more of the beasts have to be brought in. I’ve one jenny soon to foal, and though it’s warm out, sometimes there’s loose dogs or even foxes will ’ave a go at the newborn or the blood and muck. Safer if she’s in ’ere.”

Tony’s daily work and exercise lent a strength that made short work of pushing the hay down.

“Where do you want the hay?” he asked, then helped put it in the appropriate rack.

“Thank you, Mr.”

“Brown. Tony Brown. With my associate Mr. Joseph Upton, I run *Best Bonnet* cartage in Brighton. I understand you may have donkeys for sale.”

“That I do. My old man up and died in the winter. ’E was older than me, and I’m no maiden any more. With the two of us, we could handle them all, but on me own it’s too much. I’m tryin’ to reduce the herd. But I plan to do it slowly. No sense doin’ it in a panic. If I can have four to six, with one or two mares in foal and some younger ones coming along, I can manage and have a bit of money comin’ in.”

“So you breed them?”

“We did, and in a way still do, but ’aven’t had a jack for the last five years. There’s a man with a good jack a few miles away, so we take our jenny’s there when we want ’em bred. Jack’s get nasty when they smell the jennies in heat. Kill yer if yer in their way. Worse’n horses by a mile.”

Tony had heard stories about people being hurt by jacks who wanted to get at the females. Well, he didn’t need that trouble.

“Can you show me some jennies that you are willing to sell, Mrs. Kosterman?”

“Let’s go out into the lower meadow. I’ve got the beasts I want to keep in the upper one.”

Tony followed Mrs. Kosterman out the barn and along a hedgerow to a gate. There were six donkeys in the field, and, inquisitive as donkeys are, a couple came over, then the others followed.

Petting one of the two larger donkeys, Mrs. Kosterman said “This is Jessie. She’s been with us a while and has given us eight foals. Probably won’t breed her again.”

“How old is she?”

“She was born here in the Spring of 1841, so eighteen. And this one,” Mrs. Kosterman said, petting a donkey as large as Jessie, “is Rainbow. She’s just four and a half, so old enough to be a working donkey, and we’ve been training her to the cart and the saddle. These other four are all youngsters. The smallest is Omega, just one. That next one, a little bigger, is Bluebell, who’s two, and the others are Lightning and Thunder – stupid names my husband gave them – and they are three. Different mothers, one out of Jessie here, the other out of Aphrodite who I’m keeping as she’s only 9.”

“Our business doesn’t have much stabling, nor any pasture, so only Jessie or Rainbow are of interest to me, Mrs. Kosterman. Can we go into the field and have you get those two to raise their hooves? With our beasts, I know that Mr. Upton and I can more or less just ask the donkeys and they’ll raise the hoof. I hate to pull at them.”

“Ah. Someone who knows that a little kindness and affection will get them to do what you want. Yes. I can help with that.”

The main problem they had inspecting the hooves was the other donkeys being inquisitive, but with some gentle petting and guidance, they made space and the two animals of interest were persuaded to show their hooves. All were in good condition, and they had been trimmed properly too.

Tony gently petted the animals, then got Mrs. Kosterman to hold the animals heads while he pressed down the tongue, gently held it and pulled it to one side to look at the teeth. Truthfully, he didn’t have much knowledge of what to look for, but could see no obvious problem. He smelt his hand after each donkey and did not smell anything foul. Somewhere he had heard or read that a bad smell indicated something wrong.

Tony thought about each animal. He noticed that Rainbow had been quite skittish. Much more nervous than he’d ever experienced with either Moonbeam or Annabelle, or even the one or two other donkeys he’d interacted with. Perhaps Jessie was the better choice. She’d happily lifted her hooves and allowed him to look in her mouth.

“How much are you asking for each of the animals?” Tony said.

“Rainbow is in prime condition and all her working and breeding life’s ahead. I want £12 for her. Jessie is, as I said, at the end of breeding, but a fine donkey. Used to a cart, but not the saddle. I’d like £5 10s for her.”

“Both prices are a little high for me, I’m afraid. We don’t always have work for the animals, so have to consider the cost versus the revenue. I’d be willing to offer 4 guineas for Jessie, I think. Being older, I suspect she’d get along better with our Moonbeam and Annabelle. Annabelle is about the same age.”

“I could go as low as £5, but really no more.”

Tony realized he had no bridle for Jessie if he were successful in buying her. He had his satchel with some underclothes, a spare shirt, some bread and cheese, and a lemonade bottle with water, along with a knife and his notebook in its oilcloth pouch, and he had as well the trusty walking stick.

“If you can include a bridle and a bit of strap or sacking so I can have her carry some feed for her ...”

“I think you’ve just purchased a donkey. But before I say yes, I must know if you ever use that walking stick on the animals.” Mrs. Kosterman seemed a little nervous. Tony wondered if she felt threatened by him.

“Oh, never! We don’t seem to need to hit or wrestle with our two. Sometimes push them in one direction or the other if they’re really interested in something and we’ve to get to the train on time, but the push isn’t a rough one, and often it’s easier to wave a carrot in front of them.”

“Good. Then if you give me the coin – I don’t want no 5 pound note – she’s yours.”

“If you don’t mind, Mrs. Kosterman, I’ll prepare a receipt to show I’ve paid you. Don’t want to get done for stealing livestock and only one person’s word against another.”

“Better come to the cottage. I’ll need me glass to see what’s written.”

At the cottage, Tony asked “Mrs. Kosterman, what is your initial – the first letter of your christian name?”

“A for Anna.”

On a fresh page of his notebook, Tony wrote – in pencil as it was all he had –

RECEIVED FROM TONY BROWN FOR JESSIE, AN
18 YEAR OLD FEMALE DONKEY -- 5 POUNDS
A KOSTERMAN

“Can you sign or make your mark, Mrs. Kosterman. If you want, I’ll make you a copy,” Tony said, placing five sovereigns on the table.

“A copy’s not needed for me. As you said, don’t want someone thinkin’ you stole the beast, so it’s you need to show all’s right and proper.

Let's find an old bridle and a pair of sacks and some string."

In the barn a serviceable bridle was found and two burlap sacks and a yard and a half of sisal twine. Tying the sacks together would let them be slung across Jessie's back.

"You 'elped me get that hay down. Better put a bit in each sack for Jessie. Leave the tops of the sacks empty and we'll tie 'em at the corners so there's no cord across Jessie's skin. It's a fair way to Brighton."

"Indeed. I don't expect to get there until mid-day tomorrow."

* * *

"Hello. Anyone home?" Tony called out as he led Jessie into Uptons' yard. Valerie came out from the back door of the shop.

"You're back, and with a new donkey."

"Her name's Jessie. About the same age as Annabelle. Seems good natured."

"Where'll you put her?"

"We've been putting both carts inside, and putting tarps over some of the furniture. We're thinking a little reorganization and a bit of a partition for another stall, put the pallets we use for furniture inside, and use the tarps on the carts. Actually, we can pretty easily push the shafts of one cart under the axle of the other and they'll not use so much space. Maybe need only one big tarp."

"Clever. Yes. that'd work.

When you gonna build the partition?"

"I think I'll walk over to Fortescue Road now and see if Dan's there. He might have enough stuff to put something together right away.

Oh. Where's Jolly? I've missed her."

"She went off with Arthur. Likes to be out and about."

"I'm surprised you're here. Weren't you going to do the rounds? It's not much past mid-day."

"I made a couple of large meat pies, and traded one with James for doing my rounds today. He really prefers being out with the animals, even though he's good with the cooking."

"Bobby's in the shop?"

"No. Ma sent him shopping. I'll go send Ma out. She'll want to see Jessie."

"Yes. And I'll need to arrange the stabling fee with her."

* * *

“Where’d you spend last night,” Joseph asked Tony over supper – one of Valerie’s meat pies with some potatoes and cabbage.

“I found if I walked fast, Jessie would keep up with me and I didn’t have to pull her. So apart from stopping regularly to let her drink and give her some hay, I got as far as I could yesterday, which was near Worthing. I got there at a bit before seven o’ clock, but figured Jessie was as tired as I was. I’d also managed to buy some early carrots in Arundel, and she definitely liked those. There was a pub in Offington where I got some dinner. After that, I looked about and there was a church with a big lych gate that I reckoned would keep us dry if it rained and a tall hedge alongside. I didn’t want to try to sleep under the roof of the gate in case someone came to the church. So I tied Jessie to a thick stem in the hedge and I slept more or less under it. I used the sacks of hay as a pillow. Not too bad. I’ve had worse.

This morning we kept going. I got some buns in a bakery and some milk from a milkman, though it was tricky to get it in the lemonade bottle.”

Valerie said “I didn’t offer you anything to eat when you got here. Had you had your lunch?”

“Still had a couple of buns and a piece of cheese. And I shared a couple of carrots with Jessie.” This prompted some laughter.

“Dan got the partition up real quickly,” Joseph said.

“Yes, he had a few sticks of wood and some sailcloth. Not a real stall, but it will do to give the donkeys the appearance of a stall each,” Tony answered.

“When’re you going to take Jessie on rounds?” Rebecca asked. She had meant to ask this in the afternoon when she and Tony had agreed that Jessie would be stabled for the same amount as the other animals, namely, £5 per year, but apportioned for the current year at half that.

“I’m going to suggest that I take her in the morning to see how we get along. She’s been walking with me these last two days. Once she seems accustomed to the town, I’ll suggest Joseph try her, and I’ll go back to Moonbeam, and Bobby can use Annabelle for beach rides until we find a cart to go with Jessie. Bobby, don’t let any grown-ups ride. Our donkeys shouldn’t carry more than six and a half stone (*91 lbs*).

I don’t know if Jessie has ever been ridden. I suspect possibly not, so we’ll see how she reacts one of these days to the saddle, but I’ll wait a week or so. She’s had a lot of new experiences all of a sudden.”

Joseph said “Rather than a cart, how about a decent pack saddle? It would be easier to store, maybe even hang it from the wall or ceiling when it’s empty.”

“Good thought, Joseph. Better start looking about for one, or else think of making one, or adapting some other tack. Plenty to think about.”

“She seems a nice animal, Tony,” Rebecca said. “How much did she cost you?”

“Five quid, plus my train fare, dinner and breakfast. And I think a lot of shoe leather. Think I want to have a nice wash up and get to bed. Bobby, is there likely to be hot water.”

“I figured you’d want to soak your feet, so I put a small fire on just before I came over for dinner, but the vent is almost shut. Still should be some warmth in the water, an’ we can open it up as soon as we’re back to get it ’otter.”

* * *

Jessie adapted quickly to the cart and the regular rounds. Her introduction to Jolly was a quiet one. Jolly did, in any event, know to keep well out of the way of Moonbeam’s hooves, so, initially at least, gave Jessie an even wider berth.

Each evening, Tony and Joseph took one of the riding saddles and put it on Jessie. Her reaction on the first occasion was surprise, but also curiosity as she turned her head to look. They took a week until Tony tried leaning across the saddle to give some weight. Then each evening either he or Joseph would apply a bit more weight. Finally, on Saturday, July 16, Tony thought about sitting astride her. He’d done this with Annabelle and Moonbeam a couple of years ago. But then he’d been smaller. Growth and the work had added some weight.

He had, on one occasion, walked Moonbeam on a scale at the Railway Station, and she weighed just under 40 stone (*560 lbs*). Jessie was about the same size. What had Archie said? About one fifth of the donkey weight was safe for them to carry. He was about nine and a half stone (*approximately 130 lbs*), but he wasn’t going to actually ride Jessie, just sit on her. Still, Bobby probably weighed a safe amount, so they went and found him and had him get astride Jessie, who looked at Bobby with an odd expression, then allowed herself to be led gently around the yard.

“I think we need to get her accustomed to this. Possibly take her to the beach and have you astride her a few times, Bobby,” Tony said.

“Yeah. She don’t seem to mind much, but looks like she’s wonderin’ what this is all about.”

Joseph said “If she sees Annabelle or Moonbeam giving rides, she’ll probably be fine. I’ve noticed they watch each other a lot.”

* * *

Tony saw Mrs. Harper in church the next morning, and as the congregation was exiting, he greeted her.

“Good morning, Mrs. Harper. I hope you are finding your new lodgings and client to your liking.”

“Thank you, Mr. Brown. They are fine, though of course the accommodations are not my own. That is unfortunately one aspect of my form of living that cannot be resolved.”

“Ah. I see Mr. and Mrs. Cohen.

Mrs. Cohen!”

“Good morning, Tony. I’m afraid I have not met this lady yet.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Cohen, this is Mrs. Harper. I assisted her to move her belongings to a client who she is nursing. It happens she had encountered James McDowell in the Crimea, and they met when we were passing Fortescue Road on the way to her new address.”

Cassandra said “I wonder if you also know Mr. Angus Sinclair and Captain and Mrs. Fraser, who also live at Fortescue Road. They are also veterans of the Crimea.”

“It is quite possible that I know the people, or some of them, by face rather than name. I was working in Mrs. Mary Seacole’s British Hotel, a sort of hospital Mrs. Seacole established near Balaclava to aid wounded soldiers.”

Cassandra said “I gather you are now in residence near us. Why do you not walk with us and have a light lunch. It is probable that the people we are talking about, or at least some of them, will be there.”

“That is most generous of you, Mrs. Cohen. I accept with alacrity.”

“Tony. Will you join us?”

“We have a new donkey, Jessie, and I want to have her see Moonbeam and Annabelle giving rides to children before we try her in the same role. Therefore, with great reluctance, I will decline.”

Mrs. Harper said “A great pity. I would greatly like to learn more of how you established your business with the donkeys. And, to be honest, I find the animals an irresistible delight.”

For some reason, Tony also found he wished to talk with Mrs. Harper.

“If you wish, ma’am, send a note to me at Uptons’ yard, saying when you are able to come there of an evening, say half-past seven, and you can see the animals being put to bed, so to speak. It is when we groom them. Then we can have a cup of tea and talk.”

“Thank you, Mr. Brown. I will do so.”

* * *

Jane Harper sent a note that she could come on Thursday evening. Tony and Joseph made sure they ate their supper in good time to greet her in the

yard. As the weather was fine, they were performing the hoof inspections there. Jessie now accepted either Tony or Joseph to gently lift a hoof and brush out any bits of dirt or gravel. Tony hoped she would also accept the rasp when it came time to trim the hooves. He expected so. She appeared to be happy enough with the accommodations and food, and was accepted by the other two donkeys.

“Good evening, Mr. Brown.”

“A good evening to you also, Mrs. Harper. Let me introduce my colleague, Joseph Upton. Ah. Here is Valerie, his sister, and Mrs. Upton, their mother.”

There were greetings all round, then Valerie and Rebecca returned to the house.

“Would you like to brush Moonbeam?” Tony asked Jane.

“May I?”

“I would not have asked if I felt it was unwise. Moonbeam is very placid, unless she is molested or overly petted. But the donkeys like being brushed. Simply watch how Joseph and I brush the other two.”

For the next few minutes, the only noise made in the yard was the soft swish of the brushes, and that was soft indeed compared to the voices, footsteps and wheels in the street outside.

“We can now bring them in the stable. Here’s Bobby, my caretaker and general handler of all jobs. This is Mrs. Harper. Are the stalls clear, Bobby?”

“Yes. Mr. Brown. Fresh sawdust down, water and hay out.”

“Thank you. Let’s take the donkeys in.”

Jane said “There’s a cat sitting in that hay.”

“That’s Percy, Annabelle’s friend. Rides under the seat of the cart. Nearly always nearby to Annabelle, though not at the beach. Nowhere to run and get away from dogs there,” Joseph explained.

“But there’s the dog you had the other day lying over there, which I assume belongs here,” Jane said, looking at Jolly, who was dozing in a corner.

“Actually my dog, so really belongs at the shop,” Tony explained. “And she seems to get along well with all sorts of animals as long as they aren’t threatening her or me or our friends. Since we’re finished here, I’ll suggest we go to my room at the shop and have some tea and biscuits. I got some Treats from the Factory, which no doubt Mrs. Cohen told you about.”

“Oh yes. I tried one last Sunday, but they had somehow not replenished their stock at the house, and it was the last example, so I will be most pleased that you have some.”

“Coming Bobby?”

“Mr. Brown. Do you mind if I go and see Matt Moore? Wanted to learn what’s going on lately with Ma, but don’t like to go ask ’er direct, like.”

“No. Go ahead, but not too late.”

Bobby disappeared at a run.

“Jolly!” Tony called.

* * *

“This is a quite reasonable room,” Jane said, as Tony was poking up the fire in the stove to make tea.

“It’s acquisition was rather by accident, or rather, by way of a murder that a police constable I know was attempting to sort out when I came along. There were two children of the unfortunate dead woman, who had run this shop, though not run it very well. I think we have improved both the business and the premises, though they are rented, and not entirely convenient.”

“Tell me the story, so I don’t have a half-account.”

Tony related what had happened and the outcome. By then the kettle was steaming, and he made the tea.

“You mentioned when moving my baggage that you had been taken in and helped by Mrs. Cohen. I was so busy with learning about James – Mr. McDowell – and his friends from the Crimea, including Mr. Sinclair who I had actually met before but never had a name to use, that I did not ask how you came under the protection of those houses.”

Tony related the story of Samuel Crown and Matilda Evans, but did not mention the birth name of Antonia. He did, however, talk of Ezekiel and the legacy he would take over within a year.

“Will that lead to changes in your life, Mr. Brown?”

“It will certainly lead to changes, but not, I think, in the overall direction of what I do day to day. I am looking at properties I might like to acquire, either for the cartage or newsagent businesses, or for a more suitable living place in the long term, or possibly for breeding and dealing in donkeys.”

“Those are multiple directions, I fear,” Jane said.

“Yes. I am rather conscious that I want too many things at once, and am trying to decide where I should focus my energies.

Will you have milk in your tea?”

“Please.”

“Do try one of the Treats? Or two or three.”

Jane laughed. “Thank you. They are awfully good. I can see why the *Fortescue Factory* has been expanding production.

But tell me about Bobby. I heard that he is a recent addition to your little empire.”

Tony explained how he had found Bobby when intending to look at potential properties.

“Unless my instinct is wrong, Bobby is a girl in boys’ clothing.”

“That is true. Being a girl on the street can attract the ... wrong sort of attention.”

“Sadly very true. Besides, male clothing is so much more practical. You may have noticed I choose to wear clothing that is out of the common fashion. For nursing, I cannot afford to have flounces or wide skirts. They get in the way of helping my patients. In the Crimea, I adopted the garb of the cantinières, a sort of tunic and trousers.”

“Really! I had not heard of this before.”

“They run canteens or similar sources of sustenance for the French troops. And indeed, there were similar women, with often similar garb, in the British forces on occasions. Sometimes the name *vivandière* was used instead.

Sadly, I often find my garb to engender unwelcome complaint. It is in no way immodest, but seems to upset some people.”

“Yes. I know. It is most unfortunate, and often blocks women from working in different occupations, such as my own.”

“Yes. The usual skirts of women today would get in the way of moving baggage, at least moving baggage easily.

What will you do if Bobby grows in such a way that boys’ clothing is ... er ... awkward for her to wear?”

“We will have to see. In any case, it will be Bobby’s choice. In talking with Mr. Turcotte – he is the barrister Miss Bingham, now Mrs. Sinclair, works for – the law does not prohibit a woman from wearing mens’ clothes. The main concern is to avoid committing a fraud. An example he gave was pretending to be a man to marry a woman, or presumably to gain some advantage where there was a law stating only a man could have that advantage. Of course, there will no doubt be protests and campaigns to amend such restrictions.”

“I would hope so,” Jane said. “It is high time women were allowed a voice in government – given the vote. But then it is also high time that the vote were extended to more than just propertied men. And as for a man being able to appropriate all a woman’s property upon marriage, well, I will be here until the winter if you let me speak on that issue.”

“I believe Mrs. Cohen managed to protect some of her property with some sort of legal contract that Mr. Mortimer and Mr. Turcotte set up for her.”

“How interesting.

But to return to Bobby. She will have an awkward decision at some point if she continues as a boy. It could impose a lonely independence.”

“As I am acutely aware,” Tony said.

Jane was also, and suddenly, acutely aware. “Oh, I believe I see.

You have all the mannerisms and even the walking gait of a man.”

“I have never lived other than as a boy or man. Indeed, I might have great difficulty in the movement and mannerisms of a woman.”

“But you will not be able to marry or have children in the role you present.”

“I think that concerns me less than ... er ... finding someone to share my time and interests. Of having a partner. That is in my thoughts.”

“There have been intense friendships that show greater love than many married couples. Of course, in men it is against the law and punished with great cruelty. As far as I know, the world seems to ignore two women who share such a depth of affection.”

“Perhaps it is just that the world ignores women,” Tony said.

“Too true. Too true. You must be Mr. Brown, the cynic.

This has been a very strange evening for me, Mr. Brown.”

“I think I would be happier if you would address me as Tony. It is short for Antonia.”

“Then please call me Jane. I truly hope we will be great friends, Tony. And we must talk more on ideas about premises and business, as I do hope to move on from being an individual nurse to the ... er ... manager of a group of nurses.”

* * *

On May 22, 1859, the new, sea level, Needles Lighthouse on the Isle of Wight first illuminated its warning light. Some seventy odd years before, a warning light had been established on the top of the cliffs above the sharp rocks. However, the light was too high up. Mist and fog – really very low clouds – would obscure the light, and the new one was built at sea level.

For Tony, the period in his life from learning that he would inherit when he was 21 up to talking with Jane Harper was like the first Needles Light. It was a time when a heading was often visible to follow, but where there were events, particularly Adeline’s death, that obscured the path to contentment. Meeting and talking to Jane Harper made the choices more clear. Moreover, Tony now was quite certain that he was unlikely to live in society as a woman, nor to marry. But it did, perhaps, seem possible to share life with another woman, no matter how that woman dressed. On the other hand, Tony did not have a very clear appreciation of what Jane meant about *intense friendship*, nor a real understanding of the laws that made such friendships so dangerous for two men.

Despite Tony’s clarity of thinking, there was still uncertainty, of course, but it was an uncertainty as to details. He was in no doubt that resolving

those details would have many ups and downs, and could only hope that such turbulence would ultimately be constructive.

* * *

In later years, Tony could not identify particular events in the last half of the year 1859, but a diverse array of phrases, drawings, or seemingly random happenings would bring back reminiscences of life in that half year. One thing that is clear is that Jane Harper is present in nearly all these souvenirs of the time. Without great formality, Jane became a companion in attending lectures and concerts, or in excursions into the countryside surrounding Brighton.

News and More became a helpful source of joint interests with Jane, as in the examination and analysis of *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* when it began to be distributed as a partwork with *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* starting in September of the year. Jane and Tony shared the expense of a copy of Darwin's *The Origin of the Species* when it was published in November. The tome, or perhaps its content, were weighty enough to take them well into the year 1860 to even peruse a single time. Nevertheless, they were able to challenge and often silence those critics of Darwin who spouted furious antipathy to his ideas with "Have you actually read his work? It is a complicated and difficult volume."

Janet Nuffield was still an occasional companion, and Felix came too. Their group attracted several young men, none truly regular, but their conversation with and proximity to Janet at cultural events eliminated the interpretation that Tony was courting her. Moreover, all in the group benefited from having a wider acquaintance in the Brighton society.

* * *

On the last evening of October, Tony, Rebecca and Valerie walked the short distance to Goldmans' to talk with Joshua, Rachel, and Abraham. Joshua had talked a number of times with Rachel, and he had spent a lot of time thinking. Behind the counter of the pawn shop, there were often long periods when no customer was present. It gave Joshua time to think. Possibly too much time. Nevertheless, Rachel had asked him, gently but implacably, "How long can you continue to stand much of the day behind the counter, always on guard against fraud or theft?"

This question led inexorably to the necessity of deciding when and how he should make his demission from the pawn shop. This decision could not

be made alone. Tony was interested in the property, the other colleagues were possibly willing to take on the pawn business.

They would have met the previous week, especially the 25th or 26th of the month, but a deadly storm struck from the west. This came to be called the Royal Charter Storm. Over 130 ships were lost, almost as many badly damaged, and 800 lives lost. The worst disaster was the loss of the Royal Charter steamship within sight of land off Anglesey. Just 39 survived of about 500 on board. Tony and Joseph had not gone out one day, and their work was reduced another.

This Monday, things were more or less back to normal, but the meeting tonight would result in changes for our group of friends.

Rachel had already set out cups and saucers and some honey cake called Lekach. The friends and colleagues found chairs round a quite crowded table.

“Mrs. Goldman and I have invited you here tonight – well the invitation was, of course, for last week, but postponed by the storm – to tell you about some ideas we have been thinking about. We have been here more than a quarter century, and we have done well. Now we are at an age where it is proper to think how our later years will be spent.

It was a conversation some months ago with Tony Brown, who has been considering his future, that started me thinking of my own. The world expects a young person to do so, but perhaps gives less attention to the fact that at each age we should be conscious of where we are in life and where we may be going. As we age, there is, of course, a greater likelihood of illness or death imposing its grip on our wishes. Still, at this time, Rachel and I seem to be hale, and we should take advantage of that, rather than let the days come and go with the hands of the clock.”

Abraham asked “Your words are a good reminder to all of us, Joshua. Have you come to any decisions?”

“None that have settled. It is not in our nature to simply abandon what we are doing, unless, as in Odessa, there is a mortal threat. Three of us serve from time to time in the pawn shop. With Abraham’s wife and Mary Yarrow I have *Fortescue Factory*. Rose Sinclair has Phoenix and the gig here, where we still have our cart, and there are many interactions between our businesses. Those of you here tonight are the ones who may be most affected.”

Rebecca said “I can see that if you were to leave the pawn shop, we would be hard pressed to keep it running properly. Mr. Cohen has the ability, but he also has the furniture, and from what I hear, he is instrumental in finding new agents and new markets for the product of *Fortescue Factory*, so he may begrudge the time in the shop, which requires quite long hours to serve the clientele. Valerie and I also have our activities with the furnishings and with administering the movements of the *Best Bonnet* collections and deliveries.

Nor do we have the skills to deal with the full range of items people may want to pledge.”

Joshua responded “That is why we wanted to have the present conversation. It would not be proper to just cease trading, or for me to cease serving. We should, together, decide how we will move forward.”

Valerie asked “Why is Tony here? I don’t mean he should not be, just that I am unclear on the reason. I know he handles moving some goods for you, Mr. Goldman, but he doesn’t participate in the pawn or furniture businesses.”

“Well, when he and I talked recently, he mentioned he was thinking of acquiring a property that would serve as a residence but also have stabling in case his string of animals grew in number. He recently added one donkey. And the property we are sitting in meets many of his requirements of location and space and amenities.”

“You’d think of buying this shop and stable, Tony?” Valerie asked.

“There are many conditions before that could happen, but as Mr. Goldman said, the shop and yard, and where they are situated, would be convenient.”

Abraham said “Joshua. I am glad you have been thinking of the future. What has been said shows that we need to consider whether we should continue the pawn business. If we do, then we clearly need to address the matter of having at least one more person who can deal with clients, and handle the full range of items, or at least the range we prescribe. Rebecca has correctly pointed out that I have other, if not duties, then interests that I would like to continue. Also, and I hope this will not offend, I actually don’t much enjoy working in the pawn shop.”

There was laughter. Rachel said “As the woman who became a substitute mother, I have been aware for some time, Abraham, that you found time behind the counter was tedious to you.”

Rebecca asked “If you were to close the business, what would happen to all the pledges?”

Joshua replied “We could sell the business. The awkward part is that I believe that the property – the shop, house, yard and stable – have more value if there is **not** a pawn business therein. That value could be monetary – and I’m not trying to make things more difficult should Tony be the buyer – but definitely there would be more flexibility to change the uses of the place.”

“I hadn’t thought about that, but I believe you are right,” Abraham agreed. “The pawn shop activities don’t really need the yard and stable. We’ve used those parts of the property for furniture and other things.”

Rebecca continued her question. “I think I must repeat my question. What would happen to the pledges if you sold the business?”

“If we sold the pawn shop business, the price would hopefully cover the amounts we lent on the active pledges plus some premium, and some amount for the unclaimed pledges and purchased items, so that there is a return on the investment we’ve made in the business. The items themselves would be moved to the premises of the buyer. Of course, once we’ve been paid and the items are off the premises, we don’t have any say in what happens to them.”

Abraham said “Where would you choose to live, if you could, Rachel?”

“We’ve lived long enough in Brighton that we should stay, but it would be good to live somewhere that is more comfortable. This shop has all the parts of a house, but because of the shop and stable, they are not placed conveniently. It would be good not to have to use the stairs as much as we get older. I’m hopeful we can find a nice house that is comfortable and well located.”

Joshua said nothing, but nodded gently.

Rebecca asked “Tony. If you were to acquire this place, how would you use it?”

“There are three immediate uses. One, as a residence, though it would be too big for just me, even with some staff. Second, to stable some animals. Third, to house *News and More*. But the property could handle more than just those things with current business.”

“Are you looking to enlarge your business, Tony?” Abraham asked.

“Possibly. It depends on the opportunities. I can see that with Mrs. Upton, Mr. Cohen, Maud Mortimer and the Saultons, there is a continuing and I believe growing trade. Mrs. Harper, who some of you have met, is thinking of establishing an agency to offer the services of nurses to those with illnesses or disabilities, and such an agency would need some physical office. I have thought of dealing in, possibly breeding donkeys, and while the main activity of that would not make sense here, this location could be suitable for buying and selling, as well as the administration.”

“My word. What a lot of thinking you’ve been doing,” Rachel said. “Not that I’m criticizing. On the contrary, I am most impressed.”

Tony added “I’m also cognizant that there would likely be some rearrangement of how *Best Bonnet* is run, that is, with the stabling and scheduling of the commissions and regular routes. For example, if we decided – and it is *we* and not just *me* – to consolidate the *Best Bonnet* activities here and the furniture sales at Uptons’, then it will change the tasks we each perform.”

Abraham said “I should talk to Cassandra about the possibility of opening the side wall to the rear of Number 21. It would then be possible to have Phoenix and her gig there, where the Sinclairs can more easily access them, though it would be less convenient for using the pony with the cart.”

Joshua said “Yes. You need to think of a lot of different arrangements, but then one always should, even if many ideas flame up like matches only

to extinguish themselves soon after.

May I suggest we simply leave things where they are for now, and meet again in a few weeks. In the meanwhile, I will try to find out if there may be someone interested in the pawn shop business. It would be silly to plan on a sale when no buyer is possible. And Mrs. Goldman and I should start to see what sorts of houses are available that we might find comfortable.”

* * *

Abraham walked with Tony as far as *News and More*. He said “It looks like there are going to be changes.”

“Yes. I hope I won’t be blamed if some things go awry. My talking to Mr. Goldman seems to have started a very large ball rolling.”

“We’re all still talking to each other. I suspect Rebecca – Mrs. Upton – may be worried about losing the stabling income and work with Joshua. But if business prospers, there’ll be enough work and reward to go around. However, it probably makes sense to consolidate the storage of furniture that is ready to sell at Uptons’, put the donkeys at Goldmans’, and, if it is feasible, have Phoenix at Fortescue Road.”

“But it could be awkward if the cart can’t be kept there too,” Tony observed.

“I’ll talk to Dan and probably have Brougham round to get an estimate on putting a gate in the wall. But what you do with the two donkey carts now where you push the shafts underneath – that might let the gig and cart fit without too much trouble. And we might be able to build a shed or stable in Number 23, but access it through Number 21.”

“Yard access has become a large part of my thoughts about properties,” Tony said, and both of them laughed as they made their goodnights.

* * *

Cassandra and Abraham invited the Goldmans and the Yarrows, minus Elizabeth who was now 20 and going to a concert with a friend, to Sunday dinner on November 13. Abraham had talked a couple of times with Cassandra about the ideas raised in the discussions at Goldmans. In fact, a few days before, Cassandra had said, as they lay in bed, “Abraham. A discussion of the proper rewards for people in charge of the Factory is overdue as well. You, for example, are not really paid in any way commensurate with the extra business you have been finding for us. And Mary has a lot of responsibility for keeping the production and quality at a high mark.”

“Do you think Mary and I should have a salary?”

“A salary would give each of you security of income, but my instincts are to tie the reward to our profits. We also need to consider bonuses for the other staff. There are those who keep things running. For example, Elizabeth Yarrow now shares quite a bit of that responsibility with Ethel. Other staff work hard too, but they don’t have to make decisions that affect the revenue or costs.”

“Why don’t you give the matter some thought and make an outline of what you think might be appropriate. But don’t short-change yourself or Joshua on the amounts to be paid in dividends. You and he get only that out of your investment, and those dividends paid to you, Joshua and a little to Mary come after all other costs and bonuses are paid out.”

“Indeed, Abraham. It is a useful reminder, and I will attend to consideration of the bonuses and rewards. Now it is cold tonight. Let me come in your arms to warm up.”

* * *

After the pudding had been consumed and Martha had served tea to the guests who had now moved from the table, Cassandra said “I was wondering if we could consider what Christmas bonus we might give to the staff of *Fortescue Factory*.”

Joshua responded “In the thinking I’ve been doing about my own future, I realized that Mrs. Yarrow here has dividends on only 2% of our shares yet is keeping so much of the operation going. And Abraham has been out touting the Treats all over the region and bringing in business. Surely their remuneration should be thought of first.”

Cassandra was extremely relieved that Joshua had said this, as if he opposed more reward for Abraham and Mary, it would be awkward to argue strongly for them. She said “I agree with your sentiments, Joshua. Have you a suggestion?”

Michael Yarrow jumped in first, however. “Perhaps I should withdraw, or go home, which is only across the road in any case.”

“It is not necessary,” Cassandra said. “I would expect you will listen rather than speak, but if you see an error or a gross unfairness, speaking out would be proper. Joshua, please continue.”

“In round figures, I would think we should divide the profits in two, with one half for dividends, divided by shares. The other half, I think I would break into five parts, two each to Mrs. Yarrow and to Abraham, and one part divided equally into year-end bonuses for the other staff who have been with us for the whole year.

Does that accord with your own thoughts on the subject?"

This last question was directed at Cassandra, who answered "It is remarkably similar, except I thought to divide the reward for Mary and Abraham into a salary portion that is specified and a bonus that is a portion of the profits. But of course the profits would be lowered by the salaries."

"Unless you have changed in the last few months, I will guess you have done some calculations," Joshua said.

"My suggestion – and it is only a suggestion – is that Abraham and Mary, who currently we give *ad hoc* commissions for their work, henceforth get a salary of £25 per quarter, or £100 per year. Our present year looks to return profits of approximately £1000 without these deductions. Thus there would be about £800 profit if such salaries are confirmed.

I would further suggest that we choose to distribute some £40 among our workers. I would give a bonus to each of our employees who has been with us for the whole year. Mary will have to tell us how many qualify, and I also wonder if Dan and James have done enough when lent to the Factory to merit some bonus too.

After the £240 are removed, we can distribute according to the share proportion, unless we choose to set aside some funds for reinvesting into the business."

Mary said "As staff, we've had Elizabeth, Ethel, Felix and Janet from the start, but there are two others since before the start of this year. Also, I'd say both Dan and James have been very helpful when we've needed them, possibly avoiding some awkward situations where we'd have missed supplying customers, though they've only come for a few days in the year."

Joshua said "Can I suggest the general staff bonuses be £5 each, so about £30 total, and give Dan and James £2 each. That probably isn't quite right, but it is a simple round figure, and I feel it will be well-received.

On the other hand, I think the salaries for Mary and Abraham, and Mary in particular, lack a component that is tied to the level of profits.

I think I'd take a fifth of the residue from the profits after staff salaries and bonuses to split between our two champions, then the rest can be dividends to the three shareholders, unless we wish to reinvest monies."

Mary asked "Perhaps before you, or we, decide on Abraham's reward, I wonder if it would make sense for me to purchase 9% of the shares each from Cassandra and Joshua, and forgo a bonus tied to profits? That would bring my total shares to 20%, with 40% each for you two."

"It would be simpler, certainly," Joshua agreed.

Abraham said "With Cassandra and I a couple, I'm happy to have a fixed salary, since we do share our fortune. And selling me shares could upset the balance."

Joshua said "Does that mean we have a plan for salaries of £100, bonus

of £34, and then a share dividend of the rest on proportions of 40, 40, and 20.

Mary will need to pay £90 to each of myself and Cassandra, but it can come out of her salary and dividends.”

“If I am correct, there will still be a modest amount left over,” Michael said.

“That’s right,” Joshua said. “But there is no harm in reinvesting some of the profit.”

Cassandra said “We should have started this as a meeting of the shareholders. We’ll need to do it formally to record the decisions.”

Abraham said “I’m not a shareholder, but I’ll write up the process while the rest of you get more tea, then we can approve the deliberations in a couple of minutes.”

* * *

Joshua and Rachel Goldman took advantage of the pony gig that James McDowell and Dan Dixon had made to provide Angus Sinclair with some outings. Naturally they got permission from Rose. The gig let them explore the Brighton area and consider places they might like to live as well as the type of property they felt would suit them.

When they thought of the type of house, Rachel pointed out that stairs were a menace as one got older. Unfortunately, bungalows, or else houses where living on the ground floor was possible, tended to be well out of the centre. The settlements where they were found might be pleasant and picturesque, but contact with their friends and access to amenities like shops and the Railway Station, or even to the Front would be a concern.

The outings, of which they managed about two a week over a period of four weeks in November and the first week or so of December, ranged from Shoreham to Saltdean, and Kemptown to Falmer. They saw some delightful free-standing cottages in some of the more outlying neighbourhoods. There was a wonderful, and quite large, house in Rottingdean, but it was almost five miles from the centre of Brighton.

Then, on the afternoon of Friday, December 9, they were exploring near Aldrington Railway Station. This was just one stop on the Portsmouth line from Brighton Station. On a corner not more than 150 yards from the station was a modest house with a gate on one of the two streets into the yard. The house looked to be a relatively simple design, but seemed quite run-down. A couple of panes of glass were covered with boards, and the paint work was peeling in some places. There was a sign that said it was for sale.

“Not very attractive,” Rachel said.

“Though it would be very suitable if it were made tidy. The Railway is very close, there is a yard, but likely no garden to need tending, and it is perhaps not much above half a mile to the Front. Yet not so close to the sea that holiday people will be a nuisance.”

“Yes, Joshua. We should ask to see it. It would need refurbishment, but it might suit us quite well. It looks to have quite a goodly amount of space on the ground floor, should we not want to have to contend with stairs.”

“Let us write down the name of the agent. I can hardly read it because it is so faded. Rachel. Note the address as well. 52 Henry Street. I will talk to Arbuthnot and go through him. There is probably something amiss that it has not sold.”

* * *

Percival Arbuthnot entered *Goldman's Pawn Shop* as a local clock finished chiming eleven on the morning of December 12.

“Good morning, Mr. Arbuthnot. I thank you for such prompt attention to my note about the Aldrington property.”

“Not at all, Mr. Goldman. From our dealings in the past, I know that you do not trifle. I take it you may be interested in that property.”

“If I may ask that you do not broadcast the information, Mr. Arbuthnot, my wife and I are exploring where we might live should we retire from business. In that we are exploring, we may be wasting your time on the Aldrington property. At the moment, this is still very much a preliminary review. On the other hand, even if we decide we do not want it for ourselves, I might consider it a good investment.”

“People do look. I had a young man ask me to suggest possible properties for him. If you sell this place, it might interest him.”

Joshua realized Arbuthnot was referring to Tony, but did not wish to disappoint him by saying so. Instead he said “What can you tell me about 52 Henry Street?”

“I take it you have seen it?”

“Yes. Mrs. Goldman and I have been taking excursions in a pony gig and noting different possibilities. This one does not appeal directly as a residence, but it has a very convenient location and access to the yard.”

“Yes. It has a yard, and is close to the Railway. Also a not-unpleasant stroll to the sea. But it definitely does not appeal to the eye at the moment.”

“What is the explanation of its poor condition?”

“That is, in fact, a very good question. The long-standing owner got old and senile and had not given much care to the fabric of the place over some years. He died sometime in the middle of 1857, leaving no apparent

will, but a man from Worthing stated he was the son of a cousin on the distaff side. This man seemed to be genuine, and the property was sold to a couple intending to offer accommodations for holiday visitors. However, just before the conveyancing of the property, a policeman from London arrived and arrested the man from Worthing. He had been impersonating a number of people in a similar manner to unlawfully acquire property. Indeed, he had already spent the cash that went with the estate. That will probably not be recovered. However, there were then some 18 months before an heir was traced in America. She wishes to sell and be rid of it, but the sign on the house is from two years ago, the agent not having yet removed it when the police arrived. Naturally, there has been no maintenance.”

“Are there any encumbrances of which you are aware?”

“None as far as I know. Though it took time, the lady in Boston has provided appropriate documents so that the probate has been granted, in fact only a fortnight ago. I suspect no-one has realized that it is available, and the appearance does nothing to encourage them.”

“Then my wife and I should at least take a look.”

“When would suit you, Mr. Goldman?”

* * *

Joshua and Rachel decided to try the train to Aldrington in order to discover whether that was a useful means of transportation to their potential new residence. It turned out that if one noted the timetable, it was fast and convenient. They were at Henry Street at ten o’clock and met Arbuthnot there.

When Arbuthnot tried to open the front door, the key was very stiff. It was clear that it had not been opened for some time.

Rachel said “It smells very musty and stale. And from the smell, I suspect there are mice, too. Hopefully not rats.”

Arbuthnot said “I took the liberty of bringing two lanterns. I suggest we light them.”

They lit the lanterns, which were not needed for entering most of the rooms, but allowed closer examination of the darker corners, the insides of doors and chambers.

“Is there a water closet?” Rachel asked.

“The property description was very poor. I think we will need to explore to find out,” Arbuthnot answered.

They went through the whole of the interior. There was no water closet. The kitchen had a pump on the sink, which was old and filthy. Joshua said

“I see no gas, and it seems no water piped in. Mr. Arbuthnot, do you know if gas and water are on the street and could be connected?”

“Mr. Goldman, I am embarrassed to admit that I do not know, but I shall endeavour to find out.”

“Perhaps we can look outside.”

It was clear that there was a cesspit at the bottom of the yard, beside which there was a decent shed that would stable an animal and store a small cart or gig. The yard itself was paved and walled with a wall about 5 feet high. The double gate to the yard would admit a cart. On the outside of the house were a couple of doors for storage cupboards, one of which had the coal bin and the other a couple of rusty shovels. Inside the house, Joshua and Rachel had noticed that there were a few pieces of damaged furniture. It looked like anything of value had been stripped out.

In the street, Joshua walked in each direction. He found covers for water and gas not far away. “Rachel. There are covers here that indicate there is water and gas on the street.”

“Good. Or I suppose it is good, if we have any interest in this place.”

At that moment, Arbuthnot said “It is not yet half-past ten. I have the hansom that brought me returning at a quarter to eleven if I may offer you a ride back to town. However, I plan to briefly explore the street as far as Aldrington Station to familiarize myself with the area.”

Joshua said “Your offer of transport is most welcome, Mr. Arbuthnot. We will be here at a quarter to the hour.”

After Arbuthnot walked out of hearing, Joshua said “Rachel. I have an idea that people may have so far looked at this property as it is now.”

“What do you see, Joshua?”

“If it had gas and water, and were cleaned up, it would be worth at least £200. Nicely refurbished, I think £300. And in the future, with the sea and the Railway near, likely more. Unless, my dear, you have objections, I will offer £100, subject only to the condition that the property is free of any legal encumbrance.”

“But you have not had any inspection for soundness of the building, Joshua.”

“There were surprisingly no cracks or watermarks on the plaster. Thus the roof is almost certainly good, and the foundations are sound. And that plaster was old. But even supposing we acquire this house and find it has ruined foundations, I would be unlikely to lose money if it were demolished and replaced at the sum I have suggested.”

“I had not thought that way. Do you think others will do so?”

“Rachel, my dear, I do not intend to wait to find out.”

Thus it was that Goldman offered £100 for 52 Henry Street. With solicitors’ and agents’ fees, his investment was £12 more. While Joshua

anticipated that it would take possibly two months for the transaction to be completed, he was very surprised to learn that his offer was accepted when Arbuthnot appeared in the pawn shop on Thursday, December 15, 1859 in the mid-morning.

“It turns out, Mr. Goldman, that the solicitor for the vendor of the property was authorized to accept any offer £100 or above, and was also given powers to complete the sale.

Would next Tuesday, December 20, be suitable so that you can arrange to provide the funds either yourself or via your agent or solicitor on that day, at ten o’clock? I have here the name and address.”

“That should present no problem, save it will fluster my wife that things have moved so fast.”

“Indeed. The swiftness of action surprised me also.”

* * *

Ian Hoyle was rather busy that Thursday afternoon taking messages to various persons with whom we are acquainted. Abraham, Rebecca, Valerie, and Ian were asked to come at 2 o’clock on Sunday afternoon to consider how the pawn shop might be closed down. Cassandra, the note to the Cohen’s said, was more than welcome to come too.

Tony was informed that the property would likely become available, and did he wish to inspect it more closely now to allow time for him to assess his wants and needs?

Tom got a note asking if he would be available on the 20th to go to the property in Aldrington and make an inspection and any emergency repairs he deemed appropriate either immediately or as soon as possible. Soultons’ could invoice any reasonable amount up to £2 10s, or more with approval from Rachel or Joshua. Joshua did not plan to go himself, but Rachel would accompany Tom and return by train. As it happened, Tom took Robert with him, partly from Robert’s curiosity, partly because Tom wanted to consider whether renovation work might be of interest to Soultons’, and partly because it would make any work less onerous.

Henry Mortimer and his wife Maud received a note that Joshua Goldman would like Henry to act for him in ensuring the title to 52 Henry Street was clear and in exchanging money for keys and documents. The note added that Maud may want to consider how sale of Goldmans’ yard might affect her business.

Similarly, Rose Sinclair got a note that the stabling of Phoenix might become unavailable at some time not too far in the future. As it turned out, Abraham had already told her the Goldmans were thinking of retiring.

Brougham had been round and Rose, Dan and Abraham had walked about with him measuring and sketching.

Cassandra had decided her time was better spent that day at *Bartlett and Jones*, given that she had confidence in her husband and in Dan. The result was that Brougham gave an estimate of £13 to put a suitable gate in the side street wall of the garden of Number 21. The main difficulty, according to Brougham, was ensuring the new masonry matched the old and that the gateposts were strong enough that they would not sag over a short space of time. The curb also needed to be adjusted to allow smoother passage of wheels.

Dan said he was sure he could, with Tom Soulton if necessary, prepare a decent gate in the wooden fence between 21 and 23, probably using at least one of the posts put in for a gate when Cassandra had purchased the houses in 1851.

What was not immediately decided was whether to build the shed or stable for the back of Number 23, though Brougham did sketch and give an estimate for a simple design that used wooden posts to support a sloping roof that was higher at the back than front and used the back wall of the garden as one wall, with windows above up to the roof line, and these could, if desired, be made to pivot open for ventilation. The side walls would be brick, and the front would be two sets of wide double doors in a wooden frame with some spacing. The existing door in the back wall would remain, except for alteration to close any large gaps. Brougham had thought this structure could be built for between £25 and £40, depending on the materials and features chosen.

When Goldman's notes arrived, no work had yet started. Indeed, the plan had been to wait until the Spring of 1860. After discussion with Cassandra that Thursday evening, a note to Brougham was written for Dan to deliver in the morning, with instructions that Dan was to find out when work could commence on wall and stable, as it came to be called, though no stalls were ever built. The structure did become the home of Phoenix and his gig and cart, but the pony was simply given some straw, a hay shelf, and a water bucket. Often the door was left open and Phoenix could walk into what had been the garden, where she could watch some of the comings and goings of the human residents, who occasionally would come and pet her.

* * *

Tony arrived at Goldmans' at ten o'clock on Sunday with Jane Harper. The meeting with Abraham and the Uptons would take place briefly at two.

“Mr. and Mrs. Goldman, I’d like you to meet Mrs. Harper, who provides nursing for sick clients. She is interested in establishing an agency to furnish other nurses for such commissions, and it is possible she may wish to share premises with *Best Bonnet* and *News and More*.”

Rachel said “Welcome Mrs. Harper. I presume you want to see how your needs may be met by this property.”

“Indeed, Mrs. Goldman, though truthfully, I am still trying to understand what sort of facilities I will need. However, something of a business front and a place to live. As a nurse I generally reside with my client, but as someone who finds others to fulfill that role, I will not automatically have a roof.”

On Friday, Ian had been kept busy sweeping and dusting and tidying the whole house. The shop had simply been swept, but that was done every day. In the bedrooms used for storage, Joshua had installed a number of shelves for the pledged items and then pinned cards to them to indicate the dates when they would expire. However, the shelves had got into some disarray for expired items. Ian was kept busy on Saturday also, with lanterns burning so he could work late into the evening both days. Joshua did, however, offer a sixpence bonus to do so.

Thus Tony and Jane could get some idea of the rooms. Jane, surprisingly, produced a cloth tape marked for measurement, and had Tony hold one end so they could record the sizes of the rooms. Jane knew Tony carried a notebook always, and had him sketch the property arrangement, along with individual sketches of each room. Rachel said “That’s a good idea. It will avoid trying to remember the size and position of rooms when you try to think how things may fit for you.”

Joshua was in the shop, starting to do some review of the inventory. Once again, Jane arranged measurements. They also went in the yard and measured and drew it and the stable building.

Rachel offered tea, which somehow included some Jewish pastries, which they had in the parlour.

Jane asked “Are all the fireplaces working?”

Joshua said “They were. I confess it’s been some years – over a decade I fear – since we tried those in two of the three rooms that are used for storage, though the one where Mr. Hoyle sleeps has had a fire on a few very cold nights.”

Tony said “Does the stove in the kitchen heat water?”

Rachel answered “It does, but it has to be filled with a large jug. The one that Cassandra – Mrs. Cohen – has is fed from a cistern that in turn gets water either from the water company or the roof gutter.”

“I didn’t notice if the roof has a gutter here,” Tony said.

“We put in the guttering about fifteen years ago. Before that it people

got wet if they walked near the building. It was also unpleasant for us if we needed to go to the privy.” This critical but often unmentioned, possibly unmentionable, feature of the property was beside the stable and there was a cesspit underneath. Jane, Tony noticed, had inspected it carefully.

* * *

Tony and Jane left the Goldmans’ a little after eleven o’clock and walked to *News and More*. There was a lot to discuss, and as yet they had talked only of vague possibilities. When they came in the shop, there was a smell of something cooking. Tony had told Bobby that he and Jane would be inspecting Goldmans’, then likely would come back to talk about what they’d seen. Bobby had started a stew early in the morning to provide a suitable dish in case lunch was wanted. There was also a full loaf of bread in the larder.

Tony, waving Jane to the comfortable chair, said “Jane. Do you think we should consider the Goldmans’ property?”

Bobby was stirring the stew, and hearing the question, said “Mr. Brown. Would you and Mrs. Harper like to be on your own?”

“I don’t want to behave like your mother did, Bobby. However, I do admit that I would be more comfortable if Mrs. Harper and I could talk privately.”

Bobby said “I already talked to Miss Upton – Valerie – and she said to come over and bring my book of stories and we’d read together for an hour or so. I know you’ll not make me stay outside in the cold and wet. But I ’ope you’ll leave me some stew. It smells real good.”

“Don’t worry, we will.”

As Tony was saying this, Olaf decided Jane’s lap was a good place to settle, and Jane did not contest the issue.

After Bobby left, Jane said “I think Goldmans’ could work. You know, we need a different name if it becomes ... ours.”

“That’s the other matter to be decided. When I have the legacy – or rather when I gain control of it – I will almost certainly be able to purchase Goldmans’. And I will want to live there and work there. I believe, but we haven’t actually agreed, that you wish to share both the business and living space. That is, that we would share in both aspects of life as well as the building.”

Jane answered “That is my wish also. I think we find each other good companions.”

“Yes. I agree. Though on occasions you have mentioned intense friendships and hinted at what those might entail. I am not sure what opinion I

have of that. I would like to share with you, but to disappoint you could lead to unhappiness. It would be most ... galling ... if we had to ... abandon a partnership.”

“Partnerships are always a statement of optimism. Their failure is necessarily sad. If we go ahead, we have to try to make our collaboration a success, and I am prepared to do my best. I will undertake not to press you for a ... closer ... friendship than you desire. However, I will not hide my wishes, and hope you will be as open with me.”

“Thank you, Jane. I will do my best.”

Then it appears we are agreed we would be interested in sharing ... can we possibly call it *Matilda's*. That was my mother's name. Or perhaps you have a better suggestion.”

“I like the idea of a woman's name. And it doesn't speak to any of the businesses. It is *Matilda's*: home to *Best Bonnet, News and More*, and ... er ... ”

“*Harper's Nursing?*” Tony proposed.

“That would fit, but I'd hoped for something more ... unique.”

“There will be some time to think.”

Let us consider if the property will suit us.”

Jane said “There is no water closet. That is unfortunate.”

“I agree. I do not enjoy that here we have a shared privy.”

“I am convinced that a clean water closet lets one avoid some diseases,” Jane added.

Tony said “I have also a wish to have a proper bath, preferably in a proper bathroom. It is, perhaps, a dream of luxury, and I'm afraid that may imply running hot water to be truly enjoyable.”

“Then if we acquire that property, it would be best to do some renovations. Where would you put the water closet and bathroom?”

“The shop is below two stories of residence, but has a room behind the shop as well. At the moment it is full of some of the pledges and other merchandise. Did we note if it had a fireplace?” Tony concluded.

“The sketch shows a small stove. I think Mr. Goldman uses it to keep warm, as the stove has its chimney between the shop and the rear room. Did you notice a couple of openings between the room and the shop either side of the chimney? Of course not, as you asked me if there were a fireplace.”

Tony just nodded, and Jane continued “The kitchen and parlour are above, with one large and three smaller bedrooms. It is likely we want the water closet, or at least one, on a lower level, but the hot water will be on the second level, though we would probably prefer the bath, and possibly a water closet, to be on the top floor.”

Tony said “At Fortescue Road we used screens Tom Soulton made when we took a bath, and then we did so in the kitchen, so the hot water was

near and it was warm. We could do that for bathing, at least initially. It may be preferable to not do too many renovations until we have tested how the property works for us. The water closet could go on the ground floor behind the shop so the distance to the cesspit is not too far, and so workers in the businesses have access to it. Did you notice whether there was water supplied to the kitchen?"

"I think there was. A pump would make no sense on the first floor, however. Perhaps they use buckets from the street pump. Or even capture rain water from the roof. We did talk about gutters."

"Yes. But we'll have to ask about piped water, I think."

Jane said "There's no cellar, is there?"

"I didn't see anywhere to access one. I think not. A lot of houses like at Fortescue Road have a lower area, but then there is some light. Goldmans' property has no such area, so a cellar would depend on lamps."

"Tony. If we are to live there together, are we sharing the purchase?"

"If we do, we would need to know what would happen if we found we did not ... er ... get along. I would prefer to buy the property, assuming my resources allow, but of course I would assume we share expenses."

Also, I have talked, as you know, about a place to have more donkeys. If that becomes reality, it could be sensible for each of us to own one property. But we are perhaps well ahead of ourselves."

Jane said "Yes. I can see that we should maintain a legal independence, much as I would like otherwise. A shared property would be at risk should one of us die. My family and I are estranged. They begrudged a dowry and married me off to a much older man who wanted an heir, and in that he was disappointed, but fortunately not unkind to me. And he left me, as I have said before, with some money. However, my brothers would delight in claiming any estate I left, but would convert it to cash as quickly as they could."

"Supposing we are successful in acquiring *Matilda's*, would we try to renovate right away? Or rather, how much would we do initially?" Tony asked.

"Perhaps a water closet inside, with, if it is not there, a connection to the water company. What you said about screens and bathing near the kitchen stove carries a message of warmth. I have been in one house that had a true bathroom. Even running hot water if the staff set the fire in time. But they had built the bathroom by dividing a large bedroom, so the fireplace and heat were not close by. It was not comfortable. I was sure after one occasion that my teats were showing through three layers of clothing they were so hard."

Tony laughed, a bit nervously. Jane could make comments that were embarrassingly blunt, even if they were true and funny. On the other hand,

it was one of the things he liked about her.

“Have you any idea what the price might be?” Tony asked.

“I was about to ask you the same question. My knowledge of property values is almost none.”

“I have taken some interest, but I should renew my efforts. I talked last February to Mr. Arbuthnot, an estate agent, and he has sent me some notices. I even have looked at a few properties to become familiar with the prices and features. A friend confided that they paid £250 for a nicely appointed terraced house in a decent street, but it has no lower level and no access to the yard. I learned – probably I was not supposed to hear – that the two houses on Fortescue Road were purchased in 1851 for £640, and friends bought a run-down semi-rural property for £130. It is on a modest piece of land, and I believe that figure represents essentially the land alone, as my friends did a prodigious amount of work to make it livable.

Mr Mortimer says the house I will own as of March is worth something between £300 and £400. You’ll remember we walked past it one day when we were going to a lecture.”

“It was of a piece with the rest on the street, but I fear not at all useful for your donkeys, nor even the newspapers.”

“I am going to sell it as soon as I can, but if possible not in a rush.” Tony said.

“My resources could be used for a loan to avoid a sale under pressure,” Jane replied.

“Indeed, that might be the best way for us to pool our resources concerning property. That is, we combine our strengths but keep the formal ownership separate.”

Jane smiled broadly. “Yes! It gives us more power as buyers, allows us to share the gain, but avoids getting entangled with lawyers, estranged relatives, and other vultures.”

“In any event, I am of the opinion that *Matilda’s* would have a valuation somewhere between £250 and £600, but clearly I would like to narrow the range. I haven’t seen figures for properties with a yard and access to the street, and that might give a premium. After all, it is what I wish for.

Oh. Now I think on it, I overheard that the premises that is now the *Brighton Ladies Emporium* was purchased for £475. And I also overheard that the apartment above was extremely attractive, and of course the property has access to the rear, since we deliver through the *Emporium* to *B & J*. That makes me think that *Matilda’s* will be close to that price, since it is larger even as the condition and features are less attractive.”

“Could you afford that, Tony?”

“If Uncle Ezekiel’s house sells at a decent price it is almost certain I can. But if you were willing to extend a loan of, perhaps, £200, we could surely

do it. However, it would be better to spend less and have more to work with for improvements.”

Jane was about to say something, but there was a knock on the shop door. Tony got up to see who it was, and Olaf jumped down and ran to the shop window.

“Tom. Vera. Come in.

I don’t think you’ve met Mrs. Harper, who nurses private clients. She knew James and Angus in the Crimea.”

Vera said “Hello, Mrs. Harper. We heard a bit about you from the people at Fortescue Road.”

“Are you coming from church?” Tony asked.

Tom answered “Yes. But we wanted to see you, but you weren’t in church.”

“No, we were inspecting Goldmans’ property, since he’s considering retiring, and Mrs. Harper and I are thinking it might suit *Best Bonnet, News and More*, and a nursing agency she wishes to establish, and also we would share the residence.”

Tom continued “Then our news may not be of interest. It’s that the Samsons, who are next door to us, have given notice to the big estate that they plan to emigrate to America. Samson came and told us yesterday that they plan to leave early in the new year. But more interesting, he said the estate probably would sell the property, as the road is between it and the main land of the estate, and it’s also all irregular-like on the boundaries. Not easy to cultivate.”

“If the price were right, we – I – might be interested,” Tony said. “Be a place to breed and deal in donkeys. Not a lot, and I wouldn’t keep a jack, but take the jennies to ’im when needed.”

“Isn’t a jack necessary?” Jane asked.

“True, but they can be very dangerous if they want to get at the jenny. People have been badly injured, maybe killed. Yet most of the time the jack is all sweetness and light. That’s why they’re so tricky to keep. And when they’re in the mood, three big men would have a hard time holding one back. Of course, holding them back isn’t all of it. They have a vicious bite and a very dangerous kick. Even our Annabelle kicked Rebecca Upton’s husband and he died a week later.”

“And yet you keep her?” Jane was very perturbed.

Tom said “It’s a bit of a long story, but the short of it is that Upton and a friend were drunk and they were setting fire to a rented barn with Annabelle and Tony inside, though they didn’t know anyone was there. Tony was there to keep an eye on some furniture stored for resale. When Annabelle came out, Uptons’ companion tried to grab ’er, and he got bit, and Annabelle kicked out and caught Upton in the stomach. Apparently burst ’is bowel.

So nobody blamed Annabelle. In fact, she may have saved Tony's life. She certainly raised the alarm by galloping to Fortescue Road and we got the fire out, though the building and some of the contents were lost."

"My word, Tony. A lot of excitement."

"It was back in 1852. A lot's happened since."

The Saultons had to get back to feed David, and it was near enough to lunch time that Jane and Tony each had some of the stew, of which there was enough for several meals, so Bobby need not have worried about missing some.

* * *

Tony and Jolly walked Jane back to where she was nursing a client. On the way, Jane said "Should we think of trying for both properties?"

"It'll probably delay improvements to *Matilda's*, but I think we need to at least consider both. And also be prepared that the prices in both cases may give us cause to reconsider."

"Sadly, yes. Chickens and hatching and all that."

* * *

About the time that Tony returned to his room where Bobby was just finishing a bowl of stew, decisions were being made on how the closure of the pawn shop would be attempted.

Abraham said "It seems that what we talked about a few weeks ago is happening."

"Perhaps faster than I anticipated," Joshua answered.

"In some ways it's better to avoid delay," Rebecca said. "How do you propose to proceed, Mr. Goldman?"

"The active pledges are recorded, and any buyer will expect the journal to be correct. I believe we should have it verified, as if a buyer claimed missing items, the sequel could be costly of time and effort, if not money."

"How would you do that?" Valerie asked.

"I think with someone like a bookkeeper and one of us to note each item that is present with a tick on the journal, possibly with a coloured pen or pencil. Hopefully, all will be there, or we'll need to make provision for them.

And the items that are for sale, either from expired pledges or purchase, we could inventory, but perhaps a sample and an estimate is sufficient, since a buyer will inevitably bargain."

“How will you advertise that the business is for sale?” Abraham asked.

“I think it would be sensible at first to tell local pawnbrokers that we will be selling up. That we can do immediately, and if Abraham and Mrs. Upton can take an hour or so behind the counter, I will go to each of the other shops and talk to the proprietors. I’ve no idea if there will be interest.”

“And if there is none?” Rebecca asked.

“I suppose we will need to advertise,” Joshua said. “But I confess I have little idea how to do so.”

“It may be worth having a small handbill printed and send or take it to pawnbrokers in Eastbourne, Hastings, and other places not far away,” Abraham said. “It might mean a bit of travel, but perhaps we can think of some useful tasks that could be done in parallel.”

Cassandra said “Abraham. Since you know the business and have also promoted the products of the Factory, it might be sensible to visit pawnbrokers when you go to see our distributors.”

“Indeed. That makes sense,” Abraham said.

Rebecca asked “Is there much in the way of furniture or upholstery in your stock, Mr. Goldman?”

“I believe there are a few items, and I will be happy to let you choose any items I have and we will agree a floor price as we do for other items, so you can sell them on consignment and will have no prior expenditure.”

“We should consider how we might rearrange our shop and yard to better present things,” Valerie suggested.

Joshua said “It is also possible that it is worth considering if any equipment in the shop or back room would be useful to Uptons’, though you will want to talk to Joseph, Tony and Mrs. Harper about those if Tony acquires this property. Otherwise, of course, they will certainly be available.”

* * *

Monday night, December 19, Bobby had been sniffing, and by the solstice on Wednesday both he and Tony had full-blown and very nasty colds, possibly bronchitis. Fortunately, *Best Bonnet* had a very light set of commissions, but Jack was sent out to confer with Valerie on how to fulfill client needs. In spite of his cold, Tony handled *News and More* clients while Jack did some nearby collections and deliveries with a hand-cart.

When he returned, Jack said “Mrs. Upton says to stay in bed, keep warm, and she’ll bring hot soup and other food.”

“Thanks Jack. I feel so poorly that I plan to do just that. Bobby, why don’t you get in plenty of coal here so we can keep the stove going steadily

without having to go outside. And lots of water so we can keep the kettle ready.

Also you can bring your palliasse in here near the stove. It will also allow us to share the lamps to read.”

In fact, Tony and Bobby missed Christmas dinner at Fortescue Road, where they’d been invited. The celebration there was diminished by Rose and Angus also having colds and staying in bed too, but they still could be given a tray for dinner. Fortunately, Cassandra sent James to bring a basket of food, including some special items, to the *News and More* shop. Though his voice was not terribly useful, James was persistent in knocking until Bobby answered.

Tony said “Thank you, James. Being ill is becoming a nuisance. We’d have had a very dull meal without your visit.” He and Bobby emptied the basket into the larder.

James said something, but wrote on his notebook

MERRY CHRISTMAS. LOTS OF PEOPLE ILL. TAKE CARE.

* * *

On Boxing Day, both Bobby and Tony were feeling a little better, but still with coughs and runny noses. Bobby still went out and got some bread from the bakery nearby that was open. The milkman was about, and they got some milk. *News and More* did not open.

Around noon, there was knock at the front door. It was Jane, with a basket of food, so there was plenty to eat.

Jane stayed for a while, and they ate some of the food. Then both Tony and Bobby decided to set the lamp so they could read, stoked the fire, and crawled back into bed to read quietly or sleep or both.

* * *

On December 20, Tom Soulton along with Robert had walked a hand-cart with tools and some wood, wire and fasteners, as well as a pair of lanterns, to 52 Henry Street. At noon Rachel Goldman arrived with the keys she had received for the property. While Rachel, who also had brought a lantern, tried all the keys in various doors and then attached labels to them to denote their purpose, Tom and Robert boarded up some broken window panes and refurbished some existing boards.

“Can we check if the chimneys are open?” Rachel asked, and they took some spills of newspaper, lit them, and held them near fireplace openings or in the firebox of the stove. All were clear.

Tom tried the pump at the kitchen sink. He could not get it to prime.

“I think the pump dried out, so the valves won’t seal and we won’t get any lift.”

Tom went out and tried the door of a neighbour, but there was no answer. In the next house, however, a woman was able to give him some water in the bucket he had thoughtfully brought along on the hand-cart. Tom poured some water into the top of the pump, after which it functioned, albeit poorly, and the outflow was tinged with mud and rust.

“Probably needs new leather in the valves,” Tom commented.

Rachel said “We’re hoping to get connected to the water company.”

“Lot less effort, an’ Vera says she thinks there’s less risk of bad water.”

Given the proximity of the solstice, the daylight was starting to fade by three o’clock. Rachel said “Let’s lock up and take the train back to the centre.”

“Think they’ll let my cart on?”

“I’ll hold the door while you two lift it on. It’s only the one stop from Aldrington.”

* * *

There are times in people’s lives when a great deal happens but there are few, if any, moments of drama. This was the case for the first two and a half months of 1860 for our friends at Fortescue Road, Goldmans’ and Uptons’ yards, Henry Street, Chorley Terrace, *News and More* and Saultons’ Workshop. There might even be changes for the people at *Fortescue Factory*. They were all busy, exceptionally busy, because their business and personal lives were in a state of great flux.

Tony and Bobby were both doing all their regular activities by the last day of 1859, though each would at times cough violently and occasionally spit up some phlegm. Still, on New Years day, this year a Sunday, Tony went to church. The *Book of Common Prayer* had the day listed as the "The Octave Day of Christmas, and the Circumcision of Our Lord, being New Year’s Day". Nobody said much about circumcision, and he was not sure what it meant. Perhaps Jane, as a nurse, would know. However, she was not in church today. Her client had, she mentioned, been in declining health and was needing more attention.

After church, with the attendant greetings to those he knew, Tony returned to *News and More* as he had declined invitations to dinner, or rather

suggested they be postponed in case his cough flared. It was now intermittent, and he was able to avoid disturbing the church service, but his wind-pipe was definitely not clear.

Once home, where Bobby was reading and tending a pot of soup, Tony took his notebook to write down a list of pending actions or events for the coming weeks.

- Goldmans work on Henry Street
- sale of pawnbroker business
- Goldmans move
- Jane advertise for nurses
- Cohens build shelter for Phoenix and carts
- Phoenix to Fortescue Road
- plan rearrangement of Uptons' yard and shop
- sell Ezekiel's house
- if possible, buy Goldmans' yard. Name *Matilda's*
- consider property previously rented by Samson
- refurbishments at *Matilda's*
- move *News and More* to *Matilda's*
- move self and Bobby to *Matilda's*
- move donkeys to *Matilda's*
- *Best Bonnet* office to *Matilda's*
- set up *Harper's Nursing*

Looking over the list, Tony realized there was a great deal that had to happen, and most of the activities were interlocking – some could not happen before others were complete. Also, he realized, there would be plenty to occupy people with the regular duties for *Best Bonnet* and the other businesses. Already Abraham and Maud had sent notes about times and locations of sales. The Factory had started two new arrangements in smaller towns that needed regular deliveries to the Station.

In thinking about these commissions, Tony realized that it would be useful to know how much the business was earning, and from which activities.

He should talk to Joseph. Possibly get Jack to do an accounting for the year. For *Best Bonnet*, the current arrangements were that there was a log book kept at Uptons' which recorded all the monies in and out. At the end of each week, Tony and Joseph decided how much to take out and how much to leave as a float for expenses. They had usually divided what they took out equally, even though this year Jessie, owned by Tony, had contributed. That too, needed discussion. Also Valerie wasn't expressly rewarded for taking the commissions and passing them on. That clearly would change, but also he and Joseph should give Valerie some sort of bonus, though that should come after the review was complete.

To his list, Tony added

- *Best Bonnet* annual review; Valerie bonus
- *Best Bonnet* plan

The realization that *Best Bonnet* would be changing gave Tony a sudden moment of panicky discomfort. But things always are changing. The evolution of the business was a consequence of the people involved maturing and adapting to their world. Of course, he recognized that many in society drifted along insensible to the currents of change and glints of opportunity. Still, it would be worthwhile to talk to Joseph, and now was as good a time as any, given that Uptons' was only a few steps away.

"Bobby, I'm just going across to talk to Joseph for a few minutes. If you go out, be sure to lock up. I'll take my key."

* * *

Joseph was not home. Valerie said "He's out with Mary Lawrence. Thick as thieves. I just hope they make sure they don't get into trouble. She's a nice girl and they'll do all right together, but they don't need to be rushed to the altar."

"I came to talk to him about *Best Bonnet*. We're rather informal about how we keep track of our costs and revenues. I was going to ask him if we should engage a bookkeeper to organize the figures so we know where we do best and where we might be losing money. Also to suggest we start a new log book for the new year."

"No need. I've got a new book – even charged it to *Best Bonnet* along with two new pens and a bottle of ink. And things were quiet this week so I did a review. It's probably not as exact as a bookkeeper would do. I rounded to the nearest shilling – in fact I calculated everything in shillings. Makes it easier to work with. Do ye' wanna see?"

Tony did want to see. Valerie had prepared a sheet with each month along one side and across the top had put the main categories of income, then a double vertical line and the main costs, namely feed, stabling, payments for work by others, and miscellaneous costs. Then there was another double line and the amounts paid to Tony and Joseph, with a B or a U behind.

“I was going to use T and J but they are too easy to confuse,” Valerie explained.

“This is marvellous, Valerie. We’d better give you a bonus. It looks like we can afford it, though Joseph and I might have to pay a bit back into the kitty first.”

“Yes. You probably want to establish a section of the log for cash and keep a record of how much is supposed to be in the till, though that till might be an amount in a strong box, since you don’t do much business across the counter. The donkeymen and the cartmen do handle money, and they each have their notebooks. I’ve got the pages from each of your notebooks in separate envelopes for the full year.”

“You’re a marvel, Valerie. Do you know how much Joseph and I gained over the whole year.

Oh. I’m being silly. It’s there at the bottom of the column. 4645.”

“That’s shillings, so over £230,” Valerie said.

“My goodness. I’m really chagrined I only thought of doing such a table of income and expense today and you have clearly been much more businesslike than I.”

“Don’t be too ’ard on yourself, Tony. You’ve had a lot to think about with the donkeys, ’specially when Annabelle went lame. And you’ve had your dad on your mind and what you’ll do when you get the money. Though I think your plan to buy Goldmans’ is a smart one. It’ll let all the businesses keep going. I’m looking forward to making this place a real furnishings emporium. A place that will be top of mind when people want furniture or curtains or carpets for their houses.”

“Yes. I’ve felt for a long time that our activities, or the places where we focus them, are too spread out and the parts of the work mixed up.”

“I’m a bit worried about not being part of *Best Bonnet*. I really like the furnishings work, especially the upholstered pieces. An’ I’m good at getting them renewed and cleaned up, using Tom and Vera for the wood and metal. But I also like the coming and going of *Best Bonnet*. Probably have to make a decision.”

“Do you think Ian Hoyle could handle the bookings?”

“He’s smart enough. But are the Goldmans going to take him with them?”

“I don’t know. We’ll have to ask. But I will say it is probably a good idea for Joseph and I to keep you part of our team, even as an observer. I’ve

realized when Annabelle was lame that we were able to shift people around, albeit at some cost.”

“But you were still able to serve all your clients,” Valerie said, finishing Tony’s statement.

At that moment, Joseph came in with Mary Lawrence.

“Chill out there,” Joseph said. “Would there be a kettle on the stove, Val?”

Indeed, as was common, a kettle was on the back of the stove. Valerie had Tony poke the coals and add a few more, and move the kettle directly over the heat. Mary went out to the privy while Joseph hung up their coats.

Valerie had taken some Christmas cake from the larder and cut some pieces.

Joseph said “Think Ma will be all right with us ’aving some of that?”

“She said we could when I asked before she went out to see Mrs. Cruikshank. Mind you, I didn’t know Tony and Mary would be over, but I did do more than half the work on this cake, so I think I have some say in the matter.”

As they sat down around the kitchen table for tea and cake, Tony said “Joseph. Did you see the analysis Valerie did of the last year’s income and expenses for *Best Bonnet*?”

“Nah. All news to me.”

“Have a look. She’s broken down the amounts by month and the type of spending or income. According to the result, we made £115 apiece. But I’m thinking we didn’t pay Valerie anything, but we should, especially with this table done for us, and all the notebook pages organized in those envelopes.”

Mary Lawrence said “Valerie and I should go and look at the latest items in the shop while the two of you decide that.”

“A good idea, Mary,” Valerie agreed. “Just don’t be a horrible little brother, Joseph.”

As soon as the two young women were out of easy hearing, Tony said “5% of our take – 4645 shillings – is 232 shillings or a shade under £12. Auctioneer’s commission rounded up to the nearest pound.”

“Fine by me. And I like the link to auctioneer’s commission. Gives us a sort of proper reasoning for the amount.”

They were both quiet for the few minutes before the young women returned.

Tony said “We thought that a 5% commission on the profits rounded up to the nearest pound, Valerie.”

“Ooh, nice. Yes. That’ll be ... er ... 12 quid. Very nice.”

Mary said “That’s good. I was a bit afraid you might be a little tight. I like it that Joseph is careful with money. I am too. But sometimes you need to be ... er ... balanced in your view.”

The others laughed, but also applauded.

“Valerie. Do we need to put more money into *Best Bonnet* so you can take the commission out?”

“No. You’re each owed a bit under £10 as the last disbursement for 1859 to each of you.

But I have a question. It’s a bit awkward.”

“About continuing with *Best Bonnet* when and if we shift to Goldmans’?” Tony queried.

“No. I was thinking that Tony has ownership of two donkeys, a cart and two saddles – you purchased that second one for Jessie out of your own funds and really we’ve not used it yet. I wondered ... er ... ”

Joseph said “Yeah, up to now it’s been more or less equal. We even purchased the three hand-carts we own out of the business proceeds.”

Tony said “Maybe it’s easiest if *Best Bonnet* pays me back for what I’ve spent on Jessie and the saddle, and we consider the money we put in for Annabelle, Moonbeam and their carts as our shareholder investment, even if we don’t have a formal company.”

“You might want to write down what you’ve agreed, though,” Valerie said. “I’m not saying either of you will cheat the other, but we know there can be accidents and illnesses, and nothing worse than someone claiming they’re the heir to all your stuff.

“And I didn’t mean that as any comment on our Tony’s upcoming inheritance – that’s a different kettle of fish. I just meant that things happen and the people who knew the agreement aren’t around to say so.”

“Good thinking, Valerie,” Tony said. “You mentioned some new pens and ink. No time like the present.”

“I’ll get them. And I’ve got your notebook pages for when you bought Jessie, including your expenses for the train and food and fodder. Actually, you should probably have kept that, but the fact it’s here means we can settle things today, at least as an amount owing.”

Mary Lawrence said “I find all this talk of business most interesting. At home, Father tells Mother and I not to bother our pretty heads about it. That’s so annoying. If he dies suddenly, we’ve no inkling of what, where and how we will have to keep a roof over our heads. We’d be dependent on others, and not be easily able to know if they were honest or crooked.”

Tony just nodded. He was trying to guess if Joseph had shared information about his gender with Mary. Nothing seemed to indicate he had.

Valerie added “Regarding moving the office to Goldman’s, I think that you and Joseph probably should have Ian Hoyle or Jack Dixon or better both of them learn how to handle the bookings for *Best Bonnet* so you can have a reserve of knowledge.”

Tony asked Jane “Are you sure you’re up for walking all the way to Preston Manor – well nearby – so we can look at Samson’s place?”

“What else would we do?”

“Preston Park Station is a possibility, but we’d have to walk across to the Brighton Station, then back from Preston Park Station. I thought mainly of a hansom there and walk back.”

“Actually, that does make sense. Then I’m taking you for some lunch.”

“Isn’t it the gentleman who normally takes the lady?”

Jane, who had a very mixed upbringing, as well as an association with soldiers in the Crimea, noted there was nobody near them in the street in front of the house where she nursed, so, in a low voice, said “Show me your cock and balls and I’ll let you.”

Tony laughed. “You’ll lose your nursing position if you shout that out loud.”

“Quite possibly. But I believe my point is made.”

“Indeed yes. Sometimes I wish it were otherwise.”

Ah. Here comes a cab. Let’s see if he is available.”

Once they were inside the cab, Jane asked in a low voice “Do you really wish that you were actually as you appear? I fear such a wish could be the source of much ... er ... anguish.”

“Actually, Jane. I don’t know quite what I wish. Certainly it is easier in business and in what I do for a living to be a man. It is how I have learned to live. And in our society, being a man does have advantages. Women are often treated with disrespect in financial, intellectual and political matters.

We had better be a little circumspect. I am not sure how much the cabbie can hear.” Tony did not wish Jane to use base language, nor to say anything that might be damaging to his business.

Jane asked “How shall we evaluate the property we are going to inspect?”

Tony answered “We can make a rough sketch and pace out the dimensions. Also make some notes. It is not yet on the market. I asked Arbuthnot, and he thought it would come up in the next fortnight. But it will be useful to know if we are interested at all, or if we can ignore it.”

Samson was at home. “Oh. Hello. You were at Soultons that night they was robbed, or almost robbed.”

“Yes. I’m Tony Brown. This is Mrs. Harper. Mr. Soulton told us it is believed this property may come up for sale, and we wished, if you have no

objections, to inspect it so we might know whether it is worth our while to bid for it.”

“Well, I’ve no objection. We’re packin’ up. Be away in a week to Liverpool for the steamboat to New York. Then onward to hopefully find our fortune in South Carolina.”

“I wish you good luck, Mr. Samson.

Perhaps we should walk the outside first, then come back in a while and look at the cottage.”

“That’ll be fine. You’ll find stone walls each side and at the front, but just a ditch at the back. It wanders around a bit. When it was dug some many years ago, the estate wanted to keep this bit separate from the woods where the squire ’ad some birds and game. And I think some prime timber trees. Makes for a bit of a dog’s dinner of a field. No way to run the plough straight for any distance, ’cos there’s also some rocks in the middle. Not so bad for grazin’, but the grass ain’t great here. Only the hardier varieties, and the cows and ’orses don’t find that so tender.”

Tony kept quiet during this description.

“Then we will come back after we’ve reviewed the land. Thank you, Mr. Samson.”

“Until later, Mr. Brown. Mrs. ’arper.”

Tony and Jane walked to the gate. Tony said “Over there is Tom and Vera’s place. Let’s start at the gate and go away from their place to the far wall.”

Jane nodded and started walking in that direction. Tony followed but counted his paces from the gatepost. He had his notepad out and started a sketch. When he got to the corner, he said “76.”

Jane said “Oh, I should have counted too.”

“Look back. It’s not straight. And after the gate it goes off to the right. And the side walls are nearer at the front than the back. But let’s complete the perimeter.”

They walked the side wall, finding it was 72 paces for Tony and 71 for Jane. The rear property line really was irregular. Worse it was just a ditch that meandered this way and that.

“Would this ditch stop the donkeys, Tony?”

“Probably they wouldn’t cross it unless they saw something that caught their curiosity. But then they might try crossing it and break a leg. If we do buy the property, we’ll need to think how to fence that ditch. And it looks like some parts of it need clearing so it drains water properly.”

“Have you any idea how we could fence easily? I’m assuming a wall would be expensive.”

“Have to ask Tom. Maybe some other folk too.”

“Could we do a wattle fence?” Jane asked. “People use low ones for their gardens, but surely they can be made bigger.”

“Yes. Might work. Need to see what materials are available. Mind you, there’s a couple of willows over there, and the branches are hanging over the ditch.”

“Oh. You mean that branches on this side could be cut if we own the property?” Jane asked.

“Yes. Then just need stuff for the uprights.”

“For some reason, I know that the uprights are called *sales* and the cross pieces *weavers*.”

Tony said “Let’s try to get a drawing and rough measurements.”

They paced and drew. It was a bit like a saw blade made by a drunkard. Finally they paced the wall between the property and Saultons’, then back to the gate.

“Oh. I need to include the width of the gate,” Tony said, pacing across.

“If you’ve got that down, let’s walk a wide circuit around the cottage to see what the ground is like, then take a look at the building. There’s no barn or anything other than that shed.”

“That’s probably the privy,” Tony said, which was easily confirmed by the odour as they walked nearby.

The ground was not even. The Downs chalk pushed up through the grass at some points. There were several boulders in the field, if it could be called a field. However, Jane pointed out that the grass was more lush in the five or six yards near the wall at the Saultons’ side, and within a similar band near the front wall.

“If a garden is put in, more fencing’d be needed to stop the donkeys eating it,” Tony noted.

“On the other hand, the woods behind and the rise of land to the Saultons’ side would shelter the ground. I wonder if a greenhouse wouldn’t do well here for flowers or special vegetables.”

“It’s a thought,” Tony said. “Let’s look at the cottage.”

The building was almost square, with two windows at the front, one door on the side facing Saultons’, and one window at the back. No second door. When they came in, they saw it was just one large room. Well, the size was the full five yards by six. There was a plank flooring on the ceiling beams, which were uncovered, and a ladder went up between the middle beams to a small platform between the two halves of this "attic". Light for the upper area would be limited to that coming up the gap between two beams where the ladder ran. There were two beds, a table, five chairs and a few tea crates which were clearly being packed with the Samson’s belongings.

Under one of the two front windows was a sink with a pump. It drained to the outside. A fireplace and chimney ran up the middle of the side wall

opposite the door. There was a hob for the fire and several pot hooks. Overall, it was primitive.

Tony felt they did not need to inspect further, but asked "Do you know when this building was put up, Mr. Samson?"

"No idea, Mr. Brown. We did find a ha'penny between two floorboards one day that was dated 1792."

Tony and Jane thanked the Samsons and wished them luck, then walked over to see Tom and Vera.

"Am I right that it's about two acres?" Tom asked.

"Let's look at my drawing and the number of paces. It's got a crooked front, which makes it difficult, and the sides aren't square. The rear is all over the place. But lets say it's 160 yards across and about 55 deep if it were a rectangle. That's about 8800 square yards. 4840 to the acre, so a bit under 2 acres. Probably be hard to get one and a half acres of grazing with the crookedness and the house."

"And the chalk and the stones," Jane added.

"We added some manure to the garden, but I think the fact that there was a stable here before helped," Vera said.

"What does Samson do?" Tony asked.

"Works for the Manor as a manual labourer," Tom said. "I think he does some of the work maintaining the walls and paths. I see 'im covered in dust and lime sometimes."

"Have some plum duff," Vera said. "I thought I'd try to make it."

Conversation devolved to other things. Little David diverted attention, as did Fuzzy. Today, Jolly had been left home to avoid problems with visiting the Samsons. Tom, Vera and Jane kept up a lively conversation, while Tony joined in occasionally. Somehow, it seemed more appropriate to be an observer of this scene.

Vera had filled out a little as Tony had observed previously. When he first knew her, she had been rather thin and worried looking. Now she had, without fat, an aura of sturdiness. Perhaps that came from working on the furniture. Molly, the cook, joined with the group, though like Tony she said little.

Around half past two, Tony excused himself for the privy. Jane followed, as a couple of cups of tea had been consumed. Then they made their farewells. There would be no hansoms, so a walk of almost an hour was anticipated to Jane's place of employ.

For a while they walked in silence.

"Is it worth my while bidding on the place, Tony?"

"If we plan to be a team, and I acquire Goldmans' or something similar and you Samsons', then the latter will be for grazing donkeys, at least at first.

The key to whether it is worthwhile is the price. As I said to Tom, there's about an acre and a half of grazing. The rule of thumb appears to be a half acre per donkey, so it's not going to be big enough for a large operation. Nevertheless, what you said about a greenhouse might suggest a better usage in the long term."

"Brighton is a place where people come for holidays or ... er ... other celebrations."

Tony laughed gently, but Jane continued "There could be a market for specialty fruit and vegetables that are grown under glass. Or flowers."

"Have you any knowledge of that subject?" Tony asked.

"Only a little, but I know a lady who delights in plants and growing them, and who is now, unfortunately, working as a kitchen maid in a large house, having been widowed by War."

"If you buy the property, there is a cottage, albeit a rather rustic one. And one could start with a small greenhouse. Likely Tom could build it."

"Tony. I am excited. I hope we can get it."

"Calm, Jane. It will do us ill to want the property so much that we overpay."

"You are right. When it comes to the money, one must be very strict with oneself and calculate the up and the down of things.

What do you think would be fair for the property?"

"Next door I can say is valued at about £200. But that has the workshop and a much nicer house, though less land. However, that land is very poor stuff. Donkeys, fortunately, don't need tender shoots. Still, they are not the common livestock. So I'd offer something much lower. Say £75 to £90. We should ask Arbuthnot what he thinks. And, as yet, we don't know if it will come on the market."

"Could Arbuthnot approach Preston Manor to ask if they are interested in selling?"

"That might be possible. Especially if he suggests he has a client looking for some land for the future, and he – Arbuthnot – heard the tenant was quitting."

"Presumably, Tony, we'd have to pay Arbuthnot a commission?"

"He does have to live too."

"Yes. Of course. And eventually I'll be like him in offering services of nurses."

"Have you advertised yet for nurses in addition to the few who you wrote to who had been in the Crimea?"

"I thought to put an advertisement in the Brighton paper, seeking ladies who wish to nurse privately. The difficulty is that I do not yet have commissions, so I need to find them also. It is very much the chicken and the egg.

I believe it may be better to wait until we have some sort of office so that there is a focus for the activity.”

“Perhaps your advertisement should present both possibilities. That is, that you will arrange nurses and that you seek them to fill such needs. There is almost certain to be some ... er ... mismatch from time to time.”

“Yes. And possibly I should advertise fairly regularly, but not until I have a plan in place. I had better make a budget, as at the start I am bound to have rather limited revenue.”

Tony asked “Do only women do nursing?”

“Of course. Now why did I say that? It makes no sense that only women could take care of the sick and infirm. And you and I know the converse, where tradition forbids us from doing a job we are perfectly capable of performing or wearing clothing adapted to the work. Oh! I get in such a rage about that.”

“We can only push for change,” Tony said. “Or, like me, try to slip through the cracks in society’s woodwork.”

* * *

Tony put a message in Arbuthnot’s letterbox the next morning asking if he could come by late on Tuesday afternoon.

“Mr. Brown. How may I help you.”

“Mr. Arbuthnot. I have learned that the tenant of the property next to Soultons’ Workshop is quitting. While I am interested myself, it seems likely I will need to preserve my capital for a more central house. But a friend of mine is looking for such a property if the price is right. She would rent me space for donkeys to graze and work over time to establish some horticulture.”

“I have not yet seen it in communications I have received. As I indicated earlier, I thought it would come up soon.”

“We wondered if it might be more efficient to communicate to Preston Manor saying you had heard that Mr. Samson was leaving and was it possible that there was interest in selling the property. We are concerned that they may either re-rent the place, thinking that the best policy, or else sell it privately, not knowing there may be other interested parties.”

“In either of which cases I’d lose a commission. Indeed, I will write this very evening to ask. They can only tell me "no".

Do I take it you looked at the property?”

“Yes. Here is a drawing I made. It is, unfortunately, very irregular. Moreover, there are patches of bare chalk, several boulders in odd places, and the cottage is rather primitive.”

“That was my impression, but I only drove by in a gig last autumn on my way elsewhere. On the other hand, Soultons’ looked very tidy and prosperous.”

“Yes. They have greatly improved it in the five years since they took it over.”

“Is it that long? My goodness. But they do such a good job with furniture. Engagements to furnish houses come along less frequently than I would like, as with Mr. Cohen and Mrs. Mortimer and the Soultons we can generally all do very well while pleasing clients. I should not leave out Miss Match. I mean Mrs. Cohen, but somehow she is always Miss Match to me. She was the spark that got all that going.”

“Yes indeed. And *Best Bonnet* too, though I think it was Mr. Cohen who made a comment, and Tom Soultan who suggested the name. The strange and circuitous way that names are found.”

“Well, I must write that letter to Preston Manor, so I will bid you a good evening, Mr. Brown.”

“And I must get Moonbeam back to her stall. Thank you Mr. Arbuthnot.”

* * *

That evening, Joshua and Rachel were looking at a set of notes from Frederick Brougham. They detailed work needed at 52 Henry Street to install gas lighting, piped water to the kitchen and to a water closet that was to be installed, to replace the kitchen stove with one that could heat water and was also connected to water so it did not need manual filling, to reglaze some of the windows and to paint the entire interior.

“He has estimated that the total cost will be about £100,” Joshua said. “However, he has suggested that there is some uncertainty in routing the pipes in the walls that could cause costs to rise, but also the possibility that his men might find easy paths. He is willing to make a fixed price agreement, but would specify £125 because of the risks.”

Rachel said “Then we will pay the materials and the time for the workers.”

“Yes, my dear. As I should pay attention to the shop, could you be present to answer the workmen’s questions and provide some direction, for example where gas lights should be placed?”

“I would much prefer that you did that, but I agree you need to make sure of the shop. Do I anticipate that you will work on the stock verification when there are no customers?”

“Indeed. I have arranged to hire Mr. Black the bookkeeper for the whole of next week. I will get Mr. Hoyle to be present also, and this week

will instruct him in what we are going to do, so that he may continue with Mr. Black if I must serve a customer.”

“You said earlier this afternoon that you’d visited all the pawnbrokers in Brighton this week. Did any show interest in buying our business?”

“One pawnbroker is the same age as us and is thinking of selling up.

Of the other seven within Brighton, only one showed any interest. He wants to talk to his son, who is away working with an uncle in Basingstoke, who is also a pawnbroker.”

“Then we will have to wait for him. Do you know how long before he comes back to Brighton?” Rachel asked.

“No. Hackman didn’t say, and I got the feeling he wasn’t sure. So I don’t propose to wait, but hope Abraham can find a potential buyer.”

“Have you thought what we might do if we cannot find a buyer?”

“Yes. I have given that considerable thought.

If we do not manage to find a buyer for the business, then I would seek to sell off the expired pledges and the items I purchased for resale. Some of those may go to Rebecca Upton, but probably a very few. It would please me very much if you would put a value on any that you can and separate those from the rest. But I recognize that you will only be able to do this at times when other needs allow. I will do the same. If nobody buys the business, I will sell off what we can, including to other brokers, or anyone else. And I will advertise that I will arrange that pledges can be redeemed – at the moment I have not a fixed strategy for that, but possibly Rebecca could handle it by appointment, or even Tony Brown.”

Rachel said “I’d better make sure we’ve lots of labels. But I’ll be happy to value things. And I can do it each day a little, and even bring things here into the parlour with Mr. Hoyle’s help, and do so when we sit in the evenings.”

“That reminds me to ask if you feel Mr. Hoyle is the servant we wish to have at our new residence. We must remember that we hired him as much for the business as for ourselves.”

“I think I would prefer someone more suited as a domestic servant, Joshua. But I would not want Mr. Hoyle to lose employment.”

“That, my dear, is unlikely to be an issue. Unless I am much mistaken, I think Mr. Brown will be glad to have him. Or if not Mr. Brown, then Rebecca. Mr. Hoyle, while not as ambitious as some of our other young friends, is generally interested in the work and reasonably competent. It is likely he is less inclined to domestic work.”

“Joshua. Shall I seek to engage a cook-housekeeper? It may be helpful to have her – I am assuming we would want a girl or woman – sooner rather than later to assist in cleaning and moving, and even in assisting me to price the goods for sale.”

“That would be very sensible, my dear. I will leave it to you. And I will talk to Mr. Hoyle to assure him that he will not be let go.

Now, I had better write a note to Mr. Brougham to ask when he can start.”

* * *

When Tony had come home on the evening of Thursday, January 19, there was a note from Arbuthnot that he had received a reply from Preston Manor, and could he come to Arbuthnot’s office. Knowing Tony’s work, Arbuthnot suggested half-past three or later. Knowing Jane should be involved, Tony wrote a note for her and walked to the house where she worked. If possible, he would speak to her, else leave the note suggesting meeting at Arbuthnot’s.

Jane was able to come to the foyer.

“You have news of the Preston Manor Lane property?”

“I do not know the content, but Arbuthnot has had a reply, and wants me to come to his office after half-past three tomorrow. I thought you might want to be there also, if it is possible.”

“Let me consult with my client. He is already aware that I have been considering such a purchase, so I will not have to explain myself in great detail.”

Jane turned to the maid who was, correctly, waiting in case there were instructions, and also to serve against possible mischief. Tony was an unknown. “Violet, I will return as soon as I have talked to the master.”

It turned out that Jane could have leave for a while on the morrow, so Tony bid her goodnight and returned home. It was dark and drizzly, and a good night to be indoors with a hot meal, which fortunately Bobby had ready. Tony thought it unfortunate that the stove did not have an oven. That was something to remedy in the next kitchen. Well, he knew already that Rachel’s stove had an oven, and a boiler for hot water, though the latter had to be filled manually.

* * *

Arbuthnot welcomed Tony and Jane into his office.

“Mrs. Harper, I am pleased to meet you. Mr. Brown told me he had a friend who may be interested in the Preston Manor Lane property. The Estate refers to it as Lane Meadow.”

“*Meadow* is a charitable name for it, Mr. Arbuthnot. Nevertheless, I am considering it as a possible investment for a future business.”

“I have had a reply that the Estate may be willing to consider a sale, as the property does not fit their principal activities and it is separated by a road from the main parcel of land. They have not said what price they would consider, but have noted that the land has not been bought or sold for a couple of centuries. Thus the description of the property for purposes of conveyancing is in need of bringing up to date.”

“Does that mean a land survey, Mr. Arbuthnot?” Tony asked.

“That is the usual way. But also I suspect the lands were granted to whoever was the first owner of the Manor, and in times past, things were quite ... cavalier. Though this property probably belonged to the Manor prior to there being cavaliers.” Arbuthnot chuckled at his own wit here, but Jane just smiled briefly, and Tony was not sure of the meaning, as history had not been a large part of his reading.

Jane said “Mr. Arbuthnot, I am willing to offer £100 for the Lane Meadow as we shall call it, providing the description can be rendered suitable that I get a good title. In truth, I might go a little higher, but it seems an awkward sort of piece of land, with an unattractive cottage in a position that limits some use of the place.

Have you experience of the cost of getting the survey and description to a satisfactory state that the title can be trusted?”

“It rather depends on the language of the deeds, and which of those documents the Manor has in their possession. The most unfortunate case would be if the deeds have been lost or destroyed, in which case the property cannot be sold until a court makes a ruling. And it is by no means certain that the Manor could provide sufficient evidence that they are the rightful owners, though they would likely retain possession in practice, but could not sell the land. Or the description in the deeds may be such that the boundaries are uncertain, thereby risking disputes with neighbours.”

Tony asked “How do you propose we proceed?”

“I suggest that I reply to the Manor, saying my client – and I will have Mrs. Harper sign an agreement that I may represent her at a fee of 5% of the sale price, payable if and when a sale is concluded – is willing to offer £100 if a clear title can be provided, subject to review of the client’s solicitor.

In the meanwhile, I would suggest that Mrs. Harper ensure she has a solicitor who can properly review whatever documents are rendered. I’m afraid that the cost of the solicitor will be at Mrs. Harper’s expense, and will likely be a bit more than a transaction involving a property that has been recently traded.”

“Very well, Mr. Arbuthnot. Let us proceed in that manner. Even if Lane Meadow proves to be impossible to purchase, I need to gain experience

of the process of buying a property, and to have a solicitor. But I think Mr. Brown knows one.”

“I expect he will recommend Mr. Mortimer. A good man, and conscientious.”

Tony said “Yes. That is what I was about to do.”

Jane said “Mr. Arbuthnot, could I perhaps have pen and paper to write to Mr. Mortimer to request that he act for me. I will have Mr. Brown take it to him. I will suggest that he meet me at church on Sunday so he may know me by face. That will avoid my needing to make a special appointment until and unless we have some true business to conduct concerning Lane Meadow, or possibly some other property, for I shall surely need a solicitor then in any event.”

“Certainly, Mrs. Harper.”

* * *

Jane met Henry and Maud after church. Tony introduced them. In truth, they had seen each other several times before, and actually knew names and faces, but there had not been a formal introduction.

Maud said “Tony – Mr. Brown – and Henry and I all met when we lived at Fortescue Road. I gather you have met the Cohen’s, who I don’t see today.”

“Yes. And I knew Mr. McDowell and Mr. Sinclair in the Crimea. I worked there as a nurse with Mrs. Seacole.”

Henry said “A most interesting woman. I saw that she had published *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands* a couple of years ago.

But before I forget, I will tell you that I will be happy to act for you should you have need of my services.”

“Thank you Mr. Mortimer. It seems that the Lane Meadow property in which Mr. Brown and I are interested has not changed ownership for a very long time, so there may be questions as to the title. Indeed, Mr. Arbuthnot had some concerns it may not be saleable.”

“That does happen from time to time. In such cases, it is best to walk, perhaps run, away,” Henry said, to some laughter.

Maud asked “Is Lane Meadow next to Tom and Vera?”

“Yes,” Tony answered. “If we, I mean Mrs. Harper, gets it, it would be rented to *Best Bonnet*, at least the grazing.”

“And you would not want to buy it yourself,” Henry asked.

“I have been talking to Mr. Goldman about his property. If I can acquire that, there would be some ... rationalization ... of the businesses,

and *Best Bonnet, News and More*, and a nursing agency Mrs. Harper wants to establish would use the shop.”

Maud said “We’d heard some of this, but all second-hand. Tom said he went with Mrs. Goldman to secure their new property. And I heard that Mr. Goldman wishes to sell the pawnbroker business.”

Henry said “It is chilly here. Shall we find some tea somewhere and continue our conversation? I am most interested in all your plans, Tony. I suppose that we should have a formal meeting soon to discuss upcoming events, but if you are happy to share your plans with Maud and I and Mrs. Harper, I’m happy that I’ll not be able to charge for as much time when we do take a look at the reckoning.”

Thus the foursome made their way to a modest café, where it turned out some interesting simple but delicious pies and flans were available. Tony and Jane described what they hoped to be able to do.

Maud said “I’m glad you’re thinking ahead, Tony. Well, both you and Mrs. Harper. Do you think sharing a residence will suit both of you?”

Tony realized that Maud wondered if Jane was considering Tony as a potential husband. Oops. He said “Mrs. Harper – Jane – is aware of my background and birth.”

Maud said “Oh. I was ... er ...”

Jane laughed, and said “Understandable. However, I can assure you that, having been married, and to a kind but much older man, I plan to remain single, though Tony and I do seem to find each other’s company agreeable, which I sincerely hope will continue. Moreover, we are each able to discuss business with someone who shares that interest also.”

Now that the ice was broken, so to speak, the conversation devolved to description of the Mortimer household. Jane said she would like sometime to meet the children, as Tony had talked about them. She also was interested to hear how Yolanda was translating fashion articles for the ladies who ran or worked with the *Brighton Ladies Emporium*.

“I wonder if that institution would consider making me some clothing. I find the wide skirts and flounces terribly unsuitable for my nursing work. Indeed, if I get my agency well-established, it could be that we would like to have our nurses dressed in attractive but practical garb.”

Tony added “Jane mentioned that in the Crimea she encountered women who worked as cantinières and wore uniforms that were a form of skirt over trousers.”

Maud said “Sometimes I envy Tony. Trousers’d be ever so useful when doing some of the more physical jobs. But I’ll bet a fair few shillings society will make an awful fuss.”

Henry said “I think it will come. But there are many prejudices, as Tony is only too aware.”

On Friday, February 10, 1860, the post brought Rachel Goldman a letter in Yiddish from a young woman named Raisa Schulman. The content explained that there had been another pogrom in Odessa – though some reports characterized it as a riot by Greek seamen – at Easter of 1859. She did not explain how she got to England, but said she had worked as a kitchen maid and sought similar employment, preferably in a Yiddish-speaking house, as her English was, as yet, poor. If there was an opportunity, she asked for an early response, since her current situation was tenuous.

Fridays, Goldmans had evolved a routine where Ian would be allowed to eat at a local tavern, for which he was given a modest allowance. This let Rachel and Joshua revive Shabbat on Friday evening. This particular evening, Rachel asked Joshua what he thought of the strange letter from a young woman from Odessa whose story paralleled their own. Together they decided to offer her three months trial and wrote back immediately. Raisa was met by Rachel at the Station the next Thursday.

By the end of the month, Raisa's more complete history was learned. She was 23 years old, and her parents had died some years before. With no dowry, she had taken work as a kitchen maid for a Ukrainian grain merchant. This merchant was a pragmatist who recognized that business was best when people treated their religion and ethnicity as private, but he felt that a young Jewish woman without family would be vulnerable in the atmosphere following the violence at Easter of 1859. He had been approached by a quite wealthy but elderly Jewish lady to arrange discreet passage on a grain ship to Smyrna, then onward to Marseilles, where she had distant family. Her reasons for travel were also to escape potential violence.

The merchant suggested that the lady should have a companion, and suggested Raisa who was Jewish and spoke Yiddish.

Thus Raisa had travelled as far as Marseilles, where she arrived in early October, 1859. For a few weeks, she served in the house of the lady's cousin as a kitchen maid, but it was soon clear that she was superfluous to needs and, moreover, had almost no French. Oddly, she did have a little English, the source of which was never quite determined by any of our Brighton friends.

The lady from Odessa also was unable to communicate in French, though Raisa did acquire some minimal capability. By December, via an exchange of letters with an old friend who was now living in London, the lady decided to move there and managed to find a steamship that was transiting from Bombay to Southampton. It had, of course, to cross the Bay of Biscay, and in early January. Almost everyone on board was very seasick. Raisa and one of the cabin stewards were among the few who were not incapacitated by nausea and vomiting.

Raisa and the steward fell into conversation. He was not Jewish, but had picked up a usable facility in Yiddish on the streets of London's East End. Raisa's English was of a similar level to his Yiddish. Through a confused melange of these and some other bits of language, Raisa learned something of England.

Having been *de trop* in the Marseilles household, she asked her new friend if he had any ideas where she might find Yiddish-speaking households where she could work as a cook or maid. The steward laughed, and said that he had been a youngster in London, so never really knew the names or addresses. In fact, he didn't have the address of a single Yiddish-speaking household in England. No, that wasn't quite correct. He had gone to Brighton with a "friend" and they had spent more than intended, and he had needed to pawn his pocket watch. When he got to England, he planned to return to the pawn shop to redeem it. Moreover, he recalled that the pawnbroker appeared to be Jewish, and he used his Yiddish to get a better contract than he might otherwise.

Look, here was the ticket. There was an address and name, and Raisa wrote it down. When she and the lady got to London, her premonition was realized and she was not really needed. Still, they did not throw her out right away. There was enough time to write to Madame Goldman, since she felt that would be the name of the mistress of the house.

After Raisa's story was learned, Joshua said that he had redeemed a pocket watch from a Londoner about a fortnight before, and he recalled the man was able to speak Yiddish.

* * *

While there were many hopes of a quick resolution to other processes set in motion in December of 1859, it was not until March of 1860 that the termini of some of them was reached.

Indeed, it was March 14, a Wednesday, when Brougham and the Goldmans met at 52 Henry Street to conduct an inspection of the work undertaken on that house.

"We managed to avoid any great inconvenience in running the gas, thanks to Mrs. Goldman," Brougham said. "My foreman said she had a fine eye for alternative placement of lights which let the men run the pipes more easily, and, I might add, saved many hours of work, so I can't charge you as much." He chuckled. "However, since you're payin' me by the work, I really can't complain, and it is the bane of our lives to do some work, then have the customer say things are in the wrong place, even if they are where the drawings prescribe."

Rachel said “Your men were, once the foreman and I realized we could work toward the same ends, most helpful. They are a bit rough on the edges, but good workers.”

“And I know it, Mrs. Goldman. Not easy to find men who can be trusted not to do the least possible and try to get the extra pennies for themselves.”

“Mr. Brougham,” Joshua said, “It seems that the work is all in order. Do you have your invoice with you?”

“Indeed, it is here. And the document I was using as the guide to our inspection.”

Joshua looked at the invoice Brougham handed him. “I see £94 13s 7d. Is that the final total?”

“It is. Will you submit a cheque to my office within the fortnight?”

“Actually, if you are agreeable, I will pay you now in cash.”

“My goodness, Mr. Goldman. I did not expect that, but am most agreeable. It means no waiting for payment. But I may have difficulty giving change.”

“In what will be the kitchen there is a table. I took the opportunity to put a pen and ink there. If you will give me a receipt for £95, with an undertaking to use the 6 shillings and 5 pence to buy your men some ale or other beverage, or similar recognition of appreciation, I will give you 19 notes of £5 denomination. We anticipated that the bill would be close to £100.”

“Certainly. The men will appreciate that. It will no doubt get you some useful reputation of a client worth working for, though in fact you and the Cohens are already regarded so.”

* * *

The completion of work on 52 Henry Street was a fortnight after the shelter for Phoenix was finished at 23 Fortescue Road, though *finished* only meant that the structure was fit for purpose. The brick walls would, in any event, have their natural colour. However, there were windows surmounting the rear wall to the level of the corrugated iron roof, a roof which sloped forward into the yard. The frames of these windows were simply sealed with linseed oil, as were the doors and panels that made up the front. Cassandra did, it should be noted, insist that the roof have guttering at the front so that one could enter or leave the structure without getting deluged.

In that first fortnight of March, Phoenix had been harnessed to the cart to move it from Goldmans’ to Fortescue Road. The pony was walked back and the process repeated the following day with the gig. These vehicles had been loaded with Phoenix’ feed, hay and tack, and after the gig arrived, Phoenix did not go back to her old stable. For the first couple of days the

animal was a little skittish and unsettled, but James McDowell and Rose Sinclair made a fuss of her, and she soon settled in.

* * *

On the morning of March 15, Rachel took Raisa to 52 Henry Street to start a top to bottom cleaning. Both understood the importance of doing so before they moved in, which Rachel wanted to do well before Passover, which would start April 7.

Raisa found it odd that Rachel put on an apron, and scrubbed, dusted, and polished alongside her. In Yiddish, Rachel said “I’ve not ever got used to servants. I like having people to do work for me, but I don’t think I can stand and watch and tell people that they’re doing things wrongly or rightly.”

“Your husband said something about escaping the earlier pogrom by the Greeks.”

“I shall tell you about it. But then we will never mention that again. And I will tell you only because you have experienced something similar.”

“So there is no false sympathy, I did not suffer any violence and threats directly. It was certainly visited on many others, but somehow where I was the sailors and the local Greeks did not come. My employer – not Jewish but Ukranian – said he thought things might get bad, and he recommended me as a companion to the old lady who was leaving for Marselles, then London.”

Rachel laughed. “Now I’m ready to tell you, I’d better do so.”

* * *

On the afternoon of his birthday, Tony had an appointment with Henry for the cessation of the trusteeship associated with his inheritance. Henry had asked that he bring with him two persons who could witness his signature, and Joseph Upton came with him, while Cassandra met them at the door of the house and office. Jerome Dwyer was present when Tony arrived at 4 o’clock, having finished his rounds earlier than usual, then dressed in his best suit before walking to Chorley Terrace.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Brown,” Dwyer said, shaking hands. Joseph and Cassandra were introduced and shook hands with Dwyer also. Joseph shook hands with Henry without words, but the crowded office meant Cassandra did not.

“It’s a big day, Tony,” Henry said. “Why do we not do the signing of the appropriate documents that terminate the trusteeship of Mr. Dwyer and

myself, then toast your health, though I'm sure the party planned for Sunday will eclipse our little ceremony here."

There were several documents that were essentially statements that Antonia Crown, generally known as Tony Brown, had attained the age of 21 and therefore was in receipt of all the assets of the inheritance due Antonia from Samuel Crown and Ezekiel Crown. Tony also signed an agreement with Henry to make the latter his agent. Thus no actual monies were given to Tony, just copies of the statement of the assets that would still be held in trust by Henry and the termination and agency agreement documents.

Henry invited the people in his office to retire to the parlour, where Maud was waiting with some glasses and a decanter of sherry. There was a toast to Tony's health and success, but all present had various tasks to attend to, so it was a short celebration.

Tony had a lot of people who wanted to offer good wishes. To gather all these well-wishers together would require a large assembly room. Thus the recognition of Tony's 21st birthday took place piecemeal. We have already noted the toast in the parlour of Chorley Terrace.

The Uptons took note of Tony's birthday that same evening when the pudding was replaced with a fruit cake. Moreover, the post in the handful of days surrounding the Ides of March contained birthday greetings from most of the personages mentioned in this narrative who were alive at the time. A number of these consisted of the quite new commercially printed birthday cards.

While Tony was appreciative of the sentiments expressed, at the time there was so much to occupy his thoughts, which were very much on the future, that he only became fully aware how large had been the flood of goodwill some months later. After the flurry of activity in January, not much had happened. Or not much had seemed to happen. Indeed, on Sunday March 18, Jane took Tony to mid-day dinner at the Old Ship. Both found the meal a pleasure.

With regard to Lane Meadow, the Land Agent of the estate had taken a fortnight to find the deeds, then a week to get them to the Manor solicitor for an opinion as to whether they gave an adequate description of the property to serve for conveyancing. The solicitor had a bad cold that turned to bronchitis and missed twelve working days, then forgot that a reply was needed until reminded at the beginning of the second week of March. That reminder came only on a query by Arbuthnot to the Manor asking if his letter had been received.

The reply from the Manor came on the 15th of March late in the day, but it was the Monday following that Jane was able to meet with Arbuthnot. The deeds appeared to provide an adequate description of the property, since there was a rather primitive but seemingly accurate sketch of the ditch at the

rear of the property, which actually separated it from some woods that were also part of the estate. There was no question of straightening the ditch, which would mean felling some trees, though there was one place where a large beech had blown down some decades before, damaging the ditch walls. The Manor indicated that they would repair the ditch at that location, as well as clean out any debris in the watercourse. Tony wondered if it would be necessary to verify that the repair didn't move the boundary.

There was no mention in the note to the effect that the amount proposed by Jane was acceptable. It turned out, when they managed to meet Arbuthnot on the Spring equinox, that the Manor was proposing a price of £125.

Tony said "That seems to me to be a bit high for the state of the property."

"I agree. Mr. Arbuthnot, let us counter with £110.

I believe that is as far as I should reach at the moment."

* * *

On March 22, a week after his birthday, Tony arranged that he could meet Henry Mortimer at one o'clock between his regular rounds and some movements of refurbished items from Saultons' to Uptons'.

"Tony, I'm glad to see you. I presume we should review your holdings and possibly consider new directions."

"I think the main item should be to consider the sale of Ezekiel's house."

"Our meeting is well-timed. I received a letter two days ago from the current tenant indicating that they will not be renewing the tenancy, which ends at the end of April."

"That does not give us a lot of time."

"No. I believe we should put it up for sale immediately, with possession once the tenant is removed."

"Will there be any improvements or repairs needed?"

"That is the nuisance. We really cannot get in to do any work until the tenant is gone – it is the family of a London merchant who has decided to have a house in Surrey from which he can take the train to his place of business directly."

"Would we be better to wait to put the house on the market so we can do any needed work?"

"That is the question, Tony. On the one hand, we may find a buyer now at a price that, if we consider the cost of repairs and waiting, is nevertheless attractive. On the other, an improved house could get a much better price."

"We can, can we not, refuse a low price?"

“Of course. So it may be worth trying now, but be prepared to take it off the market for a few weeks once the tenant is gone and have the place improved and hopefully made more attractive. Though I must say it compares well with its companions on the street. They are much the same. And, as you know, we have ensured regular maintenance.”

“Then let us ask Arbuthnot to try to find a buyer. What should we ask?”

“I have been watching and I think £395. It is a bit high, but those houses are quite large and they have the lower area for the kitchen and scullery, much as at Fortescue Road. There is also an attic – it is not currently used, but I verified that it is accessible through a trap door. Apparently putting in a set of stairs would not be overly difficult. It has a proper floor, though no skylight at the moment, and no windows.”

“Can we ask – or even demand – that the tenant allow us to clean the attic and place a ladder so that prospective buyers may inspect the attic? I have a feeling that it may be attractive to some buyers.”

“I agree. The law is not entirely clear on the rights of owners to allow inspection, but I will write today to the tenant and request their cooperation.

Tony. Would you be willing to offer cartage of their possessions to the Railway Station as an incentive for such cooperation? For example, three hours of a donkey, cart and two men on or before the last day of the tenancy? I would insist on conditions.”

“If it gets us the cooperation, then certainly.”

* * *

At almost the same time that Tony and Henry were discussing Ezekiel’s house, Mr. Hackman, the pawnbroker, came into Goldmans’ shop.

“Mr. Hackman, good afternoon. It is a while since we talked.”

“Yes, Mr. Goldman. I am afraid that my brother, with whom I arranged a sort of apprenticeship for my son since both my brother and I have pawnshops, intercepted my letter to my son. It was only when my wife received a letter from our son complaining he had not heard from me, and also that my brother Arthur reduced his wage for some expenses, possibly fictitious, that I realized he had not heard that we might expand the business here and I would take him into partnership with me.”

“Family discord is always distressing, Mr. Hackman. You have my sympathy.”

“Thank you, Mr. Goldman. In any event, my wife went to Basingstoke and set the cat among the pigeons, and my son is now back with us. In fact,

he is at the counter today in my shop. But I came to find out if your business is still for sale.”

“It is, Mr. Hackman. It is my intention to retire, at least from the pawnbroker business, and I have acquired a house near the Aldrington Station which is now ready for occupancy. We have also been working on a valuation of the pledges and sale items. I have had a Mr. Black, the bookkeeper, helping, and I am happy if a prospective buyer talks to him.”

“I have not used his services, but a shopkeeper two doors down from me had him help with stocktaking and spoke highly of him.”

“I’m pleased,” Joshua chuckled. “A poor report of him might sink the potential sale.”

“Indeed, Mr. Goldman. Now I wanted to talk to you about possible terms for a purchase. I presume that we need to decide a fair value for the existing pledges and ensure they are properly documented since they will be taken over.”

“That was the main purpose in hiring Mr. Black. We have a log of the items pledged, the amount loaned and the amount to be paid to redeem. Those are ordered by the date of the loan, and indeed shelved in similar order, except segregated by size.”

“Am I correct in thinking that for such pledges, the value would be no less than the loan amount, but likely a bit less than the redemption fee?”

“I regard the value in a similar fashion.”

“And with the items from expired pledges or directly purchased for resale, the purchaser presumably must estimate what they may sell for and bid accordingly?”

“Yes. Though we have been reviewing what we have and applying values. We have been in business a long time, so some items are worth more and others, sadly, much less than I imagined.”

Both men laughed. Sliding values were a menace of their trade.

Goldman continued “I don’t mind sharing my list with you, though in some cases the items are lumped into group lots. There is, as always, quite a lot of dross, but even that will sell well on occasion.”

“Indeed, Mr. Goldman. Sometimes one is left to wonder what people find in some of the items that go out the door for much more than one expected.

The last element of purchase is the goodwill of your business, which is mostly the referral of customers to Hackman’s. We are not so far away, but some folk will not walk far.”

“I agree. There are discussions about the sale of this property. I know the prospective buyer quite well, and could make it a condition that there be a sign directing pawnshop customers to you. That would, in any event,

be needed for the active pledges, at least for the first year until they all have expired.”

“Then that leaves just one question, Mr. Goldman, before I talk with my son, with whom I have undertaken to share decisions so he becomes a true partner. Would you be willing to consider taking back a loan against the pledges and sale items? Our liquid capital is not huge, you understand.”

“I think I would be reluctant to cover a large amount, nor for a long period. However, some proportion of the outstanding pledges could be a reasonable way to facilitate the sale.

Might I suggest that we arrange a time when you and your son could review the stock and the log.”

“You know our business as well as I, Mr. Goldman. That would need to be a Sunday.”

“Indeed, Mr. Hackman. Would this coming Sunday be convenient. As you are aware, my wife and I are Jewish, so you may come in the morning if you wish.”

“That will allow us more time, should we need it, though you seem very organized, Mr. Goldman. Indeed, you have been a strong competitor, though the only complaints I have heard seem to be that you are Jewish, not that you deal with them unfairly.”

“It is a source of sadness that people are intolerant. And not just of Jews. The Catholics have also been disparaged for their religion.

Customers have also said you treat them fairly. At least, that is the meaning underneath their words. The people using our services are rarely terribly well-disposed to us, though it is mostly their own situation they decry.”

“True. True. But I must away. Unless you hear from me otherwise, you may expect my son and me at ten o’clock on Sunday.”

* * *

Joshua got on well with Ebenezer Hackman and his son, Stephen.

“This is well-organized, Mr. Goldman,” Stephen said.

“It is now. Preparing to sell the business forced us to be more disciplined and to do some review of the stock.”

After a couple of hours, Hackman said “We – and I include Stephen – decided that we want to buy your business some time ago, but needed to verify the value. So what remains is to settle the price and how much you are willing to take back as a loan.”

Joshua said “Why don’t we each try writing down a figure for each of the three components we’ve discussed, first the pledges, which I suggest be

as a percentage of the redemption fee, second, the sales items, and third, the good-will. Then add a figure you think you would need to borrow, or I willing to lend. I will go up to the parlour so you and Stephen can discuss your numbers. Ring that little bell when you are ready.”

Some ten minutes later, the bell rang and Joshua descended to the shop. He went to the counter and placed a sheet of paper on it with three numbers.

1. 90%
2. £ 300
3. £ 25

Loan: 20 % of total price at 10 % for 1 year

Hackman looked uncomfortable.

“Is there a problem, Mr. Hackman?”

“Just that some of our numbers are the same or higher than yours. But I suppose we should show you.”

1. 85 %
2. £ 325
3. £ 20

Loan: 25 % of total price at 10 %

Joshua said “I am content to accept your figures if the loan period does not exceed a year. Shall we draft a letter of agreement and prepare two copies? I will have my solicitor review it, and presume you will want your solicitor to do the same.”

Hackman mumbled his assent. He had not thought of having a solicitor review the agreement, but could see it would be prudent to do so.

Stephen, who had been almost silent until now, said “Do we not need to agree a process for the transfer? Ideally, it should be done overnight, but I wonder if we can move all the items that quickly.”

His father said “Best done over a weekend, as that gives us two nights. I don’t open Sundays, and as far as I know, nor does Mr. Goldman.”

“That is true,” Joshua agreed. “Moreover, we could agree that the business is transferred one weekend, with the active items moved the next, but the younger Mr. Hackman works here that week – the pledges would be to Hackman and Son. The sale items could then be moved during that week. There are more of them than pledges.”

“That will work for us, Mr. Goldman,” Stephen said, taking a measure of responsibility that would eventually become all his own.

There was another person who overheard these discussions. Ian Hoyle was on his way out, and came through the back room. He was not specifically trying to be quiet, but his shoes had been soiled when he last came into the building, having stepped in some dog mess. Thus he was in his stockinged feet and those in the shop did not hear him.

Goldman had already told him that he was planning to retire, but had said that he should not be anxious about his employment. However, the arrival of Raisa did argue that he might not be needed. He decided that he had better talk to Mr. Goldman as soon as possible, but did not wish to have it thought he was eavesdropping, so he took his shoes outside to clean them, stepping into some clogs that lived by the back door and that were there for such a purpose.

Ian went in the stable to get a stick and a brush for his shoes, and realized there was some dubbin there, so he also applied some of that to his shoes. His father would be pleased to see his shoes well-treated. Ian was going to have dinner with his family, and would take the train to Lewes and back. He wondered if he had time to try to talk to Goldman before he had to leave for the station.

As he came back into the rear of the shop, Goldman was coming from the front, having said farewell to the Hackmans.

“Mr. Goldman, I wonder if I might have a word about my employment?”

“Certainly, Mr. Hoyle. I have no doubt you are wondering how things might evolve for you, given that the pawn brokerage is, if the discussions just concluded are successful, being sold. However, the building will be sold separately.”

“With Miss Raisa now working for you, I see less need for my work, Mr. Goldman.”

“That is true, Mr. Hoyle. But you are a good worker. You could have more initiative, but you do better than most, and my intent is to find you decent employment with my associates. I strongly suspect that *Best Bonnet* will need someone. There is also the *Fortescue Factory*, as well as some other activities.

However, perhaps you have other wishes.”

“At the moment, I have no other plans.

Would it be ... er ... regarded poorly were I to enquire about other jobs?”

“No. That would show initiative. And I will be happy to discuss opportunities with you should you find any you wish to pursue. I do not hold with putting obstacles in the way of others, as long as they are not acting against me.”

“Thank you. Mr. Goldman. Oh. I hear the clock chime. I must go to catch a train to have dinner with my family in Lewes.”

“Then a very good day to you, Mr. Hoyle. Do not hesitate to talk to me of your wishes and plans. Your advancement will please me.”

* * *

Easter intervened in the multiple transactions and they were, for some number of days left up in the air, rather as if a juggler was presenting his most exciting trick and the image was frozen by one of the cameras with a very fast shutter that had been developed since the time of the Great Exhibition. The progress of the various sales and purchases was not, of course, stopped or frozen, just set to one side for a few days. However, Easter turned out to be the main day of decision regarding Goldmans’ shop.

On Easter Sunday, Tony and Jane went to church together, then walked to the Promenade. They found a small eating room for some lunch.

Jane said “Mr. Arbuthnot said we should not read any message in the delay, as he believes it is simply a matter that people are distracted by the holidays. By the way, I had a letter from my husband’s solicitor – I suppose he considers himself my solicitor now, though Mr Mortimer is here – and he will provide a cheque to Mr. Mortimer so that there are funds I may use for the purchase of Lane Meadow if our offer is accepted.

Assuming I stay in Brighton, I will have to talk to Mr. Mortimer about transferring all my assets from Mr. Stourbridge.”

“In a similar way, I think the Goldmans are distracted by Easter. I encountered Ian Hoyle who works for Mr. Goldman. He said the Goldmans were anxious to move to Henry Street before what they call Passover, which occurs at the same time as Easter.”

“At least it does this year,” Jane said. “I don’t really understand how it works, but apparently there is some difference how the Hebrew and regular calendars interpret the full moon coinciding with the Spring equinox – that’s when the day and night are exactly equal in duration.”

Tony said “I read somewhere that the regular calendar is actually due to Pope Gregory, and that we didn’t adopt it until 1752 or something like that, which is almost two centuries after it was devised.”

“Yes, sometime in 1752, ten days disappeared from the year. Before that we were using a calendar that they apparently still use in Greece and Russia.”

Tony said “Anyway, I find myself ... unsettled ... by the delays. However, Mr. Goldman has asked me to come to the shop this afternoon. Will you join me?”

“Most certainly. It is my hope that we can make it our home and our place of business.

When Mr. Hoyle talked to you, did he say if Goldman is keeping him on?” Jane added.

“Yes. He asked if *Best Bonnet* were needing anyone. I told him that would depend on whether I was able to buy the Goldmans’ property, but also that in such a case, I would be interested in having him as part of our staff. He appears to be a good worker, and is large enough that he would give us a measure of security.”

Jane said “If we do hire him, I would prefer he be accommodated so you and I, and probably Bobby as well, have ... er ... some privacy.”

“You mean so Bobby and I do not need to always present in a male form?” Tony asked.

“Precisely. We will want to think carefully on how we organize the space.”

* * *

Tony and Jane went to the rear door of the shop and house and knocked, and Joshua answered it quickly.

“Good afternoon Mr. Brown. Mrs. Harper. Come in, come in.

I assume we are all here to discuss whether you want to buy this property, so perhaps the first step is for you to inspect the stable now that it is clear. When you came to look at the end of 1859, it still had some things in it.”

Jane said “Thank you, Mr. Goldman. It will be Mr. Brown who would be the purchaser, but if that is successful, then I will be a tenant for both business and residential purposes, so I have a keen interest in the condition and arrangement of the property.”

Inside the stable, Joshua lit a lamp so Tony could examine the upper level. All was in order, but he queried “I understand your cart is now stored at Fortescue Road, Mr. Goldman.”

“Yes. I offered it to Mrs. Sinclair for 30 shillings and she accepted that offer. It is sound, but not very attractive.”

Tony actually knew this already, as he had received a note from Rose Sinclair asking if the same arrangements for use of the cart by *Best Bonnet* could continue under her ownership. Indeed, she was eager that Phoenix were employed steadily, though not, of course, to excess.

“I’ll lock up the stable, even though there’s precious little inside at the moment,” Joshua said. From his experience with robbers at Saultons’, Tony understood the reasons. However, he asked “Are there any cats to keep vermin down?”

“My wife is fond of an old mother cat, and she is now with us on Henry Street. The others here were semi-wild, and seem to have decamped since we stopped putting out a saucer of milk for them. There is a small hole for cats to come and go if you look to one side over there. It has a small door hanging from strings. ”

They returned to the main building and ascended to the kitchen.

“Will you take tea,” Joshua offered. There was a kettle steaming on the stove.

“Please,” Tony said, and Jane nodded.

Once the tea was steeping, Tony said “I think my main concern is to know your price for the property, Mr. Goldman.”

“You are in business, Mr. Brown. One must know prices.

To answer you, I have looked about to try to find sales of similar properties. In talking to Mr. Cohen, I learned that several years ago, the Ladies Emporium, which is somewhat similar in access but no outbuilding, but with a superior apartment by reputation, went for £475. This house is less well-appointed, but more space and with a good outbuilding. I am of the opinion that to a stranger I would ask £550, but between us we can arrange the transaction to our mutual convenience, so I thought a round £500.”

“From my own investigations, that seems a reasonable approximation to current values, but I would like to talk with Mrs. Harper before I say anything one way or the other.”

Joshua said “Would you like, say, several days to think on it?”

Jane said “I believe we need some minutes to ensure we are settled in our own minds what we want to do, Mr. Goldman. Perhaps we should go for a walk and return shortly.”

“Or if you prefer, stay and drink your tea while I continue organizing some of the sale goods for the transfer of the pawnbroker business to the Hackmans. I will be out of hearing unless you almost shout.

Oh. I forgot that my wife insisted I bring a box of some Passover almond biscuits. Here they are. Do have one or two.”

“Thank you, Mr. Goldman.”

Goldman disappeared to the shop.

Tony said “From what we have discussed, the price is about where we expected. But should I offer less, given that there is no water closet?”

“My feeling is that the property has, as Goldman has suggested, the space of which few others are disposed. We will have to spend quite a time looking, then hope to find something suitable, and, moreover, find such a property at a lower price.”

“That is true.”

“So would you be prepared to go ahead at £500?” Jane asked.

“I think I will ask Mr. Goldman for a loan of up to £350 at 5 % until I sell Ezekiel’s house or one year, whichever is shorter. I would rather avoid cashing in all my other resources.”

“That does make sense. We had better find out if Mr. Goldman is agreeable to that.”

“We are asking £395 for Ezekiel’s house. I got the attic cleaned and agreement to allow inspections by prospective buyers while the tenants were still in residence in exchange for helping them transport their baggage to the Station on April 30. Unfortunately, we only had one party come to look before the tenant left. And since then just one other. I may have to do some painting and improvements.”

Joshua was agreeable to the loan. It was, after all, secured by the property, so the loan would be a form of mortgage, though that word was still quite new. As Easter Monday was a holiday for some, Henry Mortimer did not see the agreement Tony and Joshua had drafted until Tuesday. Nor did Mr. Cavendish, a solicitor that Joshua, and indeed Cassandra, had used on prior occasions before Henry had opened his practice.

* * *

When Tony came in from stabling Moonbeam on Tuesday, April 10, 1860, Bobby said “There’s a message from Mr. Arbuthnot. ’e says ’e’ll be in ’is office until six o’clock, otherwise you’re to go to ’is ’ouse.”

Tony postponed an attempt to encourage a more pronounced use of the letter H, and went out immediately. He managed to catch Arbuthnot at his office as a nearby clock struck the hour.

“Ah. Mr. Brown. It is good that you managed to get here before I left. There has been an offer on your great-uncle’s house.”

“Is it reasonable?”

“I believe it to be a trifle low. They are offering £325, and would like possession as soon as possible. I believe the prospective purchaser wants to add some form of window or skylight to allow the attic to be used for bedrooms, though I have not discovered whether there is a large family, servants, or an intent to open a boarding house. However, it is clear that time is of the essence.”

“The purchaser is local, then?” Tony asked.

“I cannot be certain, but the agent who represents them seems to be able to communicate with them very quickly.”

“Shall I propose a higher figure?”

“That would be my suggestion. Have you a figure in mind?”

“£360.”

“I will communicate that right away. Oh. My assistant has gone home.”

“I can deliver your letter to the other agent this evening. Or if you like, have one of my *Best Bonnet* people do so.”

“You probably don’t need to worry, as he’ll have gone home for the day. Just put the letter through the slot. Or we could post it. It will be delivered by mid-day.”

After Tony learned that the other agent, a Mr. Hurst, had his office not far out of the way from Tony’s walk home, it was decided that he would take it.

* * *

The next day, April 11, Tony stopped at Arbuthnot’s office as he and Moonbeam were on their way back to Uptons’. He tied Moonbeam to a lamppost and had Jolly sit beside the donkey.

“I saw you arrive outside, Mr. Brown, and can inform you we now have an offer at £345.”

“What is the suggested date on which the conveyancing will take place?”

“As soon as can be arranged, as I understand.”

“Then I propose to accept the offer. How do we proceed?”

“We make two copies of the agreement and you sign them and I witness the documents, and we send them to the purchaser, who will also sign, keep one and send us the other. Then the solicitors arrange the exchange of deed and keys for the money, after which the solicitors sort out the disbursements such as agents’ and solicitors’ fees, adjustment of the rates and gas and water charges, and anything else that is outstanding.”

* * *

Arbuthnot sent Jane a note at the house of her client to say that the offer of £110 was acceptable if the sale could be concluded at the end of May to give the Estate workers time to fix the rear ditch. In that there was so much else going on, Jane was happy to oblige, but told Arbuthnot that she would consult Henry Mortimer to make her response.

Jane walked to Chorley Terrace to deliver a note asking to see Henry that very night. However, as she pushed the note through the door, Henry opened it, having heard her from his desk where he was working.

“Mrs. Harper. Can I help you?”

“I was leaving a note to ask if I could see you tomorrow. Preston Estate has indicated that they are willing to accept my offer, but that they want

until the end of May to repair the ditch that serves as the rear boundary. I thought that I should ask for your advice in wording my acceptance.”

“Let us save you a visit tomorrow and attend to the matter now. Come in, come in.

Yolanda! Can we have some tea for Mrs. Harper?”

Henry asked a few questions and satisfied himself that he understood what had transpired between Arbuthnot and the Estate.

Yolanda brought tea and biscuits, and after having one of the biscuits a couple of sips of tea, Henry said “I think you can accept the condition providing you have a right to approve the repair once it has been done.

If you don’t have a choice to accept the repair, they could move the ditch, thereby changing the size of the property. I will write down your acceptance of the offer and put in an appropriate wording which asks that you be informed when the repair is complete. Furthermore, that you are prepared to have the sale completed as soon as you have accepted the repair. That will allow an earlier conveyancing if the Estate gets the job done sooner.”

Henry made two copies of the acceptance, and Jane signed both, but Henry put one in a file he created for her.

“I’ll get Martin to deliver the other to Mr. Arbuthnot early in the morning. Now I hope that you will be all right getting back to your residence, as it has become almost dark.”

* * *

Tony interrupted his routine on the morning of Monday, April 16 to pass by Goldmans’ shop. Stephen Hackman was behind the counter. Tony introduced himself.

“Pleased to finally get to talk to you Mr. Brown. I see you out and about with the *Best Bonnet* cart. Our business has all been transported by our customers, so to speak, but I may have some business for you, and people seem to like to deal with you.”

Tony answered “I’m actually here to talk to Mr. Goldman about a detail in my acquiring this premises for *Best Bonnet* and my *News and More*. Is he about? After I talk with him, I’ll be happy to discuss your needs.”

“I didn’t know the newsagents was you. Well done, Mr. Brown.

Yes. Mr. Goldman has been bringing the sale goods down. In fact, I hear him in the back now.”

Tony went into the rear room. “Hello, Mr. Goldman. I came by because I have some news. Can I have a few minutes of your time?”

Joshua understood that Tony would not want to talk within hearing of Stephen Hackman. “Come upstairs. I can talk and listen while gathering these goods to bring down.”

“I came to let you know we have agreed a sale of Ezekiel’s house, but it will not be conveyed until after we settle this property.”

“So you will need the loan for a short period, I take it?”

“Yes. But I thought you should know that it will likely be no more than a month.”

Joshua said “Interest can be apportioned at the terms we agreed.”

“Also, I talked with Mr. Hoyle, and unless he has found new employment, I will aim to keep him on with *Best Bonnet*.”

“He did mention that to me. Indeed, it almost slipped my mind that we are not moving his cot and other minor furnishings, nor the blankets and bed-linen he uses, not that they are of great value.”

“The value to me is that I will not have to arrange to find some for him. However, Mrs. Harper and I will probably reorganize the room behind the shop and have him sleep there. Also put in a water-closet there to save the trip outside.”

“That probably is sensible. Mr. Hoyle was hired to provide some measure of security, and the back room is likely the best place from which to execute such a mission, which hopefully he will never need to do.

In any event, I plan to spend next Monday with my wife and Mr. Hoyle going over the property and making sure all is clear. Thus I believe next Wednesday will be the day when the property is conveyed to your possession.”

“I will send Henry – Mr. Mortimer – a note, and ask him, of course, to inform me if the sale of Ezekiel’s house does not transpire as planned.

Now, Mr. Hackman wanted to talk to me about something. I’ll say goodbye, Mr. Goldman.”

“I think he likely needs your cart and Moonbeam to move the sale items, but they’ll want to do that of an evening after closing time. But goodbye for now, Mr. Brown.”

Stephen Hackman wanted precisely what Joshua suggested, and Tony agreed to a late movement of boxes on the evening of Thursday, April 19, with the possibility of another trip on the Friday night if needed. Because of the hours, the rate would be higher.

* * *

On the 25th, Tony worked with Moonbeam only until two o’clock. Then he went to Chorley Terrace, where, at half-past two, Henry arrived at the same time as Tony and handed him the keys for Goldmans’.

“It won’t be locked, as Mr. Hoyle is there. However, the keys are rather symbolic.

I’ll have the reckoning and the deeds ready for you on Saturday. Maud says that you should come for dinner and Martin’s 12th birthday.”

“I’ll be there. Thank you Henry.”

Tony returned from Chorley Terrace to *News and More* and suggested Bobby might like to come and see the newly acquired property. The suggestion was accepted with alacrity, and the two of them went the short distance to Goldmans’.

Ian Hoyle was there, in the shop. This had been pre-arranged. Ian was reviewing some of Valerie’s logs for *Best Bonnet* to become familiar with the workings. After a conversation a few days before, Tony had asked if he thought he could manage the bookings for *Best Bonnet*. Ideally, this would be in collaboration with Bobby for those times when Ian’s size was needed for particular jobs. As with Bobby, Ian would need to become familiar with the donkeys so he could take on tasks with them should others be unavailable.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Hoyle. I believe you know Bobby.

I have just come from Mr. Mortimer who has given me the keys. Can you and Bobby work together to attach a label to each one? If some are for interior doors, I suggest we ink a discreet number beside the keyhole. But use a small brush rather than a pen to do that. I believe a pen will not write well on a vertical surface, particularly a varnished one.”

“Are we each gonna have a door key, Mr. Brown?” Bobby asked. “You know. Like at *News and More*.”

“Yes. We need to have one for me, one for you, one for Mr. Hoyle, one for Jack Dixon, and one for Mrs Harper. Plus, I think, one spare one that we will put on a hook in a cupboard in the kitchen in case of emergency.”

“Do you want those for the back or front door, Mr. Brown?” Ian asked.

“Ah. They aren’t the same. Then just label the ones we have and I will try to get a locksmith to change one of the two locks so we can use a single key for either.”

“Good idea,” Bobby agreed.

Tony said “We’ve dealt with Mr. Cranmer in the past. I want to talk to him anyway about a strongbox that will resist fire. If we have several businesses here, there will be money but, more critically, documents that we want to keep safe from harm.”

Bobby said “You told me to remind you that we need to discuss eatin’ Mr. ’oyle used to get fed by Mrs. Goldman. An’ you and I eat weeknights with Mrs. Upton. Are we gonna’ stay doin’ that?”

“I don’t think so. For the next almost four weeks, Mr. Hoyle will eat with us at Uptons weeknights, or at *News and More* or here on Saturday and

Sunday, depending on how quickly we can get the kitchen here working. I already talked to Mrs. Upton and have arranged the times we eat there.

Bobby. I think you should mostly think of getting this kitchen working sufficiently well that we can sleep here.”

“All right. But what about movin’ the table and chairs? And where will Ian sit. We only ’av two chairs for the table.”

“Good point. Bobby. With Mrs. Harper, there’ll be four of us, and I can envisage that if business is good, we will want another helper. I won’t say ’cook’ or ’maid’, as things never seem to fit into simple categories.”

“Yeah. You call me your ’caretaker’. I like that,” Bobby said.

“If we had a bigger firm, we could have people who just did one thing, but we’re a long way from such an organization. In any event, we’ll talk to Valerie or Mrs. Upton tonight and ask if she has a reasonable table and chairs. I think we should plan on one that will seat 10 if extended. That way we can invite people to dinner.”

“I’ll need ’elp for a dinner that big,” Bobby said.

Tony continued “Mr. Hoyle. My feeling is that you should have a part of the room behind the shop. We’ll have Mr. Soulton suggest how to partition an area for your privacy, with suitable lighting so you can read if you wish. We also have the intent to install a water closet in that room. It will save going outside in the cold.

Having you there will also help to provide some security. I do not expect you to use physical force in doing so, but hope that your height and sturdiness will provide sufficient motivation that miscreants will not bother us.

Now the other thing I want Tom Soulton to do is to help us rearrange the shop so it has at least three counters or places where business may be transacted. There will be one for *Best Bonnet*, one for *News and More*, and one for *Harper’s Nursing*. Mrs. Harper will eventually be residing upstairs as her roster of nurses and clients grows, which we hope it does once she starts to advertise.”

Supper at Uptons’ was not until half-past six, and often could be later. After Joseph came home at around five o’clock, Rebecca and Valerie could not resist the temptation to come and congratulate Tony on buying Goldmans’.

“Mrs. Harper and I have decided to call it *Matilda’s*.”

Seeing puzzlement, Tony said “It was my mother’s name.”

“Of course,” Rebecca said. “I did know that, and it provides a sort of memorial to her.”

Valerie said “Mr. Hoyle. How are you getting along with the *Best Bonnet* logbook?”

“I think I’ve got the measure of it. However, I’ve a few notes and questions I wrote down, but p’haps we can talk about that later.”

Rebecca said “Tony – I suppose I should start using Mr. Brown now, but it’s hard when we’ve known you so long. We should discuss the timing of moving the donkeys and other transitions.”

“Definitely. But let us do it at your shop. I want to see if you have a table and chairs that would suit here. My room at *News and More* has just two chairs.”

Rebecca laughed. “Yes. A little small for a dinner party. But before we go across, show me where you plan to put the table.”

* * *

The first floor of *Matilda’s* had a good-sized kitchen and a parlour. One more storey had four rooms, one quite large – the full width of the shop but not terribly deep, which would be the master bedroom – with a corridor proceeding toward the rear from the staircase landing, having one room on the side where the stairs descended, and two on the other side where there was a passageway towards the rear with a window overlooking the yard. That could be useful if one heard a disturbance.

Rebecca was curious, so Tony showed her the whole house. She paced out the kitchen and parlour and they wrote down the approximate dimensions. In his room at the shop, Tony actually had the dimensions, but Rebecca wanted to have an idea now so they could check the stock of items for furniture that might fit.

“You can try some out if you like, Tony. If they don’t suit, we’ll put them back in stock.”

“Thanks, Mrs. Upton.”

“As a man of property, better call me Rebecca. And Tony avoids me saying Mr., which I always find a little strange, though you do present well enough.”

“I just noticed there’s a trap door above the landing,” Tony said.

“Attic probably.”

“I’m planning to be here tomorrow afternoon when Brougham and then Tom are coming to see about some improvements. I’ll come and get the stepladder and try to take a look. Might be useful down the road.”

Rebecca said “We might as well go over to my shop and see what there is. We can talk as we poke around.”

The conversation as they looked at several tables that were there, though just one was in the shop due to space, concerned how Uptons’ stable area could be altered to allow for a much larger shop where more of the stock could be displayed. There would still be a need for places to store other items. With furniture the dilemma was that tight storage meant a poor display, while a

good display could not store many pieces. Some compromises would have to be made. However, it looked to be possible that the upper level of the stable could be set up for storage, while the lower part would allow for presentation of items.

“You’ll need to put in a false floor so customers aren’t walking on the cobbles,” Tony said.

“Yes. And I’d like them not to have to get wet in the rain crossing the yard.”

“Let me bring Tom by tomorrow after he’s been at ... my place.”

Rebecca chuckled. “Yes. Tony. It is your place. And possibly Tom can think of a way to provide a covered walkway, possibly like Jeremiah and Dan built for Mrs. Cohen between the houses.”

“It’d be even better if you could cover in a goodly part of the yard and gain more shop space still.”

“As long as it doesn’t bankrupt me!”

“Anyway, I have to get the stable organized at what we’re calling *Matilda’s* so we can move the donkeys as soon as possible. That will let you – and we’ll help as needed of course – reorganize quickly.”

“When do you think you’ll be ready to move them, Tony?”

“I hope within a week. It’s mainly a matter of rearranging the stalls. The donkeys don’t need as much space as horses, but they like to see each other. I’ve even thought of just having a small pen and letting them be together, but I’m a bit unsure if that would be safe for them. In an open field donkeys get along fine. But I’ve no knowledge how they might behave if in a very small space. I’d guess they would be fine, but I’ll try to put in some low partitions.

While I’m thinking about it, let me pay you for feeding the three of us over the next couple of weeks.”

“Thanks.

By the way, I was thinking that after you get settled you may still want to sup with us. Cooking for four is almost as much work as cooking for a dozen, so it could be more efficient, though we’d want to sort out how it would work.”

“All the more reason to have a big table. You’ve probably worked out that Bobby dresses as a boy, but ...”

“Yes. Doesn’t do as well as you. I suspect soon she won’t be able to hide things.”

Tony continued “Well. Bobby’s been doing not too badly with the cooking, so that may be a more suitable role as time goes on. The stove at *Matilda’s* is a decent size, though I’ll watch for a better one.”

“Are you going to want Arthur to move across?”

“Actually, I thought not. First, he works more with the hand cart, which is often enough for the furniture over here in Uptons’. And unless I’m mistaken, he adds to the security. The only issue is whether you want to have him stay in what is now the stable area, especially as there may be changes.”

“There is your old place. It’s small, but we know it can work. But possibly it would be good to have a corner of the new ... er ... showroom occupied at night.”

“True. At least we do seem to have some ideas. Let’s take a closer look at what tables you have.”

* * *

Tom said “I might be able to re-use some of the wood from the horse stalls for lower donkey separators. My biggest problem will be putting pins in the floor to keep the partitions upright at the open end.”

“But it is doable?” Tony asked.

“Oh yes. But we’ll have to pull or cut the old ones and tidy up so the floor is repaired and there’s nothing that will prove a hazard to man or beast.”

Tom asked Tony to help him with some measurements, which were carefully written down. They heard some voices outside. It was Brougham at the back door of the shop. Tony and Tom said hello, and Tony explained, though he had put it in the note to Brougham, that he wanted a water closet in the back room.

“Will you be wanting a sink as well?” Brougham asked.

“For what purpose?” Tony asked.

“Depending on the style of basin, it can be used for washing hands to doing laundry, or filling buckets, or cleaning pots.”

“Where would you put the basin?”

“If the WC is over here,” Brougham said, standing in the corner closest to where the privy was against the wall of the stable, “then the basin can be put against the outer wall of the water closet where it will be easy to plumb the water and the drain.”

Tom said “Putting the WC there would let it use the window to the side of the door for light, though the glass would need to be changed so it lets through light but not allow anyone to look in. And unless I’m wrong, the wall under the window won’t bear load so the drain can be dug without a lot of worry.”

“That was going to be part of my next comment,” Brougham said “The distance is just about right for the WC without using up more floor space than necessary.”

Tom added “I could make some quite lightweight partitions for Mr. Hoyle’s sleeping space that would fit in that corner. We could use the space from the doorway to the shop and the far wall, and then come about eight or nine feet towards the rear, giving space for a small table or dresser and a chair as well as his bed and some hooks for hanging clothes. It should also be possible to put drawers under the bed for storage of personal items. I don’t know about extending the gas so he has light. And maybe low enough or with a frosted glass to let light in from the rear window.”

Brougham said “One of our men can plumb both water and gas. He should be able to go from the gas lamp over there fairly easily as long as you don’t mind the pipe visible. Burying it in the wall can be done too, but it’ll cost you a lot more.”

Tony said “I’d like both of you to proceed with those as soon as possible. Should we chalk the layout on the floor now while the room is empty?”

Brougham said “An excellent idea, Mr. Brown.” He and Tom Soulton helped each other measuring and marking the floor and walls and also taking notes. Tony had, when he asked both of them to come, agreed that payment would be for material costs plus the work time. He would also pay for the time taken to measure, but still wanted an estimate of the total cost before actual work commenced to ensure his resources would be sufficient to have the work completed.

“I’ll send an estimate with a description of the work and materials to be used by next Friday at the latest, Mr. Brown, and hopefully much before,” Brougham said, exiting the yard.

After he had gone, Tony and Tom went up to the second floor with a stepladder and a lantern and looked into the attic.

“It’s fairly clear,” Tom said. “There’s only a couple of diagonal beams that are obstacles, but I think they could be incorporated in walls between rooms if you were to want to expand up here. Some of those rooms would have part of the ceiling slanted, but there’d be space. Or it could be simply floors and walls, with partial walls around the beams, using some light partitions if you were to have children or servants up here, or storage. The biggest task would be to provide stairs without losing too much of the existing space on this second floor.”

“I think doing anything with the attic is unlikely, at least unlikely soon,” Tony said. “The house is quite large, though I can imagine some improvements to make it easier to live in it.”

“That’s what we’re doin’ now, isn’t it?”

“Exactly.”

“By the way, I see you’re moving Hoyle to behind the shop. Am I right that part of that is so you and Mrs. Harper can be more private? I know that Vera and I have to be a bit careful when we take our baths. We like to

be together, but ...er ... ”

“Yes. We’ll probably get you to make some screens for bathing as you did at Fortescue Road, but it will be easier if we don’t need to be quite so careful because there’s a man could come in.”

“I was asking ’cos I can put a bolt on the door at the top of the stairs if you like. I notice it has a keyhole, and maybe a lock, but a bolt is simpler and less trouble if someone has to get out because of a fire or other trouble.”

“Thanks, Tom. Yes. Do that when it’s convenient. Those are the small changes that will help.

By the way, I’m of the opinion that we should think of a new stove for the kitchen. The one there is older and a bit small. And it does have a water chamber, but it has to be filled from a pitcher. We’ll stay for now with the one that’s there, but I’ll welcome ideas for a replacement, probably in a few months when we’re sure business is all right.”

“Talking of the stove reminds me I was going to ask if you’re getting the chimneys swept. Don’t want a chimney fire.”

“Thanks. I had overlooked that. Let me make a note in my book to ask Mr. Goldman when it was done.

Now I told Mrs. Upton I’d bring you across to see if you had ideas on how to modify the yard to keep rain off people and things. They want to use the stable area more like a shop to show off furniture.”

“That could be really useful to us at Soultons’ too. No use fixing up furniture if there’s nowhere to show it and sell it.”

“That’s what I was thinking.”

* * *

On Saturday evening, Tony went to Chorley Terrace for Martin Macdonald’s twelfth birthday celebration. This was actually one day late. Maud had allowed Martin to invite a couple of school friends. It was not a big party, but there was a fruitcake, and after dinner some games.

Tony had seen a quite decent pen-knife a while before in Joshua’s sale items and bought it, knowing it would be useful somehow. On a previous occasion, he had asked Maud if the pen-knife were acceptable as a gift. She had thanked him for asking. Martin was of an age when boys wanted knives but were not always careful enough with them. Martin was, however, a quite serious boy, and he clearly was very pleased with the gift. Angela’s face showed that a similarly thoughtful gift would be needed when her birthday came at the end of October when she would be ten.

While some games were being played, Henry took Tony into the office and showed him the accounting for the purchase of Goldmans’, now *Matilda’s*. As usual, Henry had been meticulous, and all was in order.

“Will you take the documents tonight?” Henry asked.

“I think I will wait until we have a strongbox installed at ... *Matilda's* if you don't mind. And I should spend some time with you in a few weeks to review my fortune with you, especially after the Ezekiel house is sold and we've paid Mr. Goldman back. There will be several expenses, but probably some money will be left over that should be put to use.”

“Yes. Let me know when you are ready.”

* * *

The next couple of months were very occupied for Tony and his associates. Tony found his daily preoccupations precluded musing on whether he wished to live as a man or a woman, or indeed any of the associated questions that had been flying around in his head.

There were plenty of other matters to demand his attention, and while some were necessary and mundane consequences of the sale and purchase of the Ezekiel, Goldman and Lane Meadow properties, others involved questions whose answers could lead to growth in both personal fortune and the wealth or well-being of associates.

There was, of course, the task of moving residence to *Matilda's*. On Sunday, April 29, Tony and Jane walked back from church to the property and Bobby joined them to start deciding where things would go.

Ian Hoyle was just leaving as they arrived, as he was going to visit his family in Lewes. Tony pointed out where the WC and Ian's sleeping quarters would be placed. Upstairs, there was some discussion of how the kitchen would be laid out. A kitchen table and chairs would be needed, with a bigger table than the tiny one in *News and More*.

“Bobby. I want you to put a sheet of paper and a pencil in each room and any time you think of something needed, write it on the paper. That applies to me, and we'll also tell Mr. Hoyle. Jane, you are welcome to contribute too.”

“That's a good idea, Mr. Brown. I'll go back and get some paper now. We prob'ly need some over here anyway.”

“Remember to lock up again,” Tony cautioned.

After Bobby had run off to get the paper, Tony and Jane looked at the parlour which had a nice window overlooking the street. However, with no furniture, it had a dull and forlorn look.

“We'll need something to brighten the appearance.”

“I'm looking for a good table suitable for ten or twelve when extended so we can have people here. Rebecca has mentioned sharing dinner as a way to make cooking more efficient. We think here will have more space. We'd

have four of us from here, and four from Uptons', with the chance of one or two more, so possibly a dozen."

"That does make sense, except it will fill this space, though if I remember the master bedroom rightly, that could be a very pleasant bed-sitting room."

"I'm hoping we can find a table with leaves so the table isn't the whole of the room," Tony said.

"Have you thought who'll do the cooking?" Jane asked.

"Possibly Bobby, though perhaps we'll want to engage another person. There are enough bedrooms. Come and see."

On the upper floor, Jane said "The disparity of size of the rooms is a bit of a problem. If my inclinations were followed, it would be that you and I share the big room openly, but that will cause tongues to wag."

"I'm going to propose that you take the big room, Jane. Am I correct in thinking your current nursing engagement is continuing for now?"

"Yes. I've had some correspondence with three of my former colleagues, and it is possible that one of them will replace me. She will be part of my agency, but I am starting to think that I need to think very carefully how the work and rewards are shared."

"You mean that the charge to customers is going to be the same, but the agency must get some of the money?"

"Yes. Except for a premium if we offer to have nursing available all the time, the rates are more or less determined. The advantage of the agency to nurses, as I envisaged it, was to allow nurses the opportunity to plan their time off from working. My aim in setting up an agency is to provide for better nursing by allowing for two or more nurses to share the task of caring for a client, or patient, if you will. At the same time, I want nurses to be able to have more control of their lives."

"Your being with the client does allow us some time to furnish this room. I'll take the second bedroom and Bobby can choose one of the other two, with space for one other person as and when we decide they are needed."

"Tony. How are we to arrange the sharing of costs? You have spent more than I will for Lane Meadow, and there will be rates, fuel, food, gas and water, and other expenses."

"Truthfully, I had not much thought about that, in that I know we talk about things and will come to a suitable arrangement."

I suggest that we tally any and all expense for the master bedroom and the furnishings, both objects and decor, and these be charged to you, but also that the objects will be your property. And we can come to some arrangement in the form of a rent, or else some decision about housekeeping."

"A regular sum would be simplest," Jane said, "though I could agree to cover all the household expenses."

“Since you are not going to be residing here for a while, we can tally the expenses and estimate a rent that approximates them,” Tony said.

“That’s a fair compromise.

Now when do you and Bobby, and *News and More* propose to move in?”

“I’m hoping to move by the 12th of May, so be able to give Withers notice on the 4th when we pay the rent. But we need to get this shop set up for both *Best Bonnet* and *News and More*. I’ll leave space for *Harper’s Nursing* for now.”

“How will you organize the shop?”

“There’s the existing counter, which is movable, though screwed to the floor at the moment. While we could have new counters built, I thought to have the counter for *News and More* placed along one side of the shop near the door, as that business is the one that will get the most outside customers. Then I thought to have simple partitions – initially just ropes will do until we decide if the arrangement is sensible – and have two desks, one each for *Best Bonnet* and your agency, since they really just need a place where bookings and accounts can be kept. There could be cabinets behind to file documents and records.”

“That should be fine.”

“I think that we need to see how people come and go in the shop. We want to keep them away from what I think of as the working side of the counter or desks, yet make movement within the shop easy for us.”

“Tony. How will people know your businesses are there?”

“That, Jane, is one of the more pressing matters. We need to adjust the signage, and tomorrow I am going to have Bobby and Mr. Hoyle take down the pawn shop sign and paint over the name. Hackmans’ gave us a board to display in the window to say that they have taken over the pledges and giving their address. However, we had to put it in front of the wire grill that Mr. Goldman has in the window to prevent theft. Actually had to put it on a string and let it slide down between the wire and the glass.”

“Will you remove that grill?”

“It does protect the premises, so I think not. But we can remove the partitions at the back of the window and get more daylight in the shop. Though I should look into some simple racks so we can display the newspapers and magazines we sell.”

* * *

Tony had reorganized his routine so he could return to *Matilda’s* at two o’clock, which would give him some time each day to deal with matters

that may arise there. As he came in, Ian Hoyle was putting some wooden partitions against the side of the stairs.

“Ah. Mr. Brown. I got your note and I’ve taken down the partition for the display window. Mr. Soultan arrived to work on the donkey stalls, and I asked his advice. He suggested to simply knock the pin out of the hinges, so that was easy. And I’ve put the pins back in the holes at the window so we don’t lose ’em.”

“Well done. And what about the sign for *News and More* to tell clients we’re moving on the 12th of May. I hope that’s enough time, but we’ll just have to make it so.”

“Here the sign I’ve made, but so far just lettered in pencil. I thought you should look at it before I ink it in. Then I thought to varnish it so it won’t get too damaged by rain. Eventually the wet will get in from behind if it’s outdoors, of course.”

“Mr. Hoyle, this is very well done. You have a fine hand and a good eye for balance in the design.

I was going to have to find someone to do the sign above the front of the shop. But I think you should try.”

“I worry I might make a bad job of it, Mr. Brown.”

“Could we get some large paper? Then you could work on the counter. Oh, has that been moved yet?”

“Yes. Bobby and I unscrewed it and moved it. We didn’t put the screws in again in the new place.”

“Let’s take a look. But we probably should not put the screws in unless needed.”

They went in the shop, where the counter was now perpendicular to the front window and on one side.

“Yes, I like that. Where did you find a screwdriver?”

“Bobby remembered you had a box of tools at *News and More*. I’ve got it in the back, but I thought perhaps I should use a drawer or two in the counter here, and organize it so the tools were each in their own place.”

“Indeed. Please do that and mark the front of the drawer or drawers clearly. Probably drawers at the bottom because tools are heavy, and also we probably want the upper drawers for things we need to get at quickly without bending over.”

“Mr. Brown. If the counter is clear like this, if I have some long paper I could prepare a sign in pencil and we could then pin it where we want the name and use it to mark out the lettering, then I can paint it in. Some shops use gold or silver lettering.”

“Again, Mr. Hoyle, I suggest you go ahead. Make sure Bobby is here if you go to seek paper or paint. For now, you have my consent to buy the paper. Shall we say ten yards, which will allow for two or three failed

attempts. For the paint, please find out how much it will cost for enough paint and suitable brush or brushes. Though I think I have heard that gold uses actual gold leaf. I think for now we will stay with paint. Possibly something that looks like silver against a black base. When our businesses are thriving, we can consider the gold leaf.”

“What should the sign say?”

“*Matilda’s* – I’ll write it down. It was my mother’s name, and I want some simple way to refer to our premises, since we’ll have several businesses here.

Put that central at the top, then in letters half the size, I want to have *Best Bonnet* on one side and *News and More* the other, with space in between to put *Harper’s Nursing* when Mrs. Harper gets her business going. For now we’ll leave that blank.”

“So we need enough space between the business names so they’re not confused.”

“Precisely.

Now I’m off to Uptons’ to take another look at tables and chairs and desks. I’ll try to get a desk today – it might only be a temporary one – for the operation of *Best Bonnet*. It will probably become your desk, so you may tell me if it suits or not, but I’ll choose one today as we can exchange it later. I sent Mrs. Mortimer and Mr. Cohen notes about the furnishings we are seeking.”

Tony’s furniture list was

- 2 desks suitable for shop use with chairs
- extensible dining table for up to 12
- chairs for above
- stools for shop
- sturdy kitchen table that seats 6
- 3-4 kitchen chairs
- 1 double and 2 single bedframes
- sideboard

There was already one stool suitable for the shop counter, and for the moment no effort was spent to look for another, though the list above had been shown to Bobby and Ian.

For the beds, Tony had decided to go with new mattresses and some new pillows and bedding. He set Bobby and Ian the task of finding suitable items

of these soft furnishings, suggesting that if they were unsure of their choices, conversations at supper might be useful.

Though Tony went this day to Uptons' and eventually found a kitchen table that would do, at least for now, along with a couple of chairs, he did not send word to Maud or Abraham to stop looking. Within the second-hand furniture business that his friends conducted, it was possible to push unwanted items back into the stream of goods they dealt in. Of course, there would be a consideration to be paid for returning anything, but it would not be unreasonable.

Valerie was with Tony as he looked at some of the items that Uptons' had, but there were more still back at his own premises under tarpaulins, as well as some under tarpaulins outside in Uptons' yard. Valerie had a list, and they checked under the tarps first at Uptons' then at *Matilda's*.

It turned out that the suitable desk was at Uptons', but they needed to go back and forth because there were two possibilities under separate tarps at *Matilda's*. It would certainly be helpful to get the furniture all at Uptons' and the donkeys at *Matilda's*. Still, over about an hour they selected a sturdy table for the kitchen and four well-constructed chairs, a bed for Bobby who had been sleeping on a palliasse at *News and More*, and a well-proportioned desk and chair that would be used for *Best Bonnet*.

There was a hand-cart at Uptons' and with Ian and Valerie, Tony got the items that he wanted moved from there across to *Matilda's*. The bed was under one of the tarps at *Matilda's*, so they extracted it from a rather tight pile.

"Valerie. We didn't work out the prices of the items. Will 25% above your cost be suitable?"

"That should work. I'll let you know the total at supper."

* * *

While nothing had been said, Tom knew that the donkey stalls were needed as soon as possible, and he and Robert Vance finished them on the evening of May 1. Thus Joseph, Arthur and Tony moved the animals on the afternoon of the second.

The donkeys seemed to like their new accommodations, because unlike at Uptons', each could see both the others. There was a hay rack and a water bucket for each animal.

The drama of the move came when Percy followed Annabelle into the stable area and was spotted by Olaf, who happened to be sitting in the rear doorway to the shop. There was much mewing and hissing until Olaf retired to the shop and Percy to the stable. This would be their armistice, with

the yard a no-cat's land, at least until the two cats realized their opposite gender.

* * *

The conveyancing of Ezekiel's house took place on Tuesday May 8, 1860. Tony had met with Henry Mortimer the previous Friday to review the documents and what would happen. Tony did not need to do anything except ensure that the house was clear and the keys were in Henry's possession on the morning of the 8th. Thus on Sunday morning, May 6, Tony and Bobby went to Ezekiel's house with Moonbeam and her cart to take away any detritus left by the tenants. There really was not very much. Some quite threadbare small carpets. A couple of dented copper pots. A broken chair. A damaged bed frame. Some rubbish they burned carefully along with the sweepings in a small area of the rear garden that was gravelled.

Moonbeam was tied to a lamppost outside, and Jolly sat beside her. Tony and Bobby had brought refreshments for themselves and for the animals, but Tony still was a little anxious about leaving them waiting for the couple of hours required for the clearing, dusting and sweeping. However, a little after noon, he suggested that he and Bobby should walk through the whole house to see all was in order, windows properly closed, and nothing left behind.

In the master bedroom, Tony went to check the latches on the sashes in the bay window. As he reached for the latch of the left hand window, his foot came forward and lightly kicked the baseboard. There was a noticeably hollow sound. Looking down, Tony realized that the diagonal cuts in the panel of the baseboard, which was about 10 inches high and about a foot and a half wide, were such that this piece of the baseboard was held in place by the two pieces on either side of it using just the mitre cut. However, unless it was prevented from sliding up by a nail or glue, it would be removable.

The baseboard, like most of its kind, had a couple of shaped ridges, so Tony was able to put his fingers in the hollow between a couple of ridges and the piece of wood slid upwards quite easily. Interestingly, the plaster above was flat, but actually sloped very slightly outwards so the lifting panel did not scrape against the wallpaper.

Tony had lifted the panel and was about to take it away from the wall below the window and set it to one side when Bobby, who had come up to ask what else there was to be done, gasped.

"A hiding place!" There was a rectangular hole about a foot wide and 5 inches high.

"It would seem so," Tony said. "Let's see if there is anything inside."

Kneeling down and lowering his head, Tony could see through the opening. There was a box inside, ten by four by four inches. It had a string handle on the front that allowed it to be pulled out, and this is what Tony did. The box had a simple lid with the perimeter rebated so it sat on the sides of the box. Tony lifted this off.

The contents of the box were a small bundle of folded notes, which turned out to be 20 £5 notes, each carefully folded along the long axis so they were about two and a half inches by eight inches folded and would fit in the box. There were 17 sovereigns and 6 half sovereigns. There was also a silver ring with a quite large emerald and what was probably a man's ring with a rectangular ruby. If they were not emerald and ruby, at least one ring had a green stone and the other a red one. There was also a pearl necklace, and that took enough space that it needed to be coiled carefully so the lid would lie flat on the box. There were no letters or notes in the box.

"Gonna keep it?" Bobby asked.

"Most likely," Tony said. "But I'll consult Mr. Mortimer so that I – we, actually – are not charged with any crime should the jewellery prove to be identifiable. However, since I own this house until Tuesday, and the box was found in the house, I likely have a good claim to it. If it is all mine, it may be time to get you some new clothes.

The jewellery is a concern. I wonder whose it was, and particularly why Great-uncle Ezekiel had it, for I find it difficult to imagine my tenants knew of this box given the dust on the lid."

* * *

The box fitted in Tony's satchel, so he sent Bobby back to *Matilda's* with Moonbeam and the cart. Nothing on the cart was too heavy for Bobby to unload, so he would be able to unharness and brush Moonbeam and check her hooves.

Tony, wanting to talk to Henry, walked to Chorley Terrace. The weather had turned showery, and he suffered some drizzle. Jolly was with him, and he was careful to keep her outside the Mortimer house until he could use a rag to dry her feet.

Yolanda showed Tony into the parlour at the rear of the house. The whole family were present, reading or playing with games or toys. Maud said "Tony. What a surprise."

"I'm sorry to show up unannounced, but in clearing up Uncle Ezekiel's house, we found this box with some valuables."

Maud said "Oh my! How interesting.

Yolanda. Bring some tea and biscuits please, and join us."

Henry, who had not said anything yet, said “You no doubt want to be sure that you deal correctly with what you’ve found.”

“There is some jewellery. It was in a hidden panel of the baseboard of the master bedroom. I’m concerned how Uncle Ezekiel acquired the jewellery and the money.”

“Why don’t you show us, but let me get some paper and a pencil?”

“I have my notebook here you can use,” Tony said, taking that item out of his satchel and handing it and a pencil to Henry.

Henry’s list was a tidy inventory of the contents of the box.

- 20 £5 notes
- 17 sovereigns
- 6 half sovereigns
- silver ring with ? emerald
- gold ring with ? ruby
- pearl necklace

Maud asked “Does the box and its contents belong to Tony, Henry?”

“Almost certainly. If someone can show that the jewellery was taken in a crime, then that might be considered stolen property and have to be returned to the rightful owners, but it would be difficult to establish ownership of the money. And Tony is the legal owner of the house, at least until Tuesday, and the tenants have vacated, though I’m guessing that they were ignorant of this box.”

“It was very dusty. And they haven’t had the house for that long.

Is there any way to find out more about the jewellery?” Tony asked.

“Well, it would be important to find out if the rings have genuine stones, so possibly they should be valued by a jeweller, though Joshua Goldman would likely be as competent to do so. He may also have ideas how to identify a possible owner, though I see no marks on the emerald ring, though there is some sort of hallmark on the ruby one.”

“Could they be from Tony’s grandparents?” Maud asked.

“That’s a good point, Maud,” Tony said. “I wonder if Jenny Dodds in Albourne who knew my grandparents could inform us.”

Henry responded “An excellent suggestion, and likely one of the few ways we may be able to get to the bottom of this. And if indeed she remembers one of the pieces as belonging to them, then your possession of them is simply a part of your inheritance.”

Tony said “I am wondering where to keep the money and the jewels.”

“You could leave the box here and I will give you a receipt for it. We have a strongbox here, but it is not as ... er ... formidable as Mr. Turcotte’s safe. Nor are there as many people about the house as at Fortescue Road. I think you could ask Rose if you could put it there.”

“I do have a strongbox myself, but at *News and More* there are too many strangers coming into the shop, and only Jack or Bobby present.

I can see that once I move to ... er ... we were thinking of calling Goldmans’ property *Matilda’s* after my mother ... it will be sensible to make better arrangements.”

Henry said “And I should have mentioned that the documents for the transfer of that property to you have been prepared. I also made sure there was adequate money to fulfill the £150 needed for direct payment of the purchase by selling some consuls.

Actually, I think I am going to have to get myself a clerk soon. My business has been increasing.”

“We hardly see him of an evening, he’s so occupied with the paper and ink,” Maud added.

Tony wondered when and how Goldman had moved whatever strongbox he had. That would be a vulnerable time. It occurred to him he would have a similar conundrum to face, namely, the appropriate time to move valuables between two places so that security could be maintained as well as possible.

Thinking again of the valuables and money found today, Tony added “I think I should leave the box here with you if it will fit in your strongbox. There will soon be some more expenses, as Mrs. Harper and I plan to have a water closet installed and possibly some other improvements. And there will no doubt be expenses for rates, gas, water, and other things, including your fee, Henry.”

* * *

Tony left the Mortimers as soon as he could, despite the continuing drizzle. He had arranged to meet with Jane between 3 and 4 o’clock for a walk. When he got to the house where she nursed her client, Jane was waiting, and they left immediately.

“It’s not terribly nice out,” Jane said. “Let’s find somewhere to have tea, or even something stronger. I know respectable ladies aren’t supposed to, but I enjoy the warmth of a tavern and I like cider.”

“I have some interesting news,” Tony said.

“Then you must tell me immediately.”

Tony related the discovery of the box. As he finished, Jane said “The money will be very useful to provide some margin of safety in expenses of

getting the *Matilda's* property to a more comfortable state. When will you try to see this ... er ... Jenny in Albourne.”

“I will write to the vicar there tonight. Jenny does not read or write, but I think I told you how we found out about my mother and father through Mrs. Dodds. It would be good to know if the jewels belonged to my grandparents, since then I can feel at ease in having them.”

“Yes. I know I would not be happy wondering if something I had might turn out to be stolen property.”

“Well, if the jewellery is my grandparents’, then it was stolen by Ezekiel unless there was some clause in a will. It could also have belonged to my great-grandparents, of course, in which case I am also the rightful owner now.”

“And all this mystery on top of the purchases of Lane Meadow and *Matilda's*.”

* * *

There were some minor details that caused some consternation among the different solicitors for the transactions on Ezekiel's house and Goldmans' shop, but they were of no consequence to the purchasers or vendors, though they did add some scratches and blots to the documents.

When Tony visited Henry Mortimer on Saturday, May 12, as requested, to learn the outcome of the sale, Henry said all the money issues had been resolved and a full account of the receipts and disbursements was available to review.

“I'll be a little formal for a few minutes, Tony, as I want to make sure that we have completed the conveyancing in a manner that cannot be challenged. And I want to make sure you understand all the items in the statement.”

As ever with procedures involving the law, there were some extra costs, but on an earlier occasion Tony and Henry had talked about the transfer of property, so none of these were a surprise, though it did seem like one had ordered a cheese plate and discovered that mice had eaten a significant proportion of it. Still, the main sum was now Tony's, and would be ready on the 15th for transfer to Goldman. The found money from the box under the window was, as Jane foresaw, helpful, though only a little of it would be used.

When they reviewed the other documents concerning the house, Henry said “It turns out that Hurst was not only the agent, he was the buyer as well. That explains the very quick responses to our counter-offers. My anticipation is that he plans to use the house as both residence and office. Ezekiel Crown did. And it is quite suitable to that, probably more so than this house.”

Tony gave Withers notice on May 5. Withers made out he was surprised and that there should be more notice, so that Tony would have to pay more because of short notice. Tony simply told Withers to take any complaint to Mr. Henry Mortimer, the solicitor, and Withers left in a huff. Actually, he had heard from at least two sources that *News and More* was moving, and Ian Hoyle's sign was already almost complete. However, he was having trouble finding a tenant for the shop and room, which were not very suitable for many businesses.

Ian was able to complete the sign above the *Matilda's* shop front in the week before the move of *News and More*. Tony and Bobby made adjustments to shelves so that there were places behind the counter for the sweets, the newspapers and magazines, tobacco and other goods that the shop sold.

There was also enough time to put a coat of paint on the walls of the kitchen, parlour, and the two bedrooms that Tony and Bobby were going to use. The room behind the shop would be painted when the water closet was complete.

By the time Bobby and Tony moved to *Matilda's* to sleep on Saturday May 12, they had already moved as much furniture and other items as they could. For example, the wardrobe had been moved on the Thursday night, but Tony had taken out the strongbox the night before, and it was now secured in a cupboard that was in a corner of the shop. Tony had purchased a small safe that claimed fire as well as theft resistance, which he installed in the wardrobe once it was in his bedroom. The old strongbox would be used by the staff of the businesses for the cash float and daily business records. Tony's private safe would be used for his own documents and money and possibly for Jane's when and if he had a chance to discuss that matter with her. Neither box was large. They would hold a quarto page flat, and the insides of the box were perhaps 4 inches high.

That Saturday evening, they ate in a nearby tavern. While all their business and personal belongings and food stock had been moved, things were not properly arranged.

On the Sunday, Jack came for a short while to *Matilda's* to handle the Sunday papers, but left around the same time Tony went to church. Bobby was, as we know, not a church-goer, but he would see what could be done for a dinner at two o'clock, when Jane was coming to join them, though Ian, as he usually did, was going to his family in Lewes.

The following Tuesday, May 15, Henry Mortimer transacted a payment to Joshua Goldman to complete the sale of what was now *Matilda's*. When Martin came home from school, Henry sent him with a congratulatory note to inform Tony, who was, in fact, still out on work with Moonbeam, but Bobby put the note on the kitchen table.

This night, they decided to try dinner at *Matilda's* and Bobby had been the main cook, but with Rebecca's direction. They were eight for supper, as Joseph had invited Mary Lawrence. With Rebecca, Valerie, Tony, Ian, Arthur and Bobby, the kitchen table was just big enough.

Rebecca said "It felt odd to lock everything up. First time for a good while that we've done that."

"It might be an idea to look for a good dog," Tony said. "Jolly isn't that big or intimidating, but her growl or bark has several times helped keep louts away from the cart."

"Yeah, Ma. We should get one if we can find something like Jolly," Joseph said.

Mary Lawrence added "I've a cousin whose bitch just had puppies a couple of months ago. You could take a look at them. There was talk for a while of drowning them, as the breed is mixed, but actually they're quite reasonable looking now."

"I'll let Valerie decide," Rebecca said. "She's got the sense not to get too soppy in choosing."

The meal went by quickly. By supper those round the table were generally hungry. As the pudding came out, Tony said "Bobby. Bring out the bottle of port and some glasses."

"Oh. A celebration!" Rebecca said.

"Yes. I had this note that says Mr. Goldman has been paid and I am now the full proprietor of *Matilda's*."

"Good for you, Tony," Rebecca said.

The port was poured and Joseph said "To *Matilda's* and to Tony Brown," and everyone echoed the toast.

Joseph then added "Since we're celebrating, Mary and I have something we should say. We'd like to get married. We were goin' to wait a couple of weeks, but with the toast to Tony, now's a good time."

"Well. It's no surprise, and I'm happy for both of you. You have my blessing," Rebecca said. Actually, she was relieved they'd announced this, though she wondered if there were not a child on the way to create a need for this. The pair were a bit young for that, though she had not been any older when she was married.

"Congratulations, Joseph," Valerie echoed, as did others round the table. Bobby topped up the glasses and there was another toast, this time to Joseph and Mary.

Valerie, ever practical, said "Have you thought where you'll live?"

"No. Not got that far yet," Joseph said.

"Would you want to marry this summer," Rebecca asked.

Mary answered "Oh. Yes. As soon as possible. ... Oh. But there's not ... I mean, it's not because ..."

Loud laughter drowned out the rest of her attempted explanation.

Valerie continued "Seems to me that we need to re-think how we all are accommodated. Right now we have Tony, Bobby and Ian here, with Mrs. Harper going to join as and when she can, but there's a room still spare.

Over in our place we've Arthur in the cot, Ma and me in the large bedroom and Joseph in the smaller one. What if Joseph and Mary took the larger one, Ma took the smaller one, and I came over here in the spare room. We'll have to work out rent, but I doubt that's much problem.

I'll also suggest that possibly we should, as we're working on the expansion of the shop, do like Tony's done here for Mr. Hoyle in what is now the stable area. In fact, since Mr. Hoyle – Ian – used to work with furniture, and Arthur is doing more with *Best Bonnet*, maybe have Ian in the shop and Arthur here. I'm just thinking out loud now. Both Ian and I can handle the commissions for *Best Bonnet*, and I'm pretty sure he's fine with selling furniture, though, even if I say so myself, I'm the best with upholstery.

Anyway, that's some thoughts for you to be mulling."

"If I come to live there, I'll be happy to learn and fit in," Mary said. "My mother made sure I know how to cook and look after a house."

"What Valerie said makes sense. Worth considering," Rebecca mused.

"It does make sense," Tony added. "What about Ian and Arthur?"

"I'd like a chance to work with furniture again," Ian said. "But I'm also finding it interesting doing the cartage commissions. Is it possible I could do both?"

Joseph said "It's safer for both businesses to have people who can fill in for each other, and that means actually doing the work fairly regularly. So, yes, you'd be more than welcome to do both."

"Let me show Valerie the room upstairs," Tony said.

The two of them went up the stairs from the kitchen where they started.

"Bobby took the room with the window, I'm afraid," Tony said. "This one gets light from the window at the back of the passage way through those glasses at the top of the wall there."

"But it's closer to the chimney there. I'll be suggesting we put a stove in place of the fireplace at the top of the stairs."

There was an obvious chimney, which was for the fireplace in the master bedroom. The other bedrooms were without fireplaces. Valerie had a good suggestion, which would provide heat for the whole floor. Tony said "If you

come to live here, I'll give you the task of acquiring a stove and having it installed."

They both laughed. Valerie said "I also thought that it would be better for you and Mrs. Harper and Bobby to have a woman here."

"Oh. Yes. In fact, Tom put a bolt on the door from downstairs. He figured it would be easier for us on bath night."

"Yes. Definitely. And I think Ma will do better having Ian around to help move furniture, possibly with Joseph. And he's a good stout lad, which won't hurt to maintain security, especially if we get a dog.

I'm not sure what Mary will take to doing. We'll have to see. In spite of her protests, I'm still not sure there isn't some urgency to get married. But she's not a fool, and I've been round her parents' place. A tidy, well-kept home. And she knows how to sew and knit. We'll manage."

* * *

Ten days later, Brougham announced that the water closet and sink were now complete and functional. The privy was not abandoned, but Tony asked Ian and Bobby to see if some cleaning and painting could improve it, which they did. Within a week, the residents of *Matilda's* wondered how they lived without the water closet and the sink, which allowed much convenience.

Though the betrothal of Joseph and Mary was now well-known, and the decision to move Ian to the Uptons' shop had been made, no actual movements had transpired. Tom's visit to consider how the shop could be extended set in motion several discussions of what should be done. Eventually it was decided that the stable area would have the stalls removed, but the upper area normally used for storing hay and feed would become storage for furnishings and a sleeping space for a staff member, with Ian being the likely first user. Tom had noted that there was a brick wall onto the yard, and he thought a small stove could be put there with a metal pipe to the outside and then up. However, the stove was some months in the future, and in fact one did not get installed until the following January.

Below the platform would be an area they would use for display of furniture. Eventually they would cover the cobbles and paving with a wooden floor, but for now just clean things well.

Part of the yard between the main shop and the stable, as it would continue to be called, would be covered. Looking at the way in which Cassandra had set up a stable for Phoenix at 23 Fortescue Road, Rebecca and Valerie decided to have a simple sloping roof that joined the two buildings, using the wall of the yard with windows on top. To support the roof, Brougham suggested some cast iron posts, but he took a suggestion of Tom and there

were two wrought iron straps at each end of the new roof making an X to keep the structure rigid.

A long conversation was had between Tom, Rebecca and Valerie – Joseph’s thoughts were elsewhere – about the front of the new structure. There were concerns about spending and then finding the result needed undoing or re-doing. Finally it was decided that since they already kept furniture outside under tarps for short periods of time, they could simply close off the front with a tarpaulin, but have it open for display of items for sale.

This idea was refined to a four-foot high wooden wall with a double gate in the middle to allow for moving furniture in and out. Above this, in two sections, was a tarpaulin on rollers that Tom devised. This area was almost treble the size of the shop, and with the stable increased the display area to five times its original area.

The biggest expense for this cover turned out to be the slates for the roof. Given that Brougham and Tom had other work ongoing, the shed, as the new area over the yard came to be called, was not completed until the end of June.

* * *

On Monday May 28, Jane Harper took a hansom to Lane Meadow. The weather was overcast and threatening, so she asked the cabbie to wait, for which she would pay him, while she and Tom, who came across from the workshop, inspected the ditch. In fact, Tom had been doing this regularly as the Preston Estate workers carried out a rather slow and lazy rehabilitation of the ditch. Thus the inspection was a formality, since Tom said the work was correct, though no more than correct. It would have been nice if the ditch had been made a little wider and deeper, and the sides in some places lined with stones. Still, the workers had made sure the boundary on the Meadow side of the ditch would not collapse or quickly erode.

Having walked the ditch, Jane said “Tom, I sincerely thank you for watching the work and giving me support. Thank you.”

“No problem, Mrs. Harper. We’ll look forward to seeing the Meadow improved and having a new neighbour.”

“As you know, I hope to move to *Matilda’s*, but I have a former nursing colleague, Mrs. Evelyn Bairstow, who will be coming to live in the cottage. Can I pay you and Mrs. Soulton to help her get set up?”

“Course you can. What will she need?”

“She’s interested in horticulture, and while Mr. Brown is interested in having donkeys graze here, he told me just one alone will be unhappy. I’m

anticipating that Evelyn will set up a small greenhouse as soon as possible. I don't know if you can build one, or if I'll need a builder."

"I think we can do that, as long as you don't want a Crystal Palace," Tom said.

"No. Just something that works, and probably some planting beds that can be covered with glass in times of frost. Also to keep donkeys out if we have any here. Eventually, we'll need to build some fences."

"Probably need some muck and straw to improve the soil."

"I'll let Evelyn decide that. Oh. She may need some furnishings. I imagine you will be able to provide some. I'll let her decide what she wants and I'll pay you for it. Don't be too generous to me – I want you to be willing to help."

"I appreciate your sentiment, Mrs. Harper. I'll not overcharge, but we'll make sure we're not suffering either."

* * *

Tony and Jane met Evelyn Bairstow late in the morning of Saturday, June 2. The sky was cloudy, but no rain. There had been a terrible storm on May 28, mainly affecting the east coast but of course having a spill-over to the south. It sank about a hundred vessels and over forty people died. Today, fortunately, the weather was more kind. In the meanwhile, on May 31, Jane had become the owner of Lane Meadow.

They loaded Evelyn's trunk on Moonbeam's cart where there was already a straw palliasse and some odds and ends of household equipment.

The introductions had already been made. Evelyn and Tony clearly were considering each other. The old friend and the new. They need not have been concerned, as they would come to be close and reliable friends.

Jane said "Evelyn. I'm afraid the cottage is a bit primitive, and we've only managed to get you some minimal furnishings and equipment. I'll give you ten shillings to be getting on with and all I'll ask is you keep a record of what you spend. Ask for more as you need it."

Evelyn said "What do you want me to do? Your letter said you were acquiring a property that could be used for horticulture, but also you were establishing a nursing agency. However, my late employment was uncomfortable and the food wasn't good."

"To be honest, Evelyn, I'm not entirely sure I know what I want you to do. Tony is thinking the property could be used eventually to raise donkeys, but at the moment we have a lot of other fish to fry."

"It'll be a couple of years at least before I'm ready, Mrs. Bairstow. And if in the meanwhile you get some profitable use out of the land, so be it. I won't come in and push you off."

“And if a nursing engagement comes up, I’d hope you can help out,” Jane added. “I expect that I’ll have some juggling to do to ensure clients have nurses and nurses have assignments, and there will be times when we need someone to fill in.”

“I’ll do what I can. I’m excited to have a chance to do some work with plants again. When my Henry was alive and he was based near Sandhurst, we had a wonderful garden and I learned how to grow all sorts of things. I hope I can find ways to do that and make some money for you, Jane.”

Evelyn was short and sturdy, but not fat, plain but not unattractive. Tony realized she was just the sort of person to bring Lane Meadow forward.

“Will you have any more baggage coming on?” Tony asked.

“No. This is it. Not much for a woman of 36, well, 36 at the end of the month. No children – we lost a baby girl and a baby boy each in infancy. And I had to sell up our furniture and other stuff to keep body and soul together after Henry was killed. They give me a tiny pension, but I had to get myself back from the Crimea, and I’ve managed to pay off the money-lender, but nothing left.”

“Let’s hope, for all our sakes, that your fortune has changed,” Jane said.

* * *

“Here we are,” Tony said as they opened the gate at Lane Meadow. Jolly had come along and raced off up the lane to Soultons’.

Tony added “Fuzzy, Tom and Vera’s dog, is Jolly’s brother.

Jane. Can you close and secure the gate. I’m going to unhitch Moonbeam and let her explore to see how she takes to the place.”

The practicalities took over for the next twenty minutes. Moonbeam, after being unhitched and offered some water, wandered a little bit away, but seemed reluctant to go far. Tony felt that was as it should be.

Jolly’s arrival had been noticed and soon both she and Fuzzy came racing over, having jumped the wall when Tom and Vera climbed over it to come and meet Evelyn.

Jane said “Evelyn, this is Tom and Vera Soulton, your neighbours. Tom, Vera, this is my friend and now employee Mrs. Bairstow.”

Vera said “Welcome, Mrs. Bairstow. I gather you’re going to try to grow some things here. Tom has pegged out a possible location for a greenhouse and some raised beds.”

“Oh. May I look now?” Evelyn asked.

“Certainly,” Tom said. “Sooner you tell me it’s all right, sooner I can get things going.

Mrs. Harper. As I said when we talked, you'll need to get some muck and straw. The soil here's pretty poor."

Tony said "I'll arrange that. There's the people who take away the dung from the donkeys. We should set aside a place for them to put it, and we can also put waste there that will rot down to soil."

Tom said "Better be near the gate. Don't want the deliveries having to go all over the place, as you may well want to use the land differently as time goes on."

"All right. S'pose we put it on the left side of the gate. Does that suit you, Jane?"

"Bit of a smelly welcome. Can it go further along? The deliverymen can put their wagon alongside the front wall and shovel the muck over into a pen."

"Would that work, Tom?" Tony asked. "Jane – Mrs. Harper – and I were thinking anyway of wattle fences for the donkeys, and there's the willow that's over there that hangs on our side of the property line."

"Yeah. That'll do it. I'll get some pegs and a mallet."

"What about having something to eat and drink first, Thomas Soulton," Vera said.

"Oh. I forgot to mention. We brought some pies and some currant buns," Jane said. "And I wanted to ask if we could work out an arrangement where Evelyn ate with you, since shopping and cooking for one is not very efficient."

Vera said "We'll be able to work something out, especially if Evelyn can give advice on our garden too."

"I'll be happy to do what I can," Evelyn said, "But I should warn you that I'm really just an amateur, though my father was the head gardener of a big house in Kent, and I used to help him as a girl. I should look for some books on horticulture, as my knowledge is mostly that which a child remembers, though I was seventeen when Henry came and whisked me away."

There had not been much said about Evelyn to Tom and Vera, and neither Tony nor Jane thought this a good time to go into details. Fortunately, Molly and Robert needed to be introduced, and then the subject of garden tools came up.

After lunch, Tom suggested it would be good to get pegs in the ground to mark where the greenhouse and planting beds would go.

Jane said "I think the greenhouse should be near the back to make it less temptation for anyone passing by. No sense having the stock stolen."

"Probably want to get a dog," Robert suggested.

"Yes, Mrs. Upton wants one too," Tony said.

"Can we use low wattle walls for the beds with the rear against the wall? I don't need them high, and the wall should provide some shelter and will retain the sun's heat," Evelyn asked.

“Good idea,” said Tom. “Course you may risk Molly filching some berries by leaning over the wall.”

“If she asks first, it won’t be filching,” Evelyn said with a chuckle.

“Rather than peg the beds, why don’t we put in the verticals now, and maybe even try to complete one to see how it might work?” Tony suggested.

That is what they did, though Jane took her leave at two o’clock to get back to her patient. Evelyn changed into a working skirt. Tony was already in his carter’s clothing, and the others were already in work attire.

By five o’clock, they had the greenhouse staked out. It would be ten feet by twenty-five, and be made as a simple A of wooden beams spaced so frames with glass could be laid between the slanting beams up to a single ridge beam. The glass would start a few feet from the ground, and the success with the wattle led to using it for a low wall from the bottom of the glass frames down to the ground. The greenhouse would not be well-sealed, at least to start with, and the inventive Tom suggested that some holes and long nails would serve to hold the glassed frames in place. The end triangles would be filled in catch as catch can at first, then improved as opportunities for better materials presented. The prevailing opinion among Tom, Tony, Robert and Evelyn was that it was important to get some beds and the greenhouse going.

As Tony was getting ready to leave, Evelyn said “We’ve put the corner posts in for the muck box. If Tom will lend me some tools, I’ll work on that tomorrow.

Mr. Brown. Can you arrange delivery of two wagons the size of your cart as soon as possible from the muck men? And I’ll write a list of tools you can take away now. Jane’s given me some money, but perhaps she can repay you directly for the tools. I want to get going as soon as I can. Indeed, by next Sunday I want to have some seeds or plants growing. This year it’s unlikely we’ll have much to sell, but I plan to earn my keep. For me it is so good to be out of that cellar kitchen.”

Evelyn went in the cottage for pencil and paper. Tony called “Jolly! Moonbeam!” and both animals came over. He harnessed Moonbeam, gave her a carrot and some water, and took the list Evelyn came out to give him.

“I’ll try to have these for you on Tuesday if not before,” Tony said. “However, I won’t be able to get to the ironmongers before Monday morning, and may have to send someone else.

Oh. You’ve noted a wheelbarrow. Can I suggest you ask Tom to let you use one of the hand-carts, but put a bin on it? He makes them. If that works, we’ll just pay him for one. They’ve two wheels rather than one, but I suspect they’ll work fine.”

“Oh yes. I saw a couple in the workshop when we went to get some tools. Yes. That’ll do fine I think. It’s just more usual to have the one-wheeled wheelbarrow.”

“We’ll keep an eye out for a second-hand one of those. But you’ll want to bring them in the cottage or somewhere you can lock up. People steal things, unfortunately, especially when they’ve got wheels and are easily moved.”

“Goodbye, Mr. Brown. And thank you for bringing me and my baggage here, and for the help with the planting beds.”

* * *

Among the many things going on in the previous month, Tony had received a reply from the Vicar of Albourne. A further exchange of letters had arranged that Tony would come to Albourne on Sunday June 3 and meet Jenny Dodds at around half past twelve. Five years before, he had walked to Albourne, which was about 9 miles each way. Bobby wanted to come too, and Jolly would enjoy the outing. She must now be about 8 or 9 years old, which was quite old for a dog. That was one reason for taking the train to Hassocks, which would put them about two and a half miles from their goal rather than nine miles from *Matilda’s*.

They locked up carefully, made sure they had plenty of water in some bottles, as well as some emergency bread and cheese, and got to Albourne not far shy of an hour early. Fortunately, Jenny was there at noon, so they didn’t wait.

After greetings and introductions, they went to the Duke of York tavern for some lunch.

“You’re looking very well, Mr. Brown,” Jenny said. “Vicar tells me you managed to get the inheritance you were due. And now you have a young servant.”

“Bobby does lots of tasks for me. I call him the caretaker. I sold Uncle Ezekiel’s house, and have bought the premises of a friend so we have a shop, residence and stable. The business now has three donkeys, as well as the use of a pony and cart owned by a friend.”

“But your friend don’t keep his pony at your place?”

“It’s actually a woman friend from the house where I used to live and work with Henry and Maud, who you met. They now have two children. A little girl about two now. And they’ve more or less adopted two children of a woman who was murdered. I took over the woman’s newspaper business.”

“My goodness, Mr. Brown. You do get about and keep busy.”

“That ’e does, Mrs. Dodds,” Bobby said. “Boxin’ Day a year and a ’alf ago ’e saved me from freezin’ te death.”

“Then he deserves his good fortune,” Jenny said.

“It was a bit of good fortune that brings us here today, actually,” Tony said. “When Bobby and I cleaned out Uncle Ezekiel’s house, I noticed a loose

baseboard. When I pulled it up, there was a hiding place with this box.” He took the box out of his satchel. “It had some money and these jewels.”

“Oh my. That’s your grandfather’s ruby. And the ring your grandmother wore that he’d given her. My, that devil Ezekiel. Took them too. But now you have them back. Good job you found them.”

“Thank you, Jenny. I was hoping that you’d recognize them.

Is there any chance you’ve seen the pearls before?”

“No. Can’t say I have. Bad luck, pearls is. At least so they say – never ’ad any to find out myself,” she laughed.

“I suspect Ezekiel got them from some other devilry,” Tony said. “But they’ve nothing to identify them as different from any number of other strings of pearls.”

“Mr. Brown. Did you want some more ale or cider?” Bobby asked. They had each had a half pint of cider and a pork pie.

“Do you want to get another half of cider and we’ll share it? Jenny?”

“I can manage another half, but you needn’t spend your money on me.”

“Meeting you led to my current fortune, Jenny. I’ll not forget that. And, so you know, I’ve written to the Vicar and told him that he’s to write to me if ever – and I mean ever – you have need, and I will make sure you do not suffer from want. Bobby here’s now witness to that.

And on that slate they’ve written that they’ve gooseberry pie with custard. Shall we seal that promise with some of that?”

* * *

Tony and Bobby left the Duke of York around two o’clock to walk to Hassocks Station. Tony was in a good mood, as was Bobby, and Jolly had enjoyed half the cheese and bread. Not regular dog food, but she loved cheese, and Tony broke the cheese and pushed it into the bread so she would not leave that.

As they walked, Tony told Bobby about how Jenny had provided the information that led to the uncovering of Ezekiel’s wrong-doing and the eventual deliverance of Tony’s inheritance.

They were walking along a lane with a tall hedgerow separating them from a field when Bobby said quietly “There’s been a man following us from the pub. ’e just went in the ’edge back there. I think ’e’s goin’ to try to go past us through the field and come out in front of us.”

Tony asked softly “I wondered why Jolly was making the odd growl. Did this fellow see me show Jenny the jewels?”

“I think so.”

“Stop a minute. Let’s see if there’s a good stick for you. I’ve my owl cane. If there’s just one man, make sure you get a bit apart from me so he can’t catch both of us with one blow.

Jolly. Here. Stay close.”

Bobby didn’t find a stick, but picked up a decent sized round stone from the side of the lane and kept his hand round it. They walked on, and as they reached the next bend, the man jumped out from a gap in the hedgerow. He was holding a wicked-looking knife.

“Let’s be ’aving those baubles,” came the slurred demand. The man was clearly drunk.

“What good will they do you? They are well-described in my solicitor’s notes, we’ve seen your face, my dog now has your scent. You’d have to kill us all to get some items that would be almost impossible to fence.”

“Well ... didn’t think o’ that.

Gimme some money or I’ll ’urt the boy,” the man said making a move towards Bobby, who jumped backwards.

Jolly growled and bared her teeth, while Tony, keeping a firm eye on the knife, put a second hand on the cane and quickly brought it down on the knife hand at the wrist level. The man dropped the knife.

“Owww. You’ve broke me wrist.”

“Step to the hedge or the next blow will be your head and with the owl’s beak.”

The man did as Tony said, and Bobby slunk to the opposite side of the lane. Tony kicked the knife to him.

“Take the knife, Bobby. We don’t want him coming after us.

Now I don’t know your name, but I’m going to have my assistant make some notes of your description. Unless of course, you run off back towards Albourne.”

The man took to his heels and was gone back the way they’d come in a few seconds.

“Thanks for noting the danger, Bobby.

Let’s get to Hassocks as quickly as we can in case there are other louts about. We should have been more careful showing Jenny the jewels.”

“That walkin’ stick’s pretty useful, Mr. Brown.”

“That was the first time I’ve had to use it that way. But I agree, it is very useful. Though we were lucky he was not very clever, and that he was alone.”

“But what you said – the jewels aren’t worth much if they’re stolen unless you can sell them. I never thought about that.”

“It isn’t really true. If the stones are removed, then they are difficult to trace. Still. Jewels are quite troublesome to convert to money. Cash is a lot more attractive to robbers. Remind me to talk with everyone at *Matilda’s*

and Uptons' about that. We can try to be aware of risks and how we might avoid them."

* * *

"It's good to have light in the evening," Jane said, as she and Tony walked along the Promenade around six o'clock on June 10, leading Moonbeam back to *Matilda's* after giving rides all afternoon. Bobby and Jessie had done the same, but custom had diminished at around five o'clock, so Tony had sent them home. However, he had said that he would be having supper with Jane, and that Bobby would have to put Moonbeam to bed so they could go to the tavern to eat. Tony told Bobby to get himself something from the tavern before half-past six.

Answering Jane's comment on the evening light, Tony said "Except it means a long day for us and the donkeys. Though I can't complain that we're not earning money."

"You're affluent enough to have someone else do the work, Tony, but I suspect you like to be out with Moonbeam or the others."

"Your suspicion would be right. But in your own case, you don't need to nurse to live comfortably, as we looked over our joint fortunes the other week. Compared to most we are both rich."

"True.

Do you think it is the memory of poverty, or in my case the fear of it?"

"That would not surprise me. I haven't given it a lot of thought. However, I know I want to be able to earn my living, even if there are monies elsewhere I could use."

Jane asked "I gather your visit to Albourne went well?"

"Yes. I learned that the two rings we found in the baseboard hiding place belonged to my paternal grandparents. When we got back, I wrote a letter to Henry Mortimer describing what Jenny Dodds had said and that Bobby had witnessed this. I had Bobby add a note to that effect to the letter, and Henry will put it in his files in case there is any question about those rings. However, Jenny did not know about the pearls."

"You did not think to have Mrs. Dodds write the letter?"

"She cannot read or write. I communicate with her via the Vicar.

However, she gave me the key to getting my inheritance. I've had Henry send the Vicar two pounds, one for the church and one to be spent on making sure Jenny gets a few comforts. I'm afraid her pride really won't let her accept much, but we've suggested that the Vicar pay the coal man, for example, to add an extra sack, or the vicar pay her to help someone else who is in need but cannot afford to pay for help, or things like that. Also, we've asked the

vicar to let us know when the pound is down to a florin and we'll repeat the exercise."

"Unless the vicar's a fool, he'll find ways. His church gets a decent contribution and I'm sure he'll find people who need Jenny's help."

Tony said " We had a bit of excitement on the way home."

"Do tell."

Tony told the story. Jane said "It could have been rather nasty if there'd been two of them."

"Yes. Any time we're in a public place it will be worth making sure we neither show nor tell of things that might attract the wrong sort of interest.

But to change the subject, how are your plans for the nursing agency?"

"My advertisements haven't brought in any nurses, but two more ladies I worked with in the Crimea have replied. Another two who did reply earlier found alternative employment that they are happy with, or perhaps have someone they are attached to where they are. But Alice Shawcross arrives this week, and Phoebe Owens thinks her patient will expire sometime during the summer. And on the other side I've had a lady who is with child who wants a nurse-midwife to be with her for her last three months – called the last trimester – starting in mid-August."

"Where will your ladies stay while they are waiting?"

"At Lane Meadow. They can help Evelyn with the planting and also with the improvement of the cottage. I've already written back to tell them of that idea, and their response has actually been rather positive. In fact," Jane laughed "I might have to worry about losing nurses and gaining gardeners."

"That's actually brilliant. There's enough space for three or four women if they are not too ... "

"fussy?" Jane provided. "I agree. The cottage is a bit primitive, but with time we'll improve it. I don't mind paying Tom and Robert to construct some sheds and make the place comfortable, and the ladies can mix in with Molly and Vera to share the cooking.

However, I am seriously thinking of suggesting that one of them replace me with my current client, and I will come to *Matilda's* and start to apply myself to building my agency."

"That would be good. Your room can use some life in it.

By the way, I heard that Mrs. Bairstow took three of the pups out of the four that survived in the litter Mary Lawrence mentioned."

"Actually Evelyn took all four for the time being. They're supposed to be house-trained, but we think that may be wishful thinking. Once they're a little disciplined, Mrs. Upton will take at least one, probably two, and Evelyn will keep two to help guard the place.

I don't know why, but she's named them after the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, but of course shortened the names, so people probably won't

know the origin unless she tells them. The names are Than, Lim, Ares and Zeal.”

“She’ll need some cats too. Always mice and sometimes rats about.” Tony said.

“Yes. But I think they found there was one cat that the Samsons abandoned. It won’t be hard to find one or two more.

Oh. I meant to ask you to arrange a roll of wire netting, and, I suppose, a pair of wire cutters to be taken out there. Evelyn is going to build some rabbit hutches and a chicken run. She thinks we can get into production more quickly that way.”

“Let me put that in my notebook. Can you hold Moonbeam’s lead? She knows the way, but better to have hold.”

After Tony had made the entry, he took back the rope. They were almost at the yard, and Moonbeam walked a little faster. Jane laughed “Someone wants her supper,” as they had to increase their pace to match that of the donkey.

* * *

The month of June was a period where construction of the shed at Uptons’ kept most of our group of colleagues waiting. Arthur and Ian had not moved. Valerie was gathering her clothes and personal belongings, but her room at *Matilda’s* was being painted. Her bed at Uptons’ was one that had been there for a while before she was born. She thought it might be a good idea to have a new one, and toward the end of the month discovered a bed she liked, as well as a chest of drawers that looked well with it.

Though it took very little measured time to install this newly acquired furniture, Valerie was quite busy with both *Best Bonnet* and with selling furniture. The sales activity was made awkward by the construction of the shed. Seeing Withers in the street on the 8th of June, Valerie asked him “Did you find a tenant for the shop where *News and More* used to be?”

“Any day now, Miss Upton.”

“Well, if you want some income, I’ll offer a pound to have it until the 8th of July.”

Withers was taken by surprise, and hemmed and hawed for about a minute, then finally said “All right. But a pound in advance.”

“Come across to the shop. I’ll get a sovereign from the till and you can give me a receipt.”

Valerie used both the shop and back room of the old *News and More* premises to display furniture while the shed was being built. It meant a lot of quite heavy work for all concerned on the 8th and 9th, but it did result in

over double the number of items displayed. However, to avoid displaying a sign that said

ASK AT UPTONS' WHEN DOOR LOCKED

there was quite a bit of juggling who was where at different times of the day. Valerie solved this problem after about two days by hiring Matt Moore to sit in the temporary shop. Each furniture piece, as had been the case for several years, had a stock number. There was usually a list of these with the price Uptons' would pay to Abraham or Maud, as well as an indicator (C or M) to indicate which. However, for Matt, the list had the price asked by Uptons'. If someone wanted to bargain, the customer would be sent across to the main shop to deal with Valerie or Rebecca.

Initially, it was suggested that customers come to the main shop to pay for purchases. Matt, however, soon encountered a customer who wanted a piece of furniture immediately. As he knew the price, he simply sold it and later in the day gave the money to Valerie, who told him she was pleased at the initiative. The next day a customer seemed really desperate to have a particular lamp in the shop, and he quoted a price that was a shilling higher than what was on the list. However, Valerie came in as the customer was paying.

Matt was obviously uncomfortable as the customer was laying money down on a small table – it was in fact also for sale, as was Matt's chair – and Valerie noted the amount. She remembered the price on the list, but carefully said nothing. After the customer left, she said “You asked for an extra shilling.”

“Yes, Miss Upton. He wanted the lamp so bad, I figured I'd ask for more.”

“Did you sell any others above the listed price?”

“No. This is the first, Miss Upton. Just like yesterday was the first item a customer paid me for. And I've only had two pay me today, includin' the one I asked the extra shillin' for. Someone else wanted that small stool that was all scratched. It were only 9 pence, so not any real chance to charge more.”

“All right. If you can get more for items, I'll give you threepence on each extra shilling for yourself.”

“Really, Miss? Thank you.”

“Don't overdo it. You want 'em to actually buy the goods.

Looks like we can fit a few more items in here. I'll see what's under the last tarp in the yard if I can get at it with the workmen there.”

* * *

The work of *Best Bonnet* continued apace, though Joseph clearly had a future wedding on his mind. He and Mary Lawrence had been to see Reverend Wagner and banns would be called for three Sundays up to June 24. Mary's parents had invited Rebecca and Valerie for dinner on the 10th of June. The following Sunday Mary's parents had come for tea and been given a tour of Uptons', *Matilda's* and the temporary shop.

Theodore Lawrence ran a wholesale business in dry goods. Flour, rice, packaged foods, and other sundries. He commented "Furniture's a difficult commodity, Mrs. Upton. I think you're right to want more space to display it. But you don't deal in new?"

"Only in the sense that a few items are made by our friends the Souldons. Mostly we get second-hand and they often refurbish the items."

Caroline Lawrence, Mary's mother, said "Some of them look like new. The Souldons seem to do a good job."

"A very good job, Mrs. Lawrence. And Mr. Cohen and Mrs. Mortimer have a fine eye for items. They look at a few sticks of wood and see the wonderful piece of furniture Tom and Vera Souldon will make of it."

* * *

Joseph and Mary married on the afternoon of Saturday, July 7. Tony was Best Man. If Reverend Wagner had any qualms, he did not show them during the ceremony, for he was well-aware that Tony Brown's birth record was as Antonia Crown in his own parish records. Tony signed the register "A. Crown, known as Tony Brown", and the vicar murmured "Ah. Thank you, that will do very well."

The celebration was continued at Uptons' in the new shed, where furniture was not yet displayed for sale, Rebecca having decided that she could afford to wait until after the wedding. Valerie had talked to Peregrine Withers and negotiated another two weeks in the old shop of *News and More*. It turned out Withers had a tenant for the first of August, and another 10 shillings was better than nothing.

Tony gave a short speech congratulating his friend and business partner. The wedding guests were unaware that doing so gave him considerable internal distress. He was happy for Joseph and Mary, but the marriage was yet another case of people finding partnership and intimacy. At the same time, he loved his work and his businesses. Being out and about in the Brighton society, even in wind and wet and cold, gave him such buoyancy of spirit. The collision of wants and needs was unavoidable, but it would be good to find a ... what? ... contentment. With Jane there was a growing closeness, but Tony was uncomfortable with the idea of physical interaction. He could

not remember being held or cuddled by his mother or grandmother, though he supposed that he had been. Since that time, there had been nobody whose touch had been loving, and in the circumstances of his life, that would have been unlikely, save perhaps with Adeline, where there was affection and probably love of a sort. However, Adeline had been extremely proper, despite her relationship with Albert.

Late in the afternoon, James McDowell took the newlyweds to the station in the gig. They were going to spend a few nights in London. Tony had given Joseph some suggestions for things to do and places to go.

* * *

The next night Valerie slept at *Matilda's*. Tony helped her to move her clothes and belongings, but her old bed would go into the stock to be sold, though blankets and linens came across to her new lodgings. A very modest rent had been agreed, though no actual rent monies ever changed hands. The transactions were all on paper with offsets for work done.

They decided to move things then have supper, as Ian was moving to a newly partitioned space in the back of the old stable at Uptons', behind a new display area. Tom would eventually make a very small firebox in the front corner of the area with a stove pipe carefully led to the outside. This would allow this part of the new shop to be kept a little warm. The shed would be unheated, however.

Arthur was moving to the back room of the shop at *Matilda's*, and brought over his hand-cart, in fact using it to move his things, then returning for Valerie's.

It was after eight o'clock when all the shifting was done. They locked up the Uptons' yard and settled around the table in the kitchen at *Matilda's* where Bobby had prepared the supper, which was pork pies and salad with some new potatoes. There was cider, and after the work they had done, everyone had a glass.

There were five at the table – Tony, Rebecca, Valerie, Ian and Arthur.

Rebecca asked "Valerie. Are you thinking that Matt Moore should stay on with us?"

"He showed some initiative in getting an extra shilling on an item, though I suspect for himself rather than the business. However, when I told him I'd give him a quarter of any extra, he seemed to accept that as a reasonable commission."

"We'd be able to have him sleep where Tony and Arthur did. I'm rather hoping with all the new space we'll be able to increase our sales."

“Does the sign need refreshing?” Ian asked. “I’d be pleased to see what I could do.”

“Yes,” Rebecca answered. “Is there still some of the paper you used for this place?”

“Yes. I managed to get it right first time for here. Well, I did need to use the rubber on the pencil marks a few times. What do you want on the sign?”

“I think just *Upton Furnishings*. Don’t make it Uptons’, just Upton.”

“I like that, Ma. Nice and simple.”

* * *

Sunday June 15 Tony walked to church with Joseph and Mary. They’d returned the night before, and from the smiles and grins, it was clear they had much enjoyed both London and each other. Jane met them at the church door and they sat together for the service. Afterwards, Jane asked “Shall I meet you at six o’clock at the beach?”, meaning as previously when the donkey rides were ending.

“Yes, please. Will you have supper with me in the tavern?”

“Gladly. Though the cook where I work will begin to think I don’t like her food, though Sunday we dine in the middle of the day.”

“All right. I’ll see you at the beach at six.”

* * *

Once more, walking Moonbeam back to *Matilda’s*, Jane and Tony got to talk and catch up on their week’s activity. Joseph and Bobby were still giving rides, but would probably stop in a quarter hour and return home together. Supper tonight was catch as catch can, but Mary had said there would be some bread and cheese plus some salad items.

Tony asked “Did Mrs. Shawcross get safely to Lane Meadow?”

“Yes. Evelyn borrowed a hand-cart from the Saultons and met her. I suppose she could have used the one we purchased from them that is a sort of wheelbarrow. I’m not sure why she didn’t.

Oh. Bye the way, it’s actually Miss Shawcross. Neither she nor Phoebe Owens were ever married to my knowledge.”

“Have to take off the bin, and that would be a bit dirty from shifting the muck,” Tony explained.

“Yes. That would make sense. I’ve not had more information, just a short note about Alice’s arrival.”

“Have you a nursing assignment for her?”

“Not yet. However, as I told you a while ago, I’m going to ask my client if he will accept Alice in my place and I will move to *Matilda’s* in a few weeks if he agrees. I’ve no reason to think he will object, as I have talked with him about my purchase of Lane Meadow and my hopes to establish a nursing agency, and he has been most interested in the progress.”

* * *

Jane’s client did not object to having Alice in place of Jane. If anything, Alice was less likely to be wanting to take an hour or so away for this or that so she could chase her ambitions. Still, the date of the change-over was set for the 11th of August, a Saturday afternoon, as this was felt to be less disruptive.

While this decision was made on Monday, July 16, the post on the morning of the 17th brought notice of a minor crisis. Phoebe Owens, who had been working in Bristol, found her forecast of the imminent demise of her patient was correct, except the event took place a few weeks earlier than she anticipated, indeed on the Sunday afternoon. The family, who were not particularly well-disposed to her patient, told Phoebe that her services were no longer required and that she must leave by Tuesday morning at the latest, though with two weeks wages.

Phoebe’s letter said she would arrive sometime on the Tuesday, but that she did not have the train schedules. In response, Jane appeared at half-past eight on the Monday evening at *Matilda’s* to ask what to do.

Tony said “Let’s see if Matt Moore can be free to wait for her at the station with a hand-cart and take her to the Meadow. He can read a book when there’s no trains arriving. Paying him is cheaper than running around. I doubt she’ll get here for the 12:30 arrival, so have Matt at the Station from half-past two onwards. If she actually manages the half-past twelve, she’ll go to where you work, so we can have Matt come by there at two o’clock on his way to the Station to make sure she’s not there.”

“Tony. I really admire your practicality. I’m supposed to be known for that, but I think you outdo me.”

“As a team, we’ll be formidable,” Tony said, then realized Jane might read more into the statement than he intended.

* * *

Phoebe arrived on the half-past two train, and saw “P OWENS” on the card Matt was holding at the exit to the platform.

“Hello. I am Miss Owens.”

“Matthew Moore, at your service, Ma’am. I’m to take you and your baggage to Lane Meadow. We sent a message out there, but it was on the regular cart rounds, so they may only just have got it.

’ope you don’t mind a walk. It’s a bit of a way, but I’ve the ’and cart for your baggage.”

Unfortunately the porter Phoebe had hired had needed only to move her small trunk and modest carpet bag a few yards. She paid him nonetheless and he helped Matt put things on the cart and strap them down.

“This way, Ma’am.”

* * *

At Lane Meadow, the message had been received just before noon, having been passed to Robert, who called Molly, who clambered across the wall to deliver it. Robert saw Molly do this, and without even asking Tom started to make two stile steps, that is two wooden objects like the Greek letter π , with twin verticals and a flat cross-piece. He used the place where Molly had, in a very ungainly fashion required by a long skirt and the need to avoid showing legs or more, traversed the wall.

With a heavy mallet, Robert pounded in the verticals, to which he had put points on the bottom end. The top of each vertical had a block of square wood screwed to it. The top had holes for screws into the block. Thus steps were established about 15 inches high each side of the wall, which was about three feet high. Then Robert found some poles that had been salvaged from a pruned tree. He pounded two into the ground beside the steps, one on each side. Then he fastened a third pole across between these using a screw and stout twine passed around a number of times. Now there was a pair of steps and a hand rail. The steps were rather high and not for the infirm, but the need for an awkward and possibly dirty crossing of the wall was avoided.

Robert had sufficient skill that the steps were in place before his cousin Molly came back. She enjoyed a chin-wag with the new neighbours, but Vera would be having a word with her about neglecting her work. The handrail was finished within the hour, and before Phoebe arrived.

Tom had seen Robert working, and approved the idea. When Robert came back into the workshop, Tom said “Nice work. I’ve been thinkin’ we needed something like that, and even thought about making a gate in the wall, but your idea is simpler and saves quite a lot of work. An’ if we don’t like it, it’s not a catastrophe to take it away.”

In the Meadow cottage, the arrival of Phoebe and Matt set off much greeting and chatter, but Phoebe was put to work almost immediately, as while there was space for her, there was a need to set up a sleeping space. Vera had, when Molly was being told to take the message across, suggested the spare palliasse that Tony or other guests sometimes used could be borrowed by the cottage.

Matt, who was offered tea and a bun, was given a note for Tony or Jane – Evelyn knew Tony could be asked for assistance on Jane’s behalf – about a cot and bedding for Phoebe. Food at Soultons’ would be under a similar arrangement to that for Evelyn and Alice, but a chair from the stock in the workshop would be needed so all could sit.

After Matt departed, it was nearing half-past four, and Evelyn took Phoebe on a tour. Phoebe said “I see you kept that cantinière uniform.”

Evelyn was wearing this outfit.

“Yes. Keeps the muck off my clothes. I know Vera thinks it very useful, and is thinking of making one, but I’ve had some dirty looks from some passers by.”

“They don’t have to clean your skirts. And you showed me the muck pile over there. That wattle fence was a good idea.”

“I’m rather proud of that. Built it myself.”

“Really. Good for you.

Did you do the planting beds too. They’re a lot lower.”

“Yes. I can build a four foot by four foot planting bed in an hour if the wall is used as the back side.”

“Perhaps tomorrow I can go into town and get some men’s trousers and make myself an outfit for working. I came to do nursing, but if Jane will keep me housed and fed, I’ll be happy to work here until we can make some profits.”

As they walked towards the new greenhouse, four young dogs of medium build and indeterminate breed – all of them a bit different – followed them. Evelyn said “These four are all siblings, but you wouldn’t know it. That one with two different ears is Than. The one with the black face is Lim, Ares is the one with the white paws, and Zeal is the one that got the curly hair of a sheepdog. The first two are dogs, the last two bitches. We aim to keep Ares and Zeal, but Mrs. Upton who you’ll no doubt meet later will take the two dogs to help guard her shop and yard in town. She sells a lot of the furniture Tom, Vera and Robert fix and refinish.”

“Where do they get the furniture?”

“A Mr. Cohen and a Mrs. Mortimer – she’s actually Tom’s sister – go to auctions and sales. They have an eye for things. Seem to do well.

Mr. Mortimer's a solicitor, but he worked as a clerk in an office where the Saultons – there's another sister too – worked for a lady who married Mr. Cohen. Mrs. Cohen runs *Bartlett and Jones* haberdashery. And next to *B & J* is the *Brighton Ladies Emporium* which sells fancy ladies' clothing. The Emporium is run by Mrs. Baldwin and Mrs. Moss, two older ladies. The gossip is that Mrs. Baldwin is Mrs. Cohen's mother, though they say they are family friends. Must be a story there. I haven't met everyone yet, but those I have, I like."

Evelyn did not mention *Fortescue Factory*, as she hadn't had that enterprise explained to her yet.

* * *

By the last week of July, Than and Lim had a kennel that Joseph constructed with some advice from Dan Dixon. They had been brought to Uptons' yard, and they had made it their home. The three cats that lived in the house and yard of what was now *Upton Furnishing* were less than happy with the new arrivals, who actually paid them scant attention except as interesting moving objects. Eventually, of course, the dynamics of people, dogs and cats settled down. Indeed, the dogs would occasionally get a rat that the cats flushed out in an informal cooperation, so the dogs and cats largely kept the rodents away.

Two days after Phoebe arrived, Joseph delivered a second roll of what in later times would be called chicken wire to Saultons' for passing on to Evelyn. When Evelyn was working to plant some spring onions – a crop that could be harvested relatively quickly – she was, of course, near the wall between the properties and Robert called out "Your wires 'ere. Want me to bring it to the wall? You might want the cart, though. Quite heavy."

"Yes please. I'll have it here and get the cart when I go back to the cottage."

This wire was so a chicken run could be built. Several weeks before such a roll had been delivered along with a pair of wire cutters and some U staples. Tom had found some wood he was willing to part with for a few pennies that could be repurposed for hutches, and Evelyn made a couple of them in the Saultons' yard where Tom and Robert could provide advice and a bit of rudimentary instruction in how to do things. But Evelyn was a fast learner, and soon could turn out a hutch in little more than an hour. They weren't works of art, simply rectangular frames with wire on all but the front, and a smaller frame that would fit in the opening that also had wire on it. Tom suggested two staples, one on the box, one on the frame, with a loop of wire and the ends twisted with pliers, would make a hinge. One of these at each

end allowed the front to swing up. On the bottom of the "door", a staple on the movable part and one in the frame could be secured with a piece of wire with the top bent over so it didn't fall through.

"Looks good," Tom said. "Just need somewhere to put 'em and then some rabbits."

Evelyn got Joseph and Tony to ask around who might sell some breeding rabbits and perhaps some young ones to fatten up. She also asked about who might have scrap greens for feeding them. Eventually, she planned to have enough plant material left over from the crops, but for now needed to have something for the rabbits. By the beginning of August, however, there were six hutches along the side of the cottage with a wattle fence at the end to shelter them from wind. The dogs took an interest, but Ares got a whack for being too inquisitive and they then watched but didn't go too near.

Tom arranged some three inch square beams to be delivered. Evelyn sent a note to Jane to ask if the latter would consider this a cottage expense, or if Evelyn were on her own. Jane was actually both amused and intrigued at her friend's enterprise, which she heartily supported, and as soon as she could came to see what had been done.

"My word. Rabbits and soon chickens. For eggs or the pot?"

"Both, I hope. I've not had birds or rabbits before, but have been places where they were being kept. I think I can manage it. But to start with, not a lot."

Phoebe helped Evelyn build the chicken run, which they placed a bit away from the cottage. Given the openness of the Meadow, even with the woods behind, they built a wattle fence on the side away from the cottage and a small chicken house for the birds which had partitioned boxes for them to nest in. One side of this could be opened, much like the rabbit hutches, so eggs could be collected.

Jane approved the chicken run, and actually suggested she would pay for some feed, but pointed out that expenditures and time should be recorded so they could work out if their efforts were profitable. Given Evelyn's energies and enthusiasm, she really did not have any great anxiety. In fact, her main worry was that Phoebe seemed to be taking so well to the work of the Meadow that she might not want to take on a nursing assignment.

That worry evaporated when a letter came from a middle-aged woman who had been nursing a retired military officer in Hove who had died. Margaret Cantley took a 10 day trip to visit family in the West Midlands before taking up the assignment with the pregnant client in Brighton, and Phoebe stayed busily helping Evelyn expand the horticulture business.

Phoebe had some knowledge of flowers, and she and Evelyn told Jane that they were going to try to make sure they could supply some flowers and greenery for the Christmas period. This was a bit of a gamble, but

with the greenhouse now in place, they thought they could manage. Phoebe spent some time walking to different places where plants and seeds could be acquired, and by the end of August – really the latest that planting would allow them to get product for Christmas – the two women had plants in pots.

An annoying task was bringing water from the cottage. Evelyn had had to buy some big watering cans. The pump in the cottage must be on top of a quite deep well. She and Phoebe talked about getting a new well drilled near the greenhouse, but Tom noted that the greenhouse was up a slope from the cottage. A partial solution was worked out by attaching some tinfoil gutters to the sides of the greenhouse near the ground and leading the runoff to some large tubs made from cutting an old barrel in two. This still cost a few shillings of materials, as well as some care that the hoops were placed well to keep the staves together, but usually there was water in the tubs available for use on the plants.

* * *

On Saturday, August 11, after finishing his regular rounds, Tony went to Lane Meadow with Moonbeam and her cart to collect Alice and her luggage to go to Jane's client. Alice left a box in a corner of the upstairs area at the cottage, as it would be easier not to move personal items that she would not need. At the destination, Alice's baggage was offloaded and Jane's put on. There was more of the latter, as Jane both had more possessions and she had not had the opportunity to store them elsewhere.

They said goodbye to Alice and walked to *Matilda's*. Tony said "Moonbeam's tired. We had a lot of collections and deliveries this morning, then the walk out to the Meadow and back."

"And what of you, Tony? You must have walked the same distance."

"Yes. But there were a few times earlier today when the load was close to the maximum I'll let her pull. At least she gets a rest tomorrow, and I'll give her an extra couple of carrots tonight."

Bobby had prepared a roast of pork as a special welcome for Jane. Valerie had helped, and there was a sponge cake for dessert that she had baked, as well as some raspberries and cream to go with it.

"Well, I shall definitely want to stay here," Jane said. "Thank you for the wonderful welcome."

In the last few weeks, Jane's bedroom had been painted, new curtains had been found, and a double bed, a wardrobe and a chest of drawers had been purchased. Jane said she felt a double bed would be more in keeping with the room. Tony and Valerie were actually responsible for the selections

as Jane had been working, though she had come by to approve the selections in quick evening outings.

When Jane and Tony had arrived with the cart, Arthur and Tony had brought up Jane's baggage and brought it into the room. Arthur left as Tony brought in a carpet bag and a pillow case of what turned out to be garments to wash. Jane said "You can stay and see what treasures lurk in my trunk and valise if you want, Tony."

"All right, but I'm going to take that chair and catch my breath. As you said, I've walked a lot. Bobby is looking after Moonbeam while Valerie keeps an eye on dinner."

Jane opened the trunk and took out a nurses uniform. "My uniform that I wore in the Crimea. I should modify it so I can use it, otherwise the moths will get it."

She hung it on a hook in the wardrobe using a chain loop on the neck. One by one, she took items out of the trunk and placed them on shelves in the wardrobe or hung them on hooks in the side of the wardrobe that had a vertical area for the purpose.

Tony had fallen asleep while Jane did this. The chair was a wing-back one and had a high enough back that his head could rest while he napped. When Jane finished her unpacking, or at least got to a point where no more unpacking was needed for the moment, it was not yet half past five, so she took off her shoes and lay on the bed and closed her eyes. She did not sleep, but listened to the sounds of the house and the street.

In her client's house she had been assigned a small room in the attic. That space had been clean and properly appointed, but sterile. This room had life. It was hers, and even though it as yet lacked the writing desk she wanted which would double as a dressing table, it already had the wingback chair Tony was asleep in. And this bed was so much more comfortable than the single cot she had used for the past months. The counterpane she was lying on was one Valerie had selected, somehow divining just what Jane wanted. And the light coming around the heavy curtains and through the lace sheer ones played upon the floor, walls, ceiling and furniture. This would be home, the first she could remember since being a little girl of 10, when her parents had died and an aunt and uncle had taken her in, but married her off as fast as they could. At least Mr. Harper had given her a better name than Mudd. Jane Mudd. What a monicker, to use the slang word that had come into use in the last decade.

"Dinner in five minutes," Bobby shouted from below. Tony stirred.

"Must've dropped off and missed your unpacking."

"Not to worry. If you can't nap in your own home, it isn't your own," Jane said.

"I'll go down to the WC and wash up for dinner."

“I’d better get the dust off my hands too,” Jane agreed. “My baggage could use a brush before being put away.”

* * *

Mary, Joseph, Rebecca, Matt and Ian were eating separately at Uptons’. At *Matilda’s*, the dinner was, as hoped, a great success. Arthur wolfed down his main course, and said he just wanted a piece of cake, so Valerie cut him a slice and he disappeared to join Matt Moore in some excursion to the beach. The others tarried over a glass of cider each.

Valerie said “I hope it won’t cause too much inconvenience, but I’ve asked Tom to come when he can in the next fortnight to put in a stovepipe on the upstairs landing.”

Tony said “I think I forgot to tell Jane that we decided to get a small stove to put there to warm the whole floor. The only fireplace is in the master bedroom. I’m thinking that we might want to have a screen that will block that – something we can remove if we want a fire. The chimney can be shared.

Oh. I sent a note to Mr. Goldman, and he said the chimneys were swept last October. We can probably wait until Spring of next year.”

“I think a stove makes sense for the floor,” Jane said. “Who’ll make the screen for the fire.”

“I’ll ask Tom,” Valerie said. “He might do it himself, or get Dan Dixon to do it. We’ll work out an arrangement. We always do.”

“Our parlour is still almost empty. Can we say a parlous parlour?” Tony said, and the others laughed.

Jane said “I think *parlous* means dangerous, but the phrase is amusing.”

“Anyway, we do need furniture in there,” Tony said.

Valerie said “There’s a table just come in yesterday with four leaves. A rather interesting arrangement with six legs so the middle doesn’t sag when you extend the table.”

“Can we go and look at it?” Jane asked. “It’s only a few steps away.”

“I don’t see why not.”

Bobby stayed to do the dishes. The other three went to Uptons’, where they not only looked at, and decided to acquire, the table, but also saw a pair of arm chairs and a chaise longue. They would need some dining chairs, probably a half dozen, but Rebecca Upton said to leave it to her to set some aside in the next few days for them to look at.

In the meantime, Mary had made tea and it would be rude to refuse, so tea and biscuits were enjoyed with a rather lively conversation about the trial of Thomas Hopley at the Lewes Assizes which had taken place on July

23. Hopley was a schoolmaster who had taken on the education of a Reginald Cancellor as a private pupil. The newspapers could not decide the age of the boy, variously stating 13, 14 or 15, and who was described in court as having been "given up as ineducable". Some reports suggested he had water on the brain. In any event, Hopley was paid £180 per year to tutor him, a very generous fee. However, the boy's supposed stubbornness led to a beating on 21 April 1860, and he was found dead the next morning.

The debate in the Uptons' parlour was less on the manslaughter conviction of Hopley than on the merits of corporal punishment of young people. This expanded to encompass the beatings husbands exacted on their wives, and the quite widely held belief that the common law countenanced this.

"Justice Buller is reputed, but I believe it is not substantiated by text, to have stated the so-called Rule of Thumb," Tony said.

"Better that Justice Buller had been beaten with such a stick of wrought iron," Jane said with some anger in her voice.

"I wasn't condoning the statement," Tony said. "In fact, I was trying to argue the opposite, namely that the attribution of the Rule was false. Indeed, I recall reading an essay somewhere that English law has for some centuries treated wife-beating as a crime, though sadly one against the community rather than the wife."

Rebecca had been unusually silent, and her expression was frozen.

Joseph asked "Ma. You all right?"

"Yes. But the discussion brings back some ugly memories."

"Are you able to tell us?" Jane asked.

"Well, I suppose it's time. Valerie, Joseph. You may have realized that after your father died as a result of his foolishness that nearly got Tony killed, I didn't mourn much. And I haven't taken much notice of any man sniffing round. Well, if I got married I'd have to lose control of my business and house. But I didn't mourn much. Your Dad had been hitting me for a while. I've still scars on my back and arms."

"Oh, Ma. That's terrible," Valerie said. "But now you say, I came in on you when you were bathing one day and saw some scars, and I wondered. You were upset so I left and pretended I hadn't seen."

"Well. Now you all know. I'd appreciate it if we said no more on the subject."

Jane said "If you did want to marry, you could first pass the property to Joseph and Valerie. Even add a condition that they were to take care of your material needs."

"That is a thought, I suppose," Rebecca said. "When Upton and I first married, we were happy. It's a pity he was such a fool in business. Should've left it to me, though I only discovered I could do all right after he died. And I think a lot of that was due to Mrs. Goldman and Maud Mortimer. When

everyone treated us like lepers they came to me and offered to 'elp. And Upton had been the cause of some loss to them, but they didn't act like vultures. Came and helped us get on our feet again. In fact, better than ever."

"Ma. We were there," Joseph said.

"Yeah. But Mrs. Harper wasn't. She should know who are the people to have as friends."

"I've only met the Goldmans when we came to look at the property, but I knew from Tony that they played fair with people," Jane said.

* * *

The next day the weather was fair, and, being a Sunday, was likely to be a big one for donkey rides. Normally Tony, Bobby and Joseph would each take a donkey, but today Joseph was to go with Mary to church, then to a dinner with some of Mary's family. While Moonbeam or Annabelle would normally be left behind in such a situation, Jane said "Would I be able to lead one of the donkeys so all three can be employed."

Tony answered "I don't see why not. There isn't much to do. You help the children to get on the donkey. We don't allow large children or adults – they're too heavy. About 6 stone limit to be really safe. And we give eight to ten rides then take a donkey to the water trough for the time of two or three rides. That means they each get a rest and we stagger the breaks. You hold the lead rope and walk. If a donkey doesn't want to move, you have to figure out why. They're not stubborn, and generally there's a reason they don't want to move. So mostly they just follow you and the rope is slack and you let them make the pace. We set a circuit that gives a five minute ride, more or less. That's generally enough for most children. They want to have the experience, then get bored. And we try to keep them from petting the donkeys. Our animals like petting but in small doses, and we don't want children bitten."

Jane found she very much enjoyed the day. They stopped at half-past six and made their way back to *Matilda's*. Supper would be a cold pork pie and some salad. Arthur and Jolly had stayed at the yard, and Tony had asked Arthur to ensure there would be hot water for baths. There would not be enough for even two full baths, but sufficient for pouring to wash hair and use a sponge.

Tom had made some screens, and Tony set these up. Valerie was over with her mother, reviewing some of the furniture and moving it for better display.

Jane said "Bobby. Do you want your hair washed?"

Thus Bobby knelt in the oval tub and Jane poured some water over Bobby's head, soaped it, then rinsed twice.

"You can stand up and use the sponge and soap. I'll do your back," Jane said. "Here's a bucket of fresh warm water to rinse off with the flannel, then you can dry off."

Bobby dried off and Jane used a towel and comb to untangle hair. "Your breasts are getting bigger, Bobby."

"Yeah. The vest doesn't hold 'em so well any more. And me trousers don't fit so well any more either."

"We'll talk about it soon."

"Yeah. I'm tired now, and mornin' will come soon."

Tony had been putting the donkeys to bed. Coming into the kitchen, he had Bobby a good night.

"Am I next in the tub or are you," Jane asked.

"Either. I'm sure we're both a bit sweaty from the heat of the day and working with the animals. They're not dirty, but they have their own smell."

Jane had already shed her skirt and blouse and was just in her shift, and said "Then I'll go next. Come pour water on my head and help me wash my hair. There's some shaved soap I boiled up with some water in that jar."

Jane knelt and Tony poured water and helped shampoo Jane's hair, then rinsed. Then Jane washed and rinsed.

"Tony. What's got your attention?"

"Uh. Um. You've ... almost no hair there."

"My pubic hair. I saw Turkish women who cut it off. In fact shave or wax it off. I started to cut it off with scissors as a way to minimize the chance of lice, then I found I was used to it.

Pass me my towel will you. Then it's your turn."

Tony had been used to bathing at Fortescue Road, and had continued to bathe, albeit standing or kneeling in a modest sized tin tub. The current tub was a larger version, and it would be possible to sit in it, though legs would overhang the margins. Since his first encounter with a tub at the hands of Mary and Adeline at Fortescue Road, he had mostly bathed alone, though Adeline had been allowed to help with hair washing on occasion.

Jane said "I can see how you get away with a man's shirt. Your breasts are there, but small. Bobby's are twice the size. We're going to have to consider women's clothing or some sort of binding."

"I'd noticed things were getting a bit ... strained."

Jane laughed. "And you're well-muscled. It's the work you do. It's not the fashion for women to be like you are, but you can't be soft and delicate to be a donkeyman and carter. Most women are a bit fat and pudgy. It's how men are supposed to like them."

Tony said “You’re not like that, but you don’t have ... I suppose it’s the sinews ... that I do.”

“And my tits are too big for me to pretend like you do. But I find your leanness and strength very interesting.”

Jane had a towel round her head but was otherwise naked.

“I suppose I find looking at you interesting too. But I wonder if I’d be similarly interested in looking at a man, or men.”

“Do you want to touch me? Or have me touch you?”

Tony was silent for several seconds. “From what you have said in the past, I think you want that. I think I may want both to touch and be touched, but you must be aware that I’ve not had physical contact with anyone that I can remember, though my mother must have held me. I believe from what is in letters and what Jenny Dodds has said that my parents were loving. And I shared a great affection with Adeline, but we didn’t touch each other except in normal activities.

I want us to be close, Jane, but I’m not sure yet how to act with you. And I don’t want to create any situation with Bobby or Valerie or others that will distract us from being together.”

“That you are at least not repelled gives me hope. And your last comment is very sensible. We don’t want to cause any scandal, so I will put on my dressing gown and pass you your night shirt.”

Tony said “For what it’s worth, Valerie knows my sex. So if she were to come in and find us bathing together, it would not be serious if we were simply helping each other with the water.”

“And now we do need to help each other with the water. Do you think we’re strong enough to lift the tub and dump it in the sink?”

“Yes. We should be able to handle it. But we need to think about a proper bathroom. Or at least a bath that can be drained easily. It might be possible to put it in the corner here beside the stove and drain out through the wall.”

“Yes. It would make it easier. But now, I find I am suddenly very tired. Goodnight, Tony. And thank you for a nice day.”

* * *

Tony was tired, but did not sleep right away. His room had a modest window that looked out on the yard, as did Bobby’s. The sash window was open a couple of inches at the top to allow some air. Were the sashes in good condition. He’d been told they were quite a bit of work if the cords broke.

Thinking about windows was a distraction from considering how to interact with Jane. Tony wanted to be close. The physical intimacy of helping

each other to bathe was ... interesting. Would touching or being touched be pleasant? Satisfying? Exciting? Disturbing? All of the above?

Better think of practicalities.

Before winter, it would be good to get a stove installed. The door to the attic wasn't far away from where the stove would have to go. Tony wondered how easy it would be to have a ladder or steps handy so the attic could be used for storage. As Tom had said, the trick would be to avoid taking up too much space for the stairs. However, not having good stairs would make the attic less useful. The best placement would be above and parallel to the stairs up to this level. There was already the passageway leading to the window with its balustrade. Stairs would reduce the light in the room Valerie had. But perhaps if some steps were hinged at the side of the trap door that was toward the front of the house. They would swing down onto the passageway. That could be awkward. Perhaps the trap door could be moved to above the stairs and the steps would swing down to land on the platform by the window.

So the idea would not be forgotten, Tony got out of bed and found the matches on the dresser and lit the candle that was there. He found his notebook and wrote a note about his thoughts, then blew out the candle, got into bed, and soon was asleep. Jolly, who sometimes slept in the room, was, this night, curled up in the room behind the shop in her rather scruffy basket. Olaf was there too. Stairs were starting to be troublesome for Jolly, who was, for a dog, now elderly.

* * *

Sunday September 9, Jane and Tony went to Lane Meadow. They were going to spend some time with Tom and Vera, then have an afternoon dinner with Evelyn and Phoebe. They wanted to talk to Tom about the attic stairs and the stove, and to the two ladies at the Meadow about the progress with the use of that property as well as other efforts to promote their business. While they could have taken a hansom, Jane and Tony walked. Jolly decided to not come. It was clear she was a lot less active than she used to be. Tony was thinking of asking Rebecca if one of the dogs she had could move to *Matilda's*. He wondered how Tom and Vera were doing with Fuzzy. Possibly one of the two bitches at the Meadow could move across the wall to serve as a guard dog there. Truthfully, Tony missed the companionship Jolly provided. It would be good to have that again.

Tony said "Do you think we are prospering sufficiently?"

"My nursing agency certainly is not. But the Meadow seems to be starting to look like it will make some money soon. Evelyn thinks she'll have some

rabbits to sell for Christmas. She's actually been building more hutches and hopes to have a dozen of them soon. And her first two female rabbits are about to give birth."

"They've just got chickens too, I think," Tony said.

"Yes. I wonder if they are laying yet. I don't know how many eggs they'll get. Probably only a small number to start with. I suspect we'll make minimal money from eggs unless there are a lot more hens. But we might make some money from chickens for meat. Overall, I think the main advantage of the property is that it gives us a place where nurses can stay and their activities on the Meadow will improve the property."

They went first to the cottage at the Meadow to drop off some bottles of cider and a box of Treats Tony had collected the day before on his rounds.

Evelyn said "You missed some drama, but probably wouldn't have wanted to see it."

"What happened?" Jane asked.

"A fox tried to get at the chickens, and was trying to dig under the wire netting. We were told to bury it, and I'm glad we did. Just as the fox was going to get through, however, Ares and Zeal pounced on him or her. They didn't even bark – real devils. We don't even know it was a dog fox or a vixen, as they tore it apart. We've just buried the remains."

"I'm glad they got it before we lost our chickens."

"So am I," Evelyn said.

Dinner was going to be at half-past one, and it was still well before noon, so Tony and Jane went across the stile to Saultons'.

"Hello there, Tom." Tony said as Tom came out of the workshop.

"Vera! Tony and Jane are here."

Vera came out of the house. She asked "How are you both?"

"Doing all right, I think," Tony said. "We're trying to see how the Meadow is doing."

Vera said "Mrs. Bairstow and Miss Owens are getting the place well set to produce a lot of different things. It's a pity you didn't acquire the Meadow earlier in the year when she could have planted things that could be harvested now."

"At least they're not spending a fortune to do so," Tom said. "I think you should do all right in a year or so, but no doubt it will be a worry in the meanwhile."

Jane answered "And just now my nursing agency isn't getting enquiries, even though we've been advertising since the beginning of the summer. We got one client and found one nurse to fill it, but a 10% commission won't bring in enough. Fortunately, I have enough savings and what my late husband left me that I won't go bankrupt. But it would be nice to do better than we are at the moment."

Vera said “That greenhouse went up very fast. I like that it is all the same sized glass frames. We’ve been thinking of making some sets of parts that could be shipped as an ensemble ready to be set up in less than a day.”

“I’m thinking of a sailcloth wall for the bottom where Ms. Bairstow has one of wattle. Wattle’s more work, and the material ain’t always available,” Tom said. “You have a couple of willows on the other side of the ditch hangin’ over on your property, and plenty of twig material.”

“I gather water was the main concern,” Jane said.

“Yes. We can add gutters fairly easily. Making a tank or reservoir is more tricky. Got to bury a barrel, and they cost money. On the Downs chalk, you need to line a pond. That’s not cheap either, especially to get it right so it doesn’t leak.”

The conversation moved on to other things. Two and a half year old David was admired and allowed to inspire laughter. Tony and Tom talked about Jolly and Fuzzy getting older. They decided they would both watch for potential new dogs. Possibly they could each take one of the four that started out with Evelyn and Lane Meadow.

The time for dinner approached, and Tony and Jane re-crossed the stile and went to the cottage. Evelyn and Phoebe normally shared dinner with Tom and family to save extra work. Today, however, two extra persons would be awkward round the table, and it was known that Jane wanted to talk with the two women about the business of either the Meadow or Harper’s Nursing.

The dinner was a rabbit stew, but not from the hutches. Phoebe had talked to Robert about how she had seen a boy she knew when a child who made snares. Robert showed her how to make and use snares, and she had caught two wild rabbits at the back of the property by noting where there were runs to get at water in the ditch. Vegetables in the stew were, however, all purchased as yet.

Jane said “It’s a pity that we’ve had so little response to our advertisements for nurses or nursing clients. Just one of each so far.”

“Yet nursing is definitely in the news,” Evelyn said. “Tom and Vera get the Times and pass it to us when they are done. I saw that there is now the Nightingale Training School and Home for Nurses opened at St Thomas’ Hospital in London.”

Tony asked “Will nursing eventually require such training, do you think?” though his question was not directed to anyone in particular.

Jane said “I think it will, but it will be a few years. There was a new Medical Act a couple of years ago that is supposed to require qualifications for physicians and surgeons.”

“I wonder what it will mean for those of us who have acquired our knowledge beside the sick bed or the operating table,” Phoebe said.

“It’ll depend on whether there are lots of nurses compared to the need,”

Evelyn suggested. "It won't go amiss to have some other skills or resources. I've got to say I'm rather happy here at Lane Meadow raising plants and animals."

* * *

On the Tuesday following, Tony detoured to Fortescue Road so he could talk to Cassandra. The new gate let him bring Moonbeam and her cart inside the yard. Cassandra was expecting the visit, as Tony had sent a note with Bobby the day before.

"Hello, Tony.

Come on up to the drawing room. Martha. Bring us some tea and biscuits." They were coming in via the lower level and through the kitchen.

Tony said "Thanks. I'm a bit thirsty, and the biscuits here are generally very good."

Martha poured the tea, then went back to the kitchen where James was preparing supper and young Catherine was "helping". Cassandra said "It has been a long time since we had a chance to chat."

"That's why I wanted to come. And you must soon visit to see what we've done so far with *Matilda's* as we now call the Goldmans' premises."

"I will. No doubt it's due to all the work with moving yourself and the businesses, as well as Jane Harper buying the property next to Tom and Vera. And you've come into your inheritance this year and sold Ezekiel's house too."

"It has been a busy year in all sorts of ways. I'm not sure that everything is going as it should."

"Why don't you tell me what's bothering you? It's clear you have some anxieties."

"On the business side, the biggest concern is that Jane's nursing agency hasn't had much success. Also The Meadow is worrying her because we got it late enough in the year that there will likely not be much revenue from any production this year. Actually, Mrs. Bairstow and Miss Owens have made enormous strides in getting the place set up to produce vegetables and flowers, and they've got rabbits and chickens, the last for both eggs and meat."

Cassandra said "I'd heard something of that by way of Tom the other day. But I've seen Jane's advertisements in the *Herald*. She needs clients and nurses, and particularly a balance of them. I wonder if she's not chosen too narrow business for an agency."

"What do you mean by "too narrow"?"

“There may be many people who need nursing, but very few who know they need it. Or they may not feel they need it as much as they do. Then you need clients who also have the money to pay sufficiently so Jane and her nurses can prosper. Harper’s Nursing is likely a good idea in London. Moreover, it’s possible people looking for nurses for the time they are here convalescing in Brighton are hiring their nurse in London from a London agency, just as many hire servants from London agencies even when in the provinces.”

“That’s a bit discouraging.”

“But you know, Tony, all our businesses have gained from the overlap between the different efforts. We use *Best Bonnet* for the Factory, and we used the Treats for the tenants here. The *Emporium* gets material and thread and needles from *B & J*, and you know how Maud and Abraham feed *Soultons’* and *Uptons’*. Perhaps Jane needs to widen her services.”

“You mean to offer more than just nurses? Perhaps assisting invalids when they travel. Or helping people to pack baggage for travel. Or even the ladies from the Meadow doing some gardening.”

Cassandra said “Yes. I think that’s what I mean. *Harper’s Helpers* if you like.”

“I’ll tell Jane.”

“What about outside of business? Are you enjoying the house?”

“Yes. We’ve managed to do some improvements. I think we’d really like the luxury of running hot water in a large bath, but that seems to be rather rare yet, though it is talked about. We did get a water closet installed. Goldmans didn’t have one. And the stable now has all three donkeys.”

“Yes. You acquired a new one. I’m not sure I’ve seen her yet.”

“Her name’s Jessie. We’ll have to give Catherine a ride.”

“And does Mrs. Harper like the house?”

“I think so. I’m still getting used to her.”

“Does she have particular opinions that are at odds with your own?” Cassandra asked.

“I don’t think so. It is more that she has had a ... different sort of life. And her ... inclinations may be different from my own. It is rather awkward for me, I fear.”

“Are you able to be a bit more specific, or is it too delicate?”

“I believe she wants what she calls an "intense friendship" with me. But my experience does not give me an understanding of what she means. In one respect I believe you may be able to give, if not an explanation, at least some measure of enlightenment, as I believe you have had a wider experience of the world than most men or women.”

Cassandra did not know how much of her past Tony was cognizant of, and suspected his comment was only very general in nature. She said “I have

indeed met many people of many different stations in life, but myself have had rather limited actual experience. I have once or twice encountered women – an indeed a few men – whose inclinations were to form very close attachments to those of their own sex. Beyond being aware of their proclivity, I haven't much idea of how they feel or wish to act. Personally, I don't care, though the law seems to view men who seek closeness with men with special viciousness. Largely the companionship of two women, of whatever intensity, seems to occasion little notice. However, it could be ... er ... very uncomfortable if one party wanted an intimacy the other did not."

"Or one party wanted that intimacy and the other were unsure."

"Ah. I believe I grasp the source of your anxiety."

I can only say that you should ask for patience and understanding while you make up your own mind. But, of course, feelings are never subject to reason. It may be irresolvable, and you may need to be prepared for a possible disappointment."

Tony said "I believe I would like a partnership and a close friendship. But I've never had anyone very close to me. I cannot even remember the embraces of my mother. That doesn't mean I might not like to be embraced, but I just don't know. It would be very sad to lose Jane's friendship, so I am ... I suppose uncertain would describe my feelings."

"We can't think or feel for others, Tony. I would estimate that being frank with Mrs. Harper about how you feel offers the best chance to avoid unhappiness. But I do hope that the friendship gives you the sense of belonging you want. Would that be more or less correct?"

"Yes. Belonging ... with someone, but probably not belonging to them."

"You always surprise me, Tony, with your depth of thought."

Oh. I probably didn't mention that over a year and a half ago, Vera showed me how you taught her about calculating the amount of a loan still outstanding. As I said, you keep surprising me, very pleasantly I might add."

"After Adeline taught me to read, I found there's so much out in the world to know about, and on my rounds I get time to read when waiting for things, and I get to think a lot when walking. And some folk would think me strange, but I talk to Moonbeam about those things, even though I know she doesn't understand or respond."

"She probably understands your tone very well," Cassandra said.

* * *

"You said Mrs. Cohen had some ideas you and I should talk about," Jane said as they were getting up from supper. "Better come in my room and we'll chat."

Cooking was still shared with the Uptons', but now pots were carried between the buildings as otherwise the table in one location or the other was too crowded for a regular meal and needed chairs moved from other rooms. Also the need to lock up one place or the other carefully was avoided. This evening, Valerie had gone over to talk to her mother and Mary about some family event with Mary's parents. Bobby and Arthur were dealing with the dishes.

Tony had a tray with teacups and some biscuits. He noticed Jane closed the door.

Jane said "So. Did Mrs. Cohen's ideas strike you as useful?"

"I think so. She asked how we were doing, and I told her we were doing fine with most things. The Meadow isn't quite profitable yet, but Evelyn and Phoebe have plenty of things that should eventually bring some revenue. It's the agency that seems to be a bit slow to start."

"Yes. And I feel it's almost a criticism of me when we say that. I know you don't intend it that way, but somehow that's what I hear."

"Of course it isn't a criticism of you. It's simply a statement of where we are. Clearly we shouldn't keep trying if we are getting nowhere. But Mrs. Cohen pointed out that the activities that started with her purchasing the houses on Fortescue Road interconnected. In fact, if I think about it, they rather grew out of things we were doing, and we still interact."

"How do you mean?" Jane asked.

"Well, look at *Best Bonnet* and how we work with Maud and Mr. Cohen at furniture sales or auctions, moving stuff to *Soultons'*, who were spawned from Tom cleaning up second hand furniture for the houses. And we bring things back to *Uptons'*. *News and More* is rather an oddity, but not every day do you encounter a murder on your daily rounds. Still, we found that *Best Bonnet* can bring the papers and magazines."

"So you are saying the nursing doesn't link to other things we do?"

"More importantly, I think Mrs. Cohen was meaning our activities should provide links that enlarge each other. It's not really always planned or intentional, but if you meet someone and you are doing something and they remember, then they come and ask if you can do X or Y for them too."

"That makes sense. But what can I do with the agency?"

"Mrs. Cohen wondered if you could broaden the services. She even suggested something like *Harper's Helpers'*"

"By which nursing would be one form of help?"

"Yes. But possibly helping invalids pack, move and presumably unpack. That would involve carts or gigs. She also thought that our people at the Meadow might assist with gardens."

She didn't say, but I think that there is the thought that each activity puts your agency in people's minds for other possibilities."

“Yes.... I shall have to think carefully how to reword my advertisements. And I had thought of nurses being more or less in residence, but perhaps visits once or twice a week would make more sense for some people who might otherwise choose no help because of limited resources.

But how can I answer requests before I have people?”

Tony said “Perhaps the same way we already do with *Best Bonnet* and other work. We have agreed rates for "borrowing" people or animals or equipment from each other, namely the Fortescue Road houses, or *Uptons'*, and they from us. And we could try to enlarge the set of enterprises.

But in your trying to find clients, you also have to remember that sometimes people don't know how to ask for the help, and for us that means we don't get work.”

“I shall have to thank Mrs. Cohen when I see her, especially if these ideas prove helpful. And I rather like the name. I think I will ask Mr. Hoyle to change the signs.

Did you have a chance to talk of other things?”

“We talked about the different properties and the changes we are making. I think the Cohens also aspire to hot running water for baths. Perhaps a decadent luxury, but one I would dearly love.”

Jane said “Me too. Even better if we could both soak in it at once.”

“Jane. I really want your friendship and partnership. Mrs. Cohen asked how I felt still about the way I dress and present to society. I told her I wanted to belong with someone, but not belong to someone, and she said I often surprised her by the depth of my thinking. But what I have just said is what I truly believe I want.

My anxiety is that I don't really know quite how to act or how I want things to happen.”

“You've said you want my friendship and – even better – partnership. I'll try not to push you for more than you want to give.”

“Thank you, Jane. There is a lot for me to think about lately, and having someone close to me is new.”

* * *

By Thursday evening, Ian Hoyle had revised the main sign, and the smaller one for the desk, and Jane had put in a small order for some headed writing paper. She was working on new wording for her advertisements and for a small hand-bill she – they – could distribute among their colleagues and customers.

By coincidence, the post the same day brought two letters.

The first was an enquiry as to whether *Harpers Nursing* could provide someone who would serve as both nurse and tutor for a crippled child, as the family could afford to pay reasonably well for one person, but poorly for two.

The second was from a woman, Dora Burke, who had served with Florence Nightingale in Scutari, but she had acquired all her training there, and it was, of course, informal training. Previously, having been the daughter of a farmer in Dorset, she had no nursing experience and was now returned and working on her father's farm again.

Another coincidence was that Martin Macdonald arrived with a note from Henry Mortimer to say that Jane's monies and investment documents had all now been transferred. Jane asked "Martin. Where are you going to school now?"

"I didn't get a lot of schoolin', so Papa Henry has enrolled me at Fraser's Academy to learn some practical things like reckoning money better, and readin' the newspaper and receipts and invoices."

"So you'll be ready to go out to work soon?"

"Yeah. I s'pose so. Could probably do it now if the job paid."

"Or perhaps do part work and part schooling?"

"I could ask."

"Let me send Mr. Mortimer a note by your hand."

Jane wrote asking if Henry would approve of Martin working part of the time helping with different tasks in either *Harper's Helpers* or at the Meadow. While some messages could be transmitted by the regular rounds of *Best Bonnet* or by the Post Office, urgent ones needed a swift runner, and Martin was, in fact, nimble. That evening, she confirmed with Tony that this was a sensible move, and he acquiesced. There was likely enough work that they could use him in various errands.

* * *

Harper's Helpers
Brighton, Sussex

13 September 1860

Dear Mr. Oliver,

We are able to offer to care for and tutor your son John. Our suggestion will be that one of our staff will come each morning at half-past eight and stay until half-past five. The person who comes may not

be the same each day as we have multiple activities, and our knowledge of different subjects varies. In some cases, I myself may come.

Our suggested weekly rate for this is 25 shillings. We can in most cases offer some flexibility in timing, and within reason would adjust the schedule without an additional charge for the same overall number of hours. Beyond this, and for Saturday afternoon or Sunday, we would charge 1 shilling per hour.

If this is agreeable, please acknowledge with your signature on the copy of this letter which I have included.

I remain, sir, much obliged for your interest in our services.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Harper (Mrs.)

* * *

Harper's Helpers
Brighton, Sussex

13 September 1860

Dear Miss Burke,

We welcome your interest in Harper's Helpers and wish to suggest that you join us. At the moment we have only limited nursing opportunities. To ensure there is work, we have a property, Lane Meadow, where we are producing vegetables and flowers as well as eggs, chicken and rabbit. The property provides accommodation and profitable activity

when we do not have nursing or similar assignments.

If you are interested, please let me know. The base remuneration would be 5 shillings per week and lodging and food at Lane Meadow, with a higher rate if we can arrange nursing work, and I suggest we give each other a 12 week trial.

I do hope you will join us.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Harper (Mrs.)

* * *

At a little after two o'clock on Monday, September 17, 1860, a short but sturdy woman in her late twenties got out of a hansom at Matilda's with a carpet bag valise. The cabbie put a modest but obviously quite heavy trunk on the ground near the door. After paying the cabbie, the woman came into the shop and asked "Is Mrs. Harper here?"

Jack Dixon was behind the counter and said "I think she's upstairs. Let me call for her. May I say who wishes to speak with her?"

"Miss Burke. Dora Burke."

This was the first time that anyone had needed to communicate with someone upstairs, but Jack realized he should not leave the counter and its till unattended, so he went to just inside the back room where, in fact, the stairs started and called out "Mrs. Harper. There's a Miss Dora Burke to see you."

Jane was actually up in her room. The anxieties of the past few weeks had started to become oppressive, and she was, at this moment, having a weep in frustration. The house, however, muffled sound and she didn't hear Jack. Bobby, who was starting to prepare a supper dish, heard him and said "I'll fetch her."

Jane told Bobby to tell Miss Burke she would be down shortly, then looked around for a face flannel to wipe her face and erase the tear stains. She found one in the wash stand after having a moment or two of panic, and in a couple of minutes appeared in the shop.

"Miss Burke. I did not expect you, and rather expected a letter."

“I apologize for no notice, Mrs. Harper. When your letter arrived, my father saw me given it by the postman. Anyway, he was very put out. Told me I was ungrateful. But he’s not been paying me, but expecting me to work on the farm, so I packed my things and left in the middle of the night with the help of my brother Arthur. Fortunately, I’d managed to hide a bit of money from my time in the Crimea. Pa didn’t like me doing that, but Ma was alive then, and she supported me. Trouble was, when I came back, I got no replies to my attempts to find work. But I found out that my father was burning letters, and when I wrote to you, I asked the postman to make sure I got any letters directly.”

“I’m afraid that at the moment, we’ve more people than commissions, but if you don’t mind doing horticultural work or looking after chickens and rabbits, at least you’ll get a little pay. And hopefully we’ll pick up other work so all of us may prosper.”

While Jane was coming down, Dora had dragged her trunk inside. Jane said “We’ll need to get your trunk to the Meadow. It’s a couple of miles, I’m afraid, but an associated business, *Best Bonnet*, has a pair of donkey carts, and we quite regularly go to Soultons’ Workshop, which is next door to the Meadow. So we can take your trunk within a couple of days. Will you have enough in your valise until then?”

“I have some working clothes and clogs in my trunk. I’ll assume that work would start right away.”

“Yes. Why don’t we see if Tony – Mr. Brown – gets back soon with Moonbeam and her cart. I’ll pay him to take you up to the Meadow. In the meanwhile, I’ll show you our activities here and there’s *Upton Furnishings* nearby. Oh. Here’s Miss Upton. She runs the assignments for *Best Bonnet*, but also does some selling of furnishings.”

Dora’s arrival was explained, and as the explanation ended, Arthur returned with his hand-cart. It wasn’t yet three o’clock, and Arthur said “I can take Miss Burke and ’er trunk up the Meadow.”

“Thank you, Arthur,” Jane said. “I’ll give you a note for Mrs. Bairstow, and ask you to wait while she writes a reply.

Miss Burke, have you had any food recently?”

“Um. ... Not really. Just a piece of bread and dripping this morning.”

“Arthur. Why don’t you come upstairs and have a bite too?”

Dora asked if there were a privy, and was shown the WC instead. “I’m afraid it’s still a privy at the Meadow,” Jane apologized.

While Dora had some bread and cheese and tea, Jane wrote a note to Evelyn and asked her to send back with Arthur a very short outline of current operations and anticipated produce, as well as any needs.

On the sideboard, Jane saw that there were two letters for Harper’s Helpers. She opened and read them, and then added to her note to Evelyn

that she was able to report that there were two enquiries about possible work for the *Helpers* today. One was to accompany an elderly and infirm man to the house of his daughter in Edinburgh. The man's wife, who had been looking after him, had died suddenly, even though she was over a decade younger than her husband. Jane mentioned this possibility in her note to Evelyn and wondered if Phoebe might be interested, otherwise she would take on the task herself.

The other query was from Mr. Hector Hancock, a gentleman in Worcester. His daughter had been compromised by the son of a local aristocrat and become pregnant, and as Mr. Hancock, while respectable, was in trade, the lord's son had been sent off to Vienna, ostensibly to study as if he had no responsibility. Thus the daughter, named Melody, was, or would become in time, a source of scandal and embarrassment. Jane's advertisement had been seen by the gentleman's brother. Would *Harper's Helpers* be able to provide discreet accommodation and help for the daughter's confinement and possibly advice on who might take on the care and raising of the anticipated child?

This possibility was one that could bring a reasonable revenue, but it also required a lot of organization and adjustment. Jane did not mention this enquiry in her note, but did say that she would come to the Meadow in the morning to discuss a possible new idea. Before then, she wanted to talk about it to Valerie, Rebecca and Tony.

* * *

After Arthur and Dora had left, Jane handed Valerie Mr. Hancock's letter. "What do you think I should do with this?"

Valerie was, Jane felt, one of the most pragmatic people she had met. Hence Valerie was the first she asked about this possible commission. The response, after a pause for reading the letter was "Lane Meadow is out of the public view. It isn't the most comfortable accommodation, but it might be that the fee you could charge to look after Miss Hancock would allow the cottage to be extended and improved. One aspect of the Meadow property is that your nurses or others who stay there can have useful activities which can profit both them and you. That avoids idle hands.

I don't know who might take on the child. There must be some wet nurses around, and possibly there are childless couples. Finding them might be difficult, or finding decent ones at any rate."

"It sounds like you think I should respond to Mr. Hancock positively."

"I think I'd rather use the word *cautiously*. Presumably you will talk to Ma?"

“And Tony. He’s becoming something of a partner.”

“I’d noticed. I hope neither of you will suffer heartache from possible disappointment.”

“Thank you, Valerie. I sincerely hope so too.”

* * *

Harper’s Helpers
Brighton, Sussex

20 September 1860

Dear Mr. Hancock,

With a couple of my trusted colleagues I have considered your request carefully, and will outline what we can offer.

I own Lane Meadow on the outskirts of Brighton where some of my staff grow vegetables and flowers and raise chickens and rabbits for market. The property serves to accommodate them and provide some income when they are not in residence with nursing or related clients. If you are in trade, you will know how commissions arrive unevenly. I will not hide the fact that the property was only recently acquired and the facilities are still being improved. However, the cottage is sound, food is of good quality, and the ladies in residence at the moment all worked as nurses in the Crimea. This is likely to be of advantage to your daughter.

If your daughter comes to Lane Meadow, we would expect that she would undertake at least some activity related to operation of the place. For this she would be paid commensurate with the work and at a rate similar to that of others there. I will suggest that such pay, which will be very modest, be permitted to be her own as an encouragement to her self-worth, as well as provide personal pocket money.

At this time, we have no suggestion for the care and raising of the anticipated child, but would be willing to pursue such investigations.

For our services we would charge £ 50 plus 25 shillings per week that Melody is with us.

I remain, sir, your obedient servant,

Jane Harper (Mrs.)

* * *

“Mrs. Harper, I believe,” said a gentleman of upright bearing.

“Yes, Mr. Oh. We’ve met. In the Crimea perhaps?”

“Henry Hancock, formerly Captain Hancock. I helped bring in my commanding officer to the hospital where you were working. I must say I prefer the current surroundings. My brother wrote to you about my niece Melody.”

“Indeed, Captain Hancock. I presume you would like to talk about the letter I received from your brother and my reply. Perhaps we should ascend to the parlour.

Valerie. Can you take care of any enquiries for me while I talk to the Captain?”

When they were in the parlour with the door to the kitchen closed, since Bobby was in and out taking care of various household matters, Jane said “How may I be of service?”

“My brother is generally inclined to accept your offer to help my niece. It is a bad business. The boy gave her a ring, which turned out to be rubbish, in order to have his way with her. Now I gather there’s drama in the house, but smiles for society, of course. But my brother has asked me to verify that your premises and staff are ... er ... correct.”

“Actually, I am glad to hear that. It means that the girl is not being tossed aside like rubbish.

Would you like to visit Lane Meadow? I will tell you now that the cottage was extremely primitive when we got it at the very end of May. We have not had a chance yet to make many improvements, but it is, to my knowledge, clean and dry.”

“I think that a visit would be prudent. Knowing how you nurses looked after us in the Crimea, I’ll be very surprised if I don’t find things well-ordered, and it won’t hurt my niece to have to live in more common surroundings. I gather you will pay her for work?”

“That is the suggestion. The pay is rather small, but my colleagues in various businesses that we share activities with all try to ensure that the workers get a bit of benefit from any extra contribution.”

“You mean *Best Bonnet* and *News and More* that I see on the sign.”

“Yes. Though sometimes we collaborate with *Upton Furnishings* and two of their buyers, as well as *Soultons’ Workshop* and even on occasion with the *Fortescue Factory*, *The Brighton Ladies Emporium* and *Bartlett and Jones*.”

Here Jane was stretching the reality, but there was an element of truth in the statement, since the people were always collaborating somehow.

“How interesting.

Now I wonder if I could go to Lane Meadow this afternoon, as I have no engagements? I would be happy to hire a hansom and you could come with me so that I am introduced properly.”

“I think that should be possible. I will just need to verify that one of the others who knows my work will be in the shop.”

Valerie was going to be present, so Jane and Mr. Hancock were able to leave. They walked toward the Promenade, where there would be cabs near the hotels, and found one right away. They spent the journey of perhaps twenty minutes sharing experiences of the Crimea, and the time was gone before they knew it. As Hancock paid for the cab, he said, “Cabbie, Are you able to return in an hour?”

“Difficult to find a fare near ’ere, sir, but if you give me an extra sixpence, I’ll go ’ave a glass at the tavern and come back then.”

“All right. Here you are. We’ll see you here in about an hour.”

Jane took Mr. Hancock to the cottage where only Phoebe was present and introduced him.

“As you see, Captain Hancock, it is rather plain. We hope to gradually improve things. Mr. Soulton next door is quite helpful. We sometimes have to insist that he take payment for his help.”

Outside they looked at the rabbit hutches and the chicken run. The two dogs were suspicious, but knew Jane already so did not bark, but were watchful. Then they walked over to the greenhouses and planting beds, where Evelyn and Dora were working. In fact, Dora was busy installing framed glass panel in a second greenhouse, this one with a sailcloth lower wall.

After introductions, Hancock said “This design has a remarkable simplicity and ease of construction.”

“Glad you approve, sir,” came Tom’s voice from the other side of the wall. Jane introduced him. Hancock asked if he might have the address of

the Workshop, as he thought he might be able to use a smaller version in his garden for tender plants.

There was conversation about different vegetables, fruits and flowers for some minutes. It became clear that Hancock and his wife liked to garden. By the time they'd gone back to the cottage to see how Tom had arranged the front of the hutches to swing up, it was time to watch for the hansom.

On the way back to town, Hancock said "I think my niece could do much worse than spend her wait at Lane Meadow. The work with the plants and animals will give her plenty to keep her mind off her predicament and she may learn some skills useful for her subsequent life. I'll recommend my brother accept your offer."

"Thank you, Captain Hancock. I rather hope that over time you will see things become better ordered. I want to get the lane and yard at least gravelled and possibly paved. And at some point it would be good to have more than one room."

* * *

Jane's last comment reflected thoughts that were already advanced enough that there were drawings that Tom and Tony had been making. The thought was that the cottage could be extended on the chimney side so any addition could have a stovepipe into the same chimney. One improvement that had already been made was a rather damaged but still serviceable stove that had its pipe simply go into the top of the fireplace. Still, it allowed for easier cooking and better warmth. The ladies in residence were wondering if the open hearth should be blocked to stop draughts, and Tom had said he would look into how this could be done in an inexpensive and reversible way.

The drawings proposed roughly doubling the cottage by adding to the end away from Saultons. The roof line, roughly parallel to the house, would be extended a further 15 or so feet on the side away from *Saultons'*. This would almost double the size of the building, which had interior 15 feet front to back, and 18 side to side. It would be necessary to cut a doorway through the wall beside the chimney and similarly in the upper level, but Tom and Tony, who had been with him when they made some sketches, felt that the existing stairs could be improved. There would be a door to the outside, probably in the new rear wall. They also thought it worth adding two dormers facing the road and one facing the woods to the rear, possibly adding partitions so there were separate rooms upstairs, two small and one large.

On the new main floor, it was considered worthwhile planning for an eventual water closet, since the new corner would be closest to the cesspit. A

long term consideration was better water heating and a bathing area with a drainable bath. However, none of these improvements were anticipated soon.

The evening of Jane's visit to the Meadow with Hancock, she and Tony were talking after supper.

"Do you think it might be a good investment to enlarge the cottage now?" Tony asked.

"We haven't got much revenue yet."

"Assuming Miss Hancock comes, the extra space would be welcome, and would allow flexibility for the future. Also, if the £50 you asked for as a base payment were made early – and I think that would be wise to demand – you could apply it to the building, which I would anticipate would cost about that much if the ladies there are willing to do the inside work under Tom's tutelage."

"What do you think is the essential work?" Jane asked.

"The building and the dormers, with doorways through from the old to new parts. Everything else can be done as and when it can be afforded, though it would probably be a good idea to get a hole for a stovepipe into the chimney from the new part right away."

Tony was about to go to return their teacups to the kitchen – they were in the parlour – but Jane got up and gave him a big hug, which was returned. The two of them stood for some seconds in an awkward but important embrace.

Somehow at that point several decisions had been made. On a practical level, Jane sent Brougham a message and things were in progress by the middle of October. Of course, the addition was not complete until just before Christmas, and the residents were very glad when it was, as the construction had been noisy, dirty, and draughty.

On the emotional level, the hug might almost have seemed to have no impact on the lives of Jane and Tony, but that would be an erroneous interpretation.

* * *

Melody Hancock took up residence at Lane Meadow on Saturday October 13. She and her mother had come to the house of Captain Hancock and his wife the night before, with a night in London before that on account of the train timetables and also the fatiguing journey.

Before that, Jane had decided to convey Mr. Johnson to his daughter in Edinburgh. They left in the middle of the day on Monday October 8, spent the night in a hotel near Euston, and then the morning train to Edinburgh, arriving nearly 12 hours later in the evening.

Jane had decided to take two nights in a hotel in Edinburgh, but said she would only charge the client for one of them, and not at all for her extra day's time. She wanted to look at the city. The return journey was much the same, and she got home in the middle of Friday, October 12.

What was a pleasant surprise was that the client, a Mr. Johnson, was looking for help to pack and ship his personal belongings and to sell his furniture. On October 1, Jane, Maud and Valerie accompanied Tony and Arthur with Moonbeam and a hand-cart. They helped Mr. Johnson through each room and put numbered tags on each item that was to be sold. The other items were transferred to the kitchen for packing in two trunks that were there. As it turned out, they needed to find a tea chest as there were more items than would fit. An amendment to the fee was agreed.

Jane had negotiated a fee for her own time of £10 plus all expenses bar the extra day in Edinburgh. This included the roughly £7 return railway fare, first class. She had insisted on a £12 petty cash fund that she would use for porters, cabs, hotels, meals, baggage and other expenses, for which she would remit the balance and an accounting of what was spent.

The agreement with Tony and Arthur was a quite modest few shillings to pack all items that Mr. Johnson did not need for the trip itself. Jane would come early on the morning of departure to help him pack a valise for the journey, and Valerie would come later to tidy up.

Maud and Valerie had agreed a fixed fee to mark, catalogue and suggest what they thought would be an auction price for the furniture and other items for sale, and to dispose of unsaleable items. It would actually be Tony and Arthur who would do that. They also offered to buy all the items for 60% of the total auction estimate, or Johnson could have everything go under the hammer with a local auctioneers. The bid, or pounds, in the hand were accepted, which caused Maud and Valerie some trips to home or office to find sufficient funds, since Mr. Johnson would be leaving the following Monday and they traded in cash.

That Monday, the furniture Mr. Johnson did not need for his living and care and that of his long-standing housekeeper was transported to *Uptons'*. The rest would be removed the following Monday, by which time Valerie hoped some of the stock would be sold or gone to *Soultons'* for refurbishment. The elderly housekeeper was going to a large country house where her brother was the butler. She would have room and board in exchange for light duties.

* * *

Jane enjoyed her day in Edinburgh, though she found she wished desperately that Tony was with her to share it. Moreover, Mr. Johnson, though

neither fussy nor ill-tempered, was sufficiently in decline that he required a lot of her strength to assist him. Indeed, that was another reason Tony would have been welcome. Nonetheless, Mr. Johnson was delivered safe but very tired to his daughter's house and Jane, possibly even more tired, was taken by the hansom they had used to her hotel. The trunks were brought by a cart that almost followed the cab and arrived before it had left for the hotel, as it took Jane, the cabbie, and Mr. Johnson's son in law to move Mr. Johnson into the house and to his bedroom. Jane was able to tip the cabbie sufficiently to assuage his impatience, as she would submit her account to Johnson's daughter the next afternoon.

The journey back to Brighton was also long. The Edinburgh train did not arrive in London until well after dark. Fortunately the hotel was expecting her and was a short hansom ride away. She had, with foresight, purchased sufficient food and bottled drink to last the whole day on the train, and was able to retire immediately. She woke the next morning to catch an early train to Brighton, getting home in the middle of the day. Nevertheless, she found herself extremely tired, and came down with a cold a day later.

Jane's indisposition meant she did not meet Melody Hancock for a few days. Captain Hancock delivered Melody by hansom to the Meadow, since he had already met the ladies who were in residence as well as Tom next door.

Though Melody could see the cottage was rather primitive, the place was well-kept and the women who lived there were friendly and straightforward. Evelyn Bairstow said "We know your basic situation, but nobody has told us more. When you've put your things upstairs we'll show you round. We share the work, but if we can arrange it, we try to each do the things we like. Of course, that isn't always possible."

Phoebe had some spare work clothes and suggested Melody change into them right away to preserve the state of those she had arrived in. In the course of being shown the Meadow property and being introduced to people at Saultons', Melody realized she might be able to rescue something of her life in this place.

After the main course of supper that evening, Evelyn asked "Miss Hancock. Do you know when your child will likely be born? It will help us plan."

"I know the date the child was conceived. How can I forget such an infamous day?"

"That was?" Evelyn persisted.

"Midsummer Day. We were celebrating the long evening and ..."

"Your memories are your own, unless you wish to share them," Evelyn interrupted. "So, at the beginning of Spring we may expect you to deliver. We will aim to keep you healthy and we can try to plan for both you and

the child for afterwards. I believe you should think of staying with us for six to eight weeks after the child is born to recover yourself and to let the child become stronger.”

Melody didn't respond to this.

Phoebe said “Would you like to work with me tomorrow in helping to finish the second greenhouse.”

“I don't know if I'll be any good at it, but I'll try. And I notice you use each others Christian names. Please call me Melody if I may use your first names.”

There was a general murmur of agreement, as Dora got up to fetch the pudding. “It's a spotted dick for a treat, with custard sauce.”

“Oh. Lately I have a craving for raisins or things like that.”

“Women with child often find they want certain things to eat, sometimes in strange combinations,” Evelyn said. “Let us enjoy this pudding, then get to bed. It is already dark out, and best if we can be up before sunrise to profit from the daylight. Getting up early also ensures we're dressed before the workmen building the addition arrive.

Melody, I'll get you to help with the washing up, as it will take a few days for you to learn the daily rituals of the place, such as ensuring the dogs are fed and watered and the cats get a saucer of milk. We've no cow, but there's a milkman comes by on his way from a farm up the road.”

* * *

Brougham's men finished the additions to the Meadow cottage and cleared their tools by December 7. The cost had been nearer £60 than £50 because the dormers meant extra roofing work. Moreover, the stove for the new area – Tom connected it and made a proper hole in the chimney for the pipe – cost a couple of pounds more than expected, and it was decided to gutter the roof and capture the water in two barrels, one at the front and one at the back.

With the outside of the cottage complete, attention turned to how the inner walls would be built and decorated. Though the business for *Harper's Helpers* was still sporadic, the Olivers were very pleased with the work of the nurses. Jane, Phoebe and Dora shared the tasks according to the needs of their charge, Master James Oliver, now 9 years old. A particular coup for Jane occurred one rather fine morning in late October when she asked Tony if Jessie were going to be taken out that day.

Tony said “No. I was thinking I'd have to walk her so she got some exercise. She didn't get out yesterday except into the yard. Are you thinking of walking her?”

“I thought it might do Master James some good to be given a ride. I think it might strengthen his legs and back.”

“Jessie should be fine. Just let her have her own pace.”

Jane was able to walk Jessie with James aboard to the Promenade, where they passed a child in a bath chair being pushed by a servant, likely her nanny.

“Oh. How I wish I were able to do that,” the little girl said.

Jane stopped Jessie gently and said “Master James here also has difficulties walking. May I give you my card should the parents of the young lady wish to consider some gentle exercise on a donkey.”

Encounters and coincidences were, of course, part of what Cassandra had in mind in suggesting Jane widen the services offered by her agency. Moreover, now such possibilities were a feature of thinking about the businesses, Jane arranged a half-page handbill that listed services of the different businesses. The *Best Bonnet* carts and their operators had many opportunities to meet people, and they could give out the handbills whenever they thought it appropriate. This did not result in a great wave of new business, but it did lead to a stream of modest enquiries and commissions, all of which added to the overall revenues.

The result of this new income, though it really was not large, gave Jane the optimism to decide that she would have Brougham’s men put plaster on all the walls of the cottage, both old and new. This would run to about £9 and create quite a mess, though they did manage to get it done before Christmas. The ladies had to move around each day as different walls were plastered and then left to dry.

It would be the end of January 1861 before the plastered walls had distemper paint on them. The ladies did that work, as well as putting varnish on the new stairway and banisters. In the upstairs area, they also built simple partitions to provide a little privacy for each of them. Tom Souton showed them how to do this in exchange for them making some extra panels he could sell on.

* * *

The year 1860 was closing by Saturday, December 15. Tony, via the newspapers and magazines, had been aware of the burning down of Beijing’s Old Summer Palace, known as the Gardens of Perfect Brightness. That this had been ordered by Lord Elgin as part of the Second Opium War was a source of some patriotic enthusiasm among part of the community. Tony said little, as it would do no good for business to risk offence to any client or potential client. However, he felt unhappy that Britain was acting to protect an activity that profited by getting people addicted to a destructive drug.

Apparently, the Chinese decided, or perhaps felt they had no alternative, to concede to the Europeans, and the first Convention of Peking formally ended the War.

More recently, on December 1, and more locally, 142 Welsh miners died in the sixth underground explosion in the Risca Black Vein Pit. One wondered why anyone would go underground in such a dangerous mine. The same day, the first instalment of Charles Dickens *Great Expectations* appeared in the magazine *All the Year Round* that *News and More* was delivering to customers. While the return on such subscriptions and over-the-counter sales was, as we have noted before, not great, Tony and his colleagues were cheered by the appearance of the new Dickens' work. They also were eager readers of the serialized story.

After supper that night, Tony was tired from a day when there were more collections and deliveries than usual due to Christmas business. He got ready for bed, then used the water closet and returned upstairs. Jane had decided to retire early also, but as Tony was coming up to the landing, she said "Come in and talk for a few minutes. We have not had much chance for conversation lately."

"All right. It's true we have been busier."

The stove on the landing had a fire, but it was still chill. Jane said "Come under the covers so you don't get cold. But turn off the gas light first. I'll leave this oil lamp on but turn it down. I find I need it for reading in bed."

Tony asked "Are you less anxious about the agency with the recent increase in clients?"

"Indeed. Though with the expenditure on enlarging the cottage, I doubt I can say I'm in profit."

"I would estimate that the Meadow would sell for more than you paid and invested in it, should it go on the market. But it will likely be worth more as time goes on," Tony said.

"And your businesses?"

"Valerie keeps good records of those, and both the cartage and the newsagents are making modest but seemingly reliable profits. Like you, I have made expenditure on the premises, but Valerie and I have been making calculations of what a rent might be and, with some judgement, applying that rent against the gross profits of the businesses. The short tale is that even charging a more or less full rent to the businesses we still have a tiny net profit, but the supposed rent means that we live here gratis, and my property investment is gradually being paid down."

"How do you mean, *paid down*?"

"I paid £500 to Mr. Goldman, then spent what we estimate as £55 in putting in the stalls, water closet, painting, and other things, about £20 in

legal and other fees or services, including Ian's time for the signs, and about £45 for the stove, counters, desks and other furniture."

"Oh. That's more than I realized," Jane said.

"What we did was reckon the payment we'd need to make at the end of each year to pay this total off completely after some number of years if we borrowed that amount at different rates. I remember that for 10 years and 10%, we'd need to pay a rent, of sorts, of around £101, but at 2 % and 30 years it was under £28."

"That's a lot of difference," Jane said. "What should you use as a figure for reckoning profit?"

"We decided on 15 years and 5 %, which is about £60 a year. But note that with the first option, we'd pay £1010 total back to the lender, with the 30 year lowest rate £831 and with the choice we've made £900. Of course, I already own the premises, so these figures are to work out what would be the profit if the businesses were renting. Moreover, we haven't split the cost between the two businesses. My guess is that they are about equal, as *Best Bonnet* uses the stable, while *News and More* is really the main activity in the shop."

"Tony. You surprise me. Always thinking and reckoning. I should do it more."

"We can do it together. You actually pay a sort of rent as we've agreed you pay all the food, coals, gas and water. I pay all or part wages for Bobby, Ian, Jack, Matt, Arthur and Valerie. The apportioning of those is a bit of a guessing-game, but it really just pushes profits to one column or the other. And for *Best Bonnet* we have to work out the share for Joseph and me. For you, we should work out your wages and revenue and see how you are doing. And also do a similar calculation for the expenses of the Meadow property."

"I'm glad you and Valerie are good at sums."

"We have a couple of little books called a *Ready Reckoner* that have tables for different calculations. For the loan amount there is a book I found from 1804 called a *Collection of Mathematical Tables* by Andrew MacKay. Mostly concerns astronomical and navigational calculations, but at the back he gives the payment for a loan of £1 and you scale accordingly. But my estimation is that now your agency is a little behind my businesses. But Joseph and I have been at it for the better part of a decade. You've just started."

"Oh. Tony. You give me such comfort. Move in closer. I want to share our warmth. I'll turn away from you and you can come close behind me like two spoons in a drawer."

Tony wasn't sure what Jane wanted, but was very tired. Whatever Jane did want, for some minutes they were close and silent. Then Jane realized Tony had fallen asleep. She didn't wake him. In the morning, Jane was

spooned behind Tony when they each awoke in the pale December light.

The description Tony gave of the loan calculation was not quite complete. MacKay's book only went to 6 %. Tony had had to do the multiplication to get the factor for 10 years at 10 %, but that was fortunately relatively easy.

* * *

The Christmastime of 1860 had passed convivially for our diverse friends. Mary Yarrow and Cassandra Cohen had decided that they should host a Christmas dinner at the Factory on December 23 in the afternoon. By clearing much of the space, using the marble slab counters and high stools, as well as some number of trestle tables, it was possible that the Fortescue Road and Factory residents were joined by the Yarrows, Mortimers, Uptons, the *Emporium*, and those from *Matilda's* as well as the Goldmans, including Raisa.

There was a lot of noise, plenty of food. The big ovens meant there was turkey, goose, beef, and lamb, with many accoutrements. With her usual organizational skills, Cassandra managed to get everyone to contribute to the celebration in either material or effort, yet nobody had to do so much that it seemed a chore. Remembering some years before in the kitchen of Fortescue Road, she made sure those with instruments brought them. Ethel was persuaded to sing to accompaniment of Abraham's violin. Cassandra had made him practice in the last months, though he had, in fact, regularly kept up his playing. Jane was certain Ethel was pregnant, and whispered this to Tony, who told her of the stillbirth nearly two years ago. Jane wondered if she and her nurses had any skills to help avoid another. She herself did not have a lot of midwifery experience, but she thought one of the others did, but couldn't remember who at the particular moment of thought.

With the large party at the Factory, Christmas Day devolved to being a much more intimate day. At *Matilda's*, just Bobby, Jane and Tony had a small capon. The Uptons' had a ham. Arthur and Ian and Matt were elsewhere with family members. At Fortescue Road there were rather more to dinner, but Abraham, Cassandra and Catherine were at the Goldmans in Aldrington. Ethel and Percy went to the Mortimers, while Felix and Janet and another staffer cooked at the Factory. The Yarrows were at home too. At the Meadow, the ladies invited Tom, Vera and David to join them for Christmas dinner. Tom and Vera had been at the Factory party, but the nurses had not, as their interaction with Fortescue Road was minor. Melody was now clearly pregnant, which was another consideration. Robert and Molly had gone to their families for a few days, so things were quiet until the 27th.

Perhaps the event that got the most mention, and happily a cheerful and kind mention, was the announcement that James McDowell and Martha Murphy had decided to marry. Each of them had their own reasons to be anxious about such a move. However, they had come to be comfortable with each other. Martha was sure James would be patient with her. James recognized that Martha saw him beyond his injuries. He had also seen how Angus and Rose had navigated the awkwardness of serious injury. The two old soldiers talked – sometimes James wrote down his words – and it was clear that the marriage was a real one, though no child had been forthcoming. This was, Angus made clear, not due to a failure of the mechanics, so to speak.

By Boxing Day evening, the engagement was somehow known to most of the friends, thanks to different people taking walks and leaving notes. *News and More* opened for a while on Boxing Day, but it was the 27th before normal business resumed.

On the night of January 1st, 1861, Tony and Jane were lying in each others' arms. They had somehow come to share the double bed quite regularly. Tony was still not quite sure how to handle the physical proximity, especially where hands were welcome or unwelcome to be placed.

“Jane. I’m never quite sure where to put my hands.”

“Dear Tony. You may touch me anywhere you like. I’m sure I will find pleasure in your so doing.”

“But then you may expect me to have the same attitude. I’m not sure that I do.”

“You mean if I touch you between your legs, or perhaps even your breasts.”

“Possibly. I don’t think the latter would be troublesome. It would probably give a feeling of comfort.”

“But on your sex you’d get upset?”

“Jane. I don’t think I’d get upset. I’m just not sure, and don’t want you to have me ... er ... recoil. That would make you feel I lack affection for you.”

“I suppose if I hadn’t been so young and inexperienced, I would have had such fears with Robert.”

“Was that your husband’s name?”

“Yes. Robert Harper. Did I tell you my maiden name was Mudd. Two Ds, but not a nice name.

Actually I owe a great deal to my late husband.”

“But you were ... uncomfortable ... with him touching you?”

“I suppose uncomfortable could be the word, at least at the start. I was young, I’d not been told anything about sex, and been sheltered from seeing how farm or domestic animals reproduced. Then I was marched in and out

of church and into Robert's bed. I knew that something happened between married people in bed together, but I really was very ignorant."

"You said he was kind," Tony offered.

"Yes. I was extremely lucky. Many young women are essentially raped on their wedding night."

"By rape you mean the man forces himself on the woman."

"On and especially in. A man's organ gets quite hard when he's aroused, but it isn't easy to get inside the woman's channel if she's not ... er... receptive."

"But your husband didn't do that?"

"No. Over several days he talked to me about what is supposed to happen. He asked if he might touch me and hold me close, and gradually I became comfortable with him. And he had me look at him and touch him so that I wasn't wondering what was going on.

Finally, he suggested I might climb on top of him to ... well, insert his sex in mine. The first time hurt a bit – he'd told me it likely would and that was natural. The night after, I let him come on top of me, and that was not uncomfortable, just a little strange. Over a few weeks I got to find the experience of sex more or less comfortable, even rather pleasurable at times, and Robert would touch me in front where it's sensitive and that was rather nice. But I never got really carried away as I think some women do.

We were in a hotel in France. We delayed our honeymoon a few weeks. Robert guessed I would be inexperienced, and he wanted to be at home until he was sure I was not afraid of bedtime. Fortunately he accomplished that quite quickly.

Anyway, we went to Dieppe, on the coast. And there was a French couple in the next room and the balcony windows were open. The noises she made were quite alarming to me, but Robert said she was just carried away by the sexual pleasure."

"That didn't happen to you?"

"Not with Robert."

"With another man, then?"

"Tony. You are inquisitive. But as it may affect us, I will tell you. After Robert died in 1849, I spent a couple of years in widow's weeds at various places. I tried our marital home. It was a very well-appointed house, but it was an older man's house. It had nothing to enchant me. Then I spent almost a year moving from hotel to hotel in fashionable places. Bath, Cheltenham, Scarborough. Not Brighton for some reason. Then I decided I might as well do something useful, and a relative of Robert needed nursing – an elderly woman – and I nursed her until she died. Then the Crimea was starting. I found a way to volunteer. I even paid to get a little training. There was another woman in circumstances not so dissimilar to my own. We'll call her

Elaine for the purposes of my narrative.

At a point in the training we had been learning anatomy. It was all from drawings. Not very helpful. One evening, it was fortunately quite warm, and Elaine said we'd learn more about anatomy bathing together, so we did. She insisted we examine each other very carefully. When she got to my private parts and opened the lips, I was all wet. She started to touch me and I found I was making various noises and had what I understand is sometimes called a climax. Then she asked me to do the same for her.

We kept this a secret, of course. People get upset at other people's pleasure. What harm are we doing anybody else? Indeed, are we doing any harm whatever?"

"Yes. Society can be very reproving of anything they suspect they are not getting to enjoy."

"Well put, Tony. Anyway, we had about a month, then we took passage to Turkey and were sent to different hospitals, though that is a grander word than the reality of the places."

"And Elaine? Where is she now?"

"She died of a fever, possibly the influenza. At least, that was the report. It left me with a great sadness."

"Jane. Do I take it you wish to ... er ... share such pleasure with me?"

"Yes. If you are willing. It likely will not work for us unless you feel comfortable too. In fact, through this conversation I've realized you may be like I was with Robert. Not opposed to the physical ... er ... actions, but not much stimulated by them either."

"I rather think that might be the case, and I am sorry for it. We both might be happier otherwise, I'm sure. But Robert gave you a good model. I do find comfort together, feeling you close. More may be welcome as I become more accustomed to that."

"Thank you, Tony."

"Jane. I feel very ignorant sometimes. Last year at church on this day, I noticed the *Book of Common Prayer* says it is the feast of the circumcision. I don't know what that means."

"Yes. Nobody wants to say. The Jews and Muslims both practice it. Supposedly Abraham was told by God that he, all male members of his family and slaves were to be circumcised as a part of the covenant between God and the Jews. It means cutting of a small tube of skin at the end of a man's penis – his sex."

"That must be painful."

"I'm sure it is."

"And it does not cause difficulties in ... er ... sexual congress?"

"Apparently not. I noticed with Robert – my only sure knowledge – that the skin at the end of his organ would slip back behind the head, which was

like a sort of helmet. And in Turkey I once had to wash the body of a dead soldier prior to burial who had been Jewish, and it looked like the foreskin as it's called was just slid back, but it had been cut off. I confess I spent some time trying to figure out where it was."

"So many strange things related to our private parts, and everyone is so secretive about them."

"Yes. I'm afraid that is the case. And I'm sure that some people would get very upset about us lying close like this, Tony. We will have to be a little circumspect. For two men it is a crime, in fact, though I cannot see why myself. However, declaiming on that subject would attract attention we can do without."

* * *

On Monday, January 15, 1861, Martin Macdonald arrived in the afternoon – he was at the Fraser Academy for lessons in the morning – to run errands or do other jobs for Jane. Several more commissions had come in for *Harper's Helpers* over the past few weeks. They were not great amounts of money, but Jane was recognizing that her enterprises would almost certainly be profitable this year. Perhaps she would even cover the losses of 1860, though it was better to think of those as an investment.

"Mrs. Harper, Papa Henry gave me this note for you and Mr. Brown."

"Thank you Martin.

There's a couple of messages there for Lane Meadow, and I think some things they have asked for are waiting in the back room of the shop. Ask Miss Upton to make sure you have everything, and I suspect you'll need a hand-cart, or at least a rucksack."

The rucksack was a suggestion Tony had made when there were only small items to convey. It allowed for quicker movement. The parcels today were some special items from *B & J* for sewing maternity clothes and baby clothes for Melody, as well as several letters and two parcels, one for Melody and one for Dora.

Martin, as usual, was off like a shot. Jane opened Henry's note

Dear Jane and Tony,

It occurred to me that you both have estates that are sufficient that if, unfortunately, one of you were to die, there would be no specific instructions for their disposition.

Can I suggest that each of you consider preparing a will?

Yours sincerely,

Henry Mortimer

* * *

January 22, 1861, found Tony doing the regular run that included *Soultons'* and Lane Meadow. The weather was cool with showers, but the air was fresh and occasional sun dappled on the Downs to the north. Jolly now stayed mostly in the yard. She was old for a dog. However, Rebecca Upton had allowed Lim to come to *Matilda's*, where this dog seemed to have found a place. Today he'd seemed eager to come with Tony, who decided to allow him to accompany them. And, surprisingly, Lim fell in beside Moonbeam at a comfortable pace as if he belonged there.

"Well, Moonbeam. It's been quite a year for us, hasn't it?"

Moonbeam's response was to keep walking, but she did make a snuffle noise.

"Last year I wondered about how I should make my life. That now seems to be, if not fully settled, at least moving to a place of comfort. Jane and I have written our wills so each gets the other's fortune in case of sudden death. In her case, her family would have squabbled over what she has. In mine, who knows?"

We still haven't come to ... should we say equilibrium in our intimate life. But I cannot see how I could partner with a man and remain in society as Mr. Brown. And I do love Jane. Not, perhaps, as she would want ideally, but hopefully sufficiently to give us both a peace and contentment.

It is good that all our enterprises seem now to be prospering. More profit would always be of interest, but we don't now have the anxieties of last summer. Moreover, Lane Meadow has become a little community. Jane had a letter the other day about another young woman who is with child out of wedlock. This unfortunate appears to have been violated. Nevertheless, the family still feels shame. That should not be. And Lane Meadow's angels of mercy won't cure the ills of society that make that happen, though hopefully they can salve the wounds of the poor young woman and rescue an innocent child.

We still haven't resolved what will happen to Melody's child, but Captain Hancock and his wife have visited the Meadow several times. They were childless, and Evelyn has overheard some words that suggest they might

want to adopt the child, and possibly have Melody come as the ostensible nursemaid. A suitable fiction for the child's birth will need to be developed, but it's a resolution that might avoid a lot of suffering.

Well, look at that shaft of sunshine. What a great welcome to the next chapter of our lives."

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