**CHAPTER IIx Mr. Teddy Henfrey's First Thochts**

At fower o'clock, fin it wis rael derk an Mrs. Haa wis gaitherin up her virr tae gae in an speir her veesitor gin he’d takk some tea, Teddy Henfrey, the clock-wirker, cam intae the howf. "Ma certes! Mrs. Haa," quo he, "bit this is roch weather fur thin buits!" The snaa ootbye wis faain faister.

Mrs. Haa agreed, an syne saw he’d his bag wi him. "Noo yer here, Mr. Teddy," quo she, "I'd be gled gin ye'd gie the auld clock in the parlour a bit o an owergaun. It’s gaun, an it strikks weel an hairty; bit the oor-haun winna dae onythin bit pynt tae sax."

An heidin the wey, she gaed ben tae the parlour yett an chappit an gaed in.

Her veesitor, she saw as she lowsed the yett, wis dowpit in the airmcheer afore the lowe, dwaumin it wid seem, wi his bandaged heid drappin on ae side. The anely licht in the chaumer wis the reid glimmer frae the lowe--that lichtit his een like puir railwey signals, bit left his dooncast face in derkness--an the sma merks o the day that cam in ben the lowsed yett. Aathin wis reid, shadowy, an blurred tae her, the mair sae since she’d jist bin lichtin the howf lamp, an her een wir bedaizzled. Bit fur a secunt it seemed tae her that the cheil she luikit at hid a muckle moo wide gappin--a muckle an unca moo that swallaed the hale o the boddom airt o his face. It wis the begeck o a meenit: the fite-bund heid, the unca goggle een, an this muckle yawn aneth it. Syne he steered, stertit up in his cheer, pit up his haun. She caad the yett ajee, sae that the chaumer wis lichter, an she saw him mair clearly, wi the mochler heistit up tae his face jist as she’d seen him haud the serviette afore. The shaddas, she fancied, hid trickit her.

"Wid ye mind, sir, this cheil camin tae luik at the clock, sir?" she speired, recoverin frae the meenit’s begeck.

"Luik at the clock?" quo he, glowerin roon in a dwaumy mainner, an spikkin ower his haun, an syne, gettin mair fully awaukened, "of coorse."

Mrs. Haa gaed awa tae get a lamp, an he raise an raxxed himsel. Syne cam the licht, an Mr. Teddy Henfrey, camin in, wis faced bi this bandaged cheil. He wis, he sez, "dumfounert."

"Gweed efterneen," quo the fremmit body, regairding him--as Mr. Henfrey sez, wi a pouerfu sense o the derk glaisses--"like a labster."

"I hope," quo Mr. Henfrey, "that it's naea scutter."

"Nane ava," quo the fremmit body. "Tho, I unnerstaun," he cairriet on turnin tae Mrs. Haa, "that this chaumer is raelly tae be mine fur ma ain private eese."

"I thocht, sir," quo Mrs. Haa, "ye'd wint the clock--"

"Of coorse," reponed the fremmit body, "of coorse--bit, in the ordnar wey, I like tae be alane an unsteered.

"Bit I'm rael gled tae hae the wag at the waa sortit," quo he, seein a thochtie’s dauchle in Mr. Henfrey's mainner. "Verra gled." Mr. Henfrey hid meant tae apologise an gyang awa, bit thon anticipation sattled him. The fremmit cheil turned roon wi his back tae the hairth an pit his hans ahin his back. "An sune," quo he, "fin the wag at the waa is ower, I think I’d like tae hae some tea. Bit nae till the wag at the waa is ower."

Mrs. Haa wis aboot tae quit the chaumer--she stertit nae spikk this time, because she didnae wint tae be snubbit afore Mr. Henfrey--fin her veesitor speired gin she’d vrocht ony arreengements aboot his kists at Brummilhurst. She telt him she’d spukken o the maitter tae the postie, an that the cairrier could bring them ower the morn. "Yer siccar thon’s the earliest?" he speired.

She wis siccar, wi a merked cauldness.

"I should explain," quo he, ‘fit I wis far ower cauld an weariet tae dae afore, that I’m an experimental investigator."

"Ma certes, sir," Mrs. Hall reponed, unca impressed.

"An ma kists haud gear o aa kinds."

"Verra eesefu ferlies indeed they are, sir," quo Mrs. Hall.

"An I'm unca keen tae win on wi ma darg."

"Of coorse, sir."

"Ma rizzon fur camin tae Iping," he gaed on, wi a certain wechty mainner, "wis ... a wint fur alaneness. I dinna wint tae be fashed in ma wirk. In addition tae ma darg, an accident--"

"I thocht sae," Mrs. Haa muttered tae hersel.

"—means I need a thochtie’s privacy. Ma een--are whyles sae dweeble an painfu that I hae tae steek masel up in the derk fur oors thegether. Jyle masel. Whyles--noo an then. Nae eenoo, of coorse. At sic times the slichtest steer, the incam o a body inno the chaumer, is a source o unca sair roose tae me—it’s weel thon ferlies should be kent."

"Of coorse, sir," quo Mrs. Haa. "An gin I micht makk sae bauld as tae speir--"

"Thon I think, is aa," the cheil reponed, with thon quaet strang air o finality he could pit on fin it suited him. Mrs. Haa held back her speirin an peety fur a better time.

Efter Mrs. Haa hid left the chaumer, he bedd staunin afore the lowe, glowerin, sae Mr. Henfrey pits it, at the wag at waa sortin. Mr. Henfrey nae anely tuik aff the hauns o the wag at the waa, an the face, bit tuik oot the wirks; an he tyauved tae wirk in as slaw an quaet an ordnar a mainner as he could. He vrocht wi the lamp nearhaun tae him, an the green shade cast a sheenin licht on his hauns, an on the makk an wheels, an left the lave o the chaumer in shadda. Fin he luikit up, coloured swatches swam in his een. Bein ill-faschent bi natur, he’d taen oot the intimmers--a darg nae nott- wi the notion o haudin aff his leavin an mebbe stertin tae news wi the fremmit cheil. Bit the cheil stude thonner, aathegither seelent an still. Sae still, it got ontae Henfrey's nerves. He felt alane in the chaumer an keekit up, an thonner, grey an blearie, wis the bandaged heid an muckle blue lenses glowerin fixed, wi a mist o green merks wauchtin afore them. It wis sae uncanny tae Henfrey that fur a meenit they bedd glowerin blankly at ane anither. Syne Henfrey luikit doon again. Verra misfittin poseetion! Ane wid like tae say somethin. Should he remairk that the weather wis unca cauld fur the time o year?

He luikit up as gin tae takk aim wi thon stertin ploy. "The weather--" quo he

"Foo dae ye nae feenish an gyang?" speired the stiff body, clearly in a state o painfu grippit in roose. "Aa ye've got tae dae is to sort the oor-haun on its axle. Yer jist ficherin aboot--"

"Of coorse, sir--ae meenit mair. I owerluikit--" an Mr. Henfrey feenished an gaed oot.

Bit he gaed oot feelin verra roosed. "Damn it!" quo Mr. Henfrey tae himsel, trauchlin doon the clachan ben the thawin snaa; "a cheil maun sort a wag at the waa whiles, can he nae?"

An again, "Can a cheil luik at ye?--Ugsome!"

An mairower, "Seeminly nae. Gin the polis wis wintin ye ye couldnae be mair wippit up an bandaged."

At Gleeson's neuk he spied Haa, fa’d recently mairried the cheil's hostess at the "Coach an Shelts," an fa noo drave the Iping convoyance, fin antrin fowk nott it, tae Sidderbridge Junction, camin forrit tae him on his return frae thon airt. Haa hid bin clearly "bidin a while" at Sidderbrig, tae judge bi his drivin. "'Fit like, Teddy?" he speired, passin.

"Ye’ve got a richt objeck at hame!" quo Teddy.

Haa verra frienly like pued up. "Fit's that?" he speired.

"Unca-luikin cheil bidin at the 'Coach an Shelts,'" quo Teddy. "Ma certes!"

An he gaed on tae gie Haa a strang pictur o his ugsome guest. "Luiks a bittie like a mask, dis it nae? I'd like tae see a cheil's face gin I’d him bidin in my hame," Henfrey telt him. "Bit weemen are sae trustfu--far fremmit fowk are consarned. He's taen yer chaumer an he hisnae even gien a nemme, Haa."

"Ye dinna say!" Hall reponed, fa wis a cheil o slaw harns.

"Aye," quo Teddy. "Bi the wikk. Fitiver he is, ye canna get rid o him unner the wikk. An he's got a gweed puckle gear camin the gear, sae he sez. Lat's hope it winna be stanes in kists, Haa."

He telt Haa foo his aunt at Hastings hid bin swickit bi a cheil wi teem kists. Aathegither he left Haa rael suspicious. "Gee up, auld lass," quo Haa. "I jelouse I maun luik intae thon."

Teddy trauchled on his wey wi his thochts conseederable blyther.

Insteid o "luikin intae it," hoosaeiver, Haa on his return wis sairly miscaad bi his wife on the length o time he’d spent in Sidderbridge, an his mild speirins wir met wi snappy repons an in a mainner nae tae the pynt. Bit the seed o suspicion Teddy hid sown tuik haud in the harns o Mr. Haa in spite o thon dampers. "Ye weemen dinna ken aathin," quo Mr. Hall, set on finnin oot mair aboot the style o his guest at the earliest likely chaunce. An efter the cheil hid gane tae bed, aboot hauf-past nine, Mr. Haa gaed unca ill-naturet intae the parlour an luikit verra hard at his wife's gear, jist tae shaw that the fremmit body wisnae maister there, an luikit close an a thochtie disrespeckfu a screed o mathematical wirkins the fremmit body hid left. Fin gaun tae bed fur the nicht he telt Mrs. Haa tae luik verra close at the fremmit body's gear fin it cam neist day.

"Ye sup ooto your troch, Haa," quo Mrs. Haa, "an I'll sup ooto mine."

She wis aa the mair like tae snap at Haa because the fremmit body wis aathegither a byordnar fey kinno o fremmit body, an she wis bi nae means sattled aboot him in her ain harns. In the mids o the nicht she waukened up dreamin o muckle fite heids like neeps, that cam treetlin efter her, at the eyn o aybydan thrapples, an wi muckle blaik een. Bit bein a mensefu wuman, she smored her flegs an birled ower an gaed tae sleep again.