

English Champions

Autumn/Fall 2018 – November 6, 2018

A surprise visitor

Unfortunately Mr Tufty and his wife were not able to meet Mr Hiran and his wife for dinner. Things had become a little hectic at the Tufty Carpets factory and Mr Tufty had thanked Mr Hiran for his kind invitation and suggested that they rearrange in a few weeks time.

One evening, a few days later, Mr Tufty was enjoying his usual routine. He was in the games room for a game of whist with his daughter, Henrietta. His corgi, Falmouth, was asleep in front of the log fire. They were playing by candlelight and Wagner's Liebestod was playing quietly in the background occasionally interrupted by a crackle from the fire.

Henrietta was winning the hand and Mr Tufty was starting to feel the effects of a hard day's work and a large glass of brandy. He was about to call it a night when Falmouth woke up and started barking loudly.

Mr Tufty and Henrietta didn't understand why until they noticed a movement just outside the French doors. Henrietta screamed loudly and fearing the worst Mr Tufty reached for his shotgun. It was pitch-black outside and very cold. Suddenly a very striking woman appeared in the window wearing a red sari. She looked to be in some distress and Mr Tufty sprang up from his chair and opened the door to the outside.

A slim woman entered the room looking agitated. The light of the moon behind her accentuated her striking, dusky beauty. She was probably about 40 years old, with some grey hair on her temples, and a few wrinkles around her eyes. Mr Tufty was initially speechless but then asked her how he could help her. Henrietta got up and said hello and shook her hand.

She introduced herself to Mr Tufty as Amenpreet Hiran, the wife of Mr Hiran. Mr Tufty was a little relieved. He shook hands and asked if he could get her something to drink and whether she would like to sit down. She declined on both counts.

She then said the following:

"Mr Tufty, I am very happy to meet you at last and nice to see you again, Henrietta. I am sorry to disturb you so late at night but I must speak to you about a matter of the utmost urgency. My husband and son do not know that I have come here and they must never know."

"I have enjoyed spending time with your lovely daughter but I have something very serious I need to say. My son, Arthur has become infatuated with your sweet daughter. I admit that she is a lovely and impressive young woman but there is a problem."

Mr Tufty and Henrietta both took in a sharp intake of breath.

Mrs Hiran continued:

"My son is already engaged to be married to a girl in India. This has been arranged for a number of years and cannot be broken without putting the Hiran name to shame."

"I feel that my husband is trying to develop a business relationship at the expense of my family. He cares more about Hiran Ceramica than my happiness."

At this point Mrs Hiran got to her knees before Mr Tufty and begged:

"I implore you to ask your daughter to release my son from any entanglements. I also beg that she returns the 'Nath' that Arthur gave her. It has been in my family for centuries and is priceless."

Large tears began to develop in Mrs Hiran's eyes. Her black eye shadow started to run down her cheeks. Henrietta began to sob uncontrollably at the other side of the room and Mr Tufty was at a bit of a loss as to what to do.

Mrs Tufty heard the commotion and arrived in the games room in her dressing gown and hair curlers looking rather flustered. She realized that her daughter, who was crying loudly, was in some distress and she put her arm around her and shepherded her out of the room.

Mr Tufty was left in the room with the emotional Mrs Hiran. Her large dark eyes implored him to capitulate to her requests and to save her honour, family and marriage.

What was Mr Tufty to do?

Questions for the French romance advisory team

1. What should Mr Tufty say to the distraught Amenpreet Hiran?
2. How should he approach his emotional daughter?
3. How should Henrietta approach Arthur? What if he contacts her first? Should she mention his mother's visit?
4. Should these events affect a business relationship between Tufty Carpets and Hiran Ceramica?

Vocabulary

Hectic: full of incessant or frantic activity.

Settled down: to become or make calmer or quieter.

Crackle: a sharp, popping sound, as of dry wood burning.

Call it a night: to stop what one has been doing, for the remainder of the night.

At a loss: not to know what to do or say (idiom).

Sharp intake of breath: to breathe in quickly and noisily, because you are shocked at something (idiom).

Flustered: to make (someone) agitated or confused.

Pitch-black: black, dark, pitch-dark, black as pitch.

Web site

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