

Stuart So there's pictures of Grandee in the nude hanging on walls all over the town?

Dave I suppose so. I've never seen any, but they must be somewhere. Your great grandmother Elizabeth bought half a dozen of the most explicit ones. They're still in Grandee's attic. Of course he wanted them hanging in the hall, but Gran put her foot down.

Stuart Really? Are they still there? Can I have one?

Dave What on earth do you want one for?

Stuart Well you see when I get my own place I'll have it hanging over the fireplace. It'll be a great talking point. You think about it, not many people will have a picture of their Great Grandfather – nude – above the fireplace.

Dave No, I can honestly say you will be unique.

Stuart What else did he do?

Dave What didn't he do! For the next twenty years he tried everything that he had wanted to do in his youth.

Stuart Did he chase women?

Dave No – he never did that. He was devoted to Grandma Elizabeth. As far as I know he never looked at another woman. It was after she died he perhaps looked about a bit, but he'd calmed down by then.

Stuart Didn't she try to stop him doing these mad things?

Dave No, she never could control him. You see he could always make her laugh. Mind you, he could make anybody laugh. She tried, of course, we all did, but he'd just twinkle in that way he had and he got away with anything. I suppose he was just lovable.

Stuart He curtsied at the Queen didn't he?

Dave Oh yes, that was a terrible thing that he did. It was in all the papers and on TV.

Stuart Why did he do that?

Dave I don't know really, he said he was bored with all these men bowing and scraping. He just thought it would be funny.

Stuart Did she say anything?

Dave Well if you look at the television coverage you can see that she looks a bit amazed – and cross at first – then he said, “That was a bit of a change wasn’t it?” and started laughing in that way he had that was so infectious and she couldn’t help but laugh. She said something but he would never tell us what it was. They both ended up laughing. The Councillors, including your Grandad, who was the Mayor, were furious.

Stuart Oh great! Grandee was so cool! I blame the Council it was their fault, they shouldn’t have let him anywhere near the Queen.

Dave They didn’t really. You see your Grandad was the Mayor and Grandee was his father and everybody knew him, so he just tagged along and there was no-one brave enough to tell him to go.

Stuart Oh I wish I had seen it. I bet Grandad went ballistic.

Dave I’ll say he did – so much so that when he was presented to the Queen he couldn’t speak and he forgot to bow. That was in the papers and on local TV as well. I’ve got a VHS of that – I’ll have it put onto DVD so you can see it. Now Grandee must have told the Queen that he was the Mayor’s father because she looked over at him and laughed. Your Grandad went into a terrible sulk and didn’t speak to him for a month. Mind you, he didn’t speak to anyone else for a month either.

Stuart Oh I wish I’d have been old enough to know him better. I hope I grow up to be just like him.

Dave It’s my nightmare knowing that his genes are in you.

Stuart But he was so cool. What else did he do?

Dave No more today I’ve got things to do, but you can bet a lot more things will come out now that he’s gone.

Stuart I can’t wait. (*Blackout*)

The next day.

David is sitting in a chair with his feet up in tee-shirt and slippers. Mr. T enters looking very formal.

Mr. T Come along David! Mrs Simpson will be here very soon – get yourself dressed.

Dave I am dressed.

Mr. T Well hardly in the style one expects at the Will reading of a loved one, especially one who has considerable wealth and property to bestow.

Dave Well I'm afraid your Mrs Simpson will have to take me as I am. After all she is working for me not me for her!

Mr. T You know David, there is more than a touch of your grandfather in you.

Dave Oh I do hope so. *(Gill enters)*

Jill Come on Dave – are you going to get ready?

Mr. T Aha! That's just what I was telling him Gillian. His appearance leaves a lot to be desired.

Jill That's what you were telling him were you? In that case Dave – you look just fine.

Mr. T I don't know why I bother to speak.

Jill You'll get no arguments from us.

Dave Now, now, children – play nicely – on today of all days.

Jill Well I think we should act as Grandee would have expected.

Mr. T Good Heavens! I hope you will behave more in keeping with the occasion. After all I am his one and only son.

Dave So they say.

Mr. T What do you mean by that?

Jill Well you have to admit, you don't look like him, you don't sound like him and you don't act like him.

Dave You certainly don't act like him or Gran.

Mr. T How dare you! My mother was a virtual saint.

Jill So you don't take after her either.

Dave Are you sure they didn't find you on the doorstep – you know – a foundling?

Mr. T Certainly not – what a suggestion – and from my own son – disgusting!

Dave I dunno – I sometimes wish I'd been found on the doorstep.

Jill You'd have still been there – he wouldn't have taken you in.

Dave Of course he would – wouldn't you Dad.

Mr. T I would have thought about it very carefully and knowing what I know now I would have rung the necessary Council Department to take you away.

Dave Charming! And this from my own father.

Mr. T *(With a smile)* That was one of my jokes David.

Dave Really? Sorry Dad it's always difficult to recognise one of your jokes.

Jill Yes – they're so rare. *(They both snigger)*

Mr. T You're both still like a couple of kids. It's time you grew up.

Dave Sorry Dad *(they both put on very serious faces)* Will this do for the Will reading? *(They look at each other – it is too much – they collapse laughing).*

Mr. T I give up.

Jill Oooh – if only....

(Stuart and Gemma enter dressed very casually)

Mr. T My God! Look at you two.

Stuart Morning all.

Gemma We're looking a bit tasty aren't we Grandad.

Mr. T Not the word I would have used.

Jill Grandad's not in a very good mood this morning.

Gemma Well there's a surprise.

Dave Don't be rude to your Grandad.

Stuart No – let me do it.

Mr. T Oh don't bother, I've got some calls to make. Let me know when Mrs Simpson arrives. *(He exits)*

Gemma You know I was thinking – I can't imagine Christmas without Grandee – can you?

Stuart No – it won't be the same ever again will it?

Jill No – thank goodness. For once we can have a proper family Christmas with no surprises.

Gemma Like marijuana in the Christmas pudding along with the brandy *(she laughs)*

Jill He must have snuck into the kitchen when I wasn't looking. He said he had given the pudding mix a stir for luck. Crafty old devil!

Stuart You must admit – it certainly turned Christmas day into a rave.

Gemma It was Dad's fault – trying to limbo under the table – that caused all the trouble.

Stuart He was lucky he didn't have to have stitches in that eye.

Jill Who cares about his eye – everything all over the floor – mince pies, brandy butter, wine, beer – what a mess – and all the fault of Grandee!

Dave I had a hell of a bang on that eye – but it didn't hurt. Actually I don't remember much about that Christmas!

Jill I'm not surprised – you had three helpings.

Dave Did I?

Stuart You did Dad. You were totally stoned.

Gemma Oh isn't it a shame there'll be no more Christmases like that.

Jill Thank goodness! We can become a normal family at last now's he's gone.

Dave Oh Jill – you sound as if you're glad Grandee's dead.

Jill No of course I'm not – I loved him – everybody loved him – you couldn't help it. But you must admit it will be nice to know that from now on things will be normal.

Gemma Quite right. No more crocodiles in the bath.

Jill Exactly! I can do without that. I thought I was going to have a heart attack when I saw it.

Stuart Oh Mum it was only a baby crocodile and even you laughed afterwards.

Jill I know – you couldn't help laughing at the silly old fool. Where on earth did he get a crocodile from?

Stuart His mate Jim. He breeds them. He was just looking after this one for a couple of days. The bath was the only place he could keep it really.

Jill I notice he didn't keep it in his bathroom.

Stuart No – he wouldn't would he? Still I can't sit around here, I've got things to do. Can't I go? You can let me know when Mrs thingy arrives.

Jill No – Grandee was very particular about who should be at the reading and you were included so you must stay.

Stuart Alright! Alright! I only asked.

Jill She should be here in the next ten minutes. I'm dreading it. I'm sure there'll be some dreadful revelations. We should all prepare to be shocked.

Gemma You bet. He won't let an opportunity like this pass. Mind you, I can't think what it could be.

Stuart You never know with him, he won't let us down.

Jill Let us down? That was his mission in life – to let the family down at every opportunity. Oh I'm getting stressed, I'll go and make a fresh pot of coffee.

Stuart We'll perhaps need something stronger than coffee. *(He and Gemma laugh)*

Jill You two just shut up and I hope you're going to behave yourselves.

Gemma The trouble is Mum we've never had a good example of decorum to follow – did we Stu?

Stuart *(Putting on a posh voice)* No, I'm afraid we never did Gemma. *(They both start laughing again)*

Jill I don't know why I bother. I'll put the coffee on.

Dave Yes that's a good idea – can we have something to nibble as well, nothing much – cheese and onion sandwich perhaps.

Gill You've not long had your breakfast!

Dave I only had a round of toast and marmite.

Jill Alright – alright. *(They both exit Gemma and Stuart flop down on the sofa giggling)*

Gemma You know we should both be sitting here all miserable and crying 'cos we've lost our Grandee.

Stuart You're right Gem and I do feel sad, but as soon as I think about him I just have to smile.

Gemma Yeah I know – me too. It's so difficult to feel sad with a big grin on your face.

Stuart We were lucky weren't we?

Gemma What – to have Grandee?

Stuart Yeah. What kind of childhood would we have had without all those tales he told us?

Gemma Do you think they were true?

Stuart Who knows? And what does it matter? With Grandee everything was possible. But I'm sure he never really had his hand chopped off.

Gemma Well he did have that big scar on his wrist where he said they sewed it on again.

Stuart What about the bullet hole in his shoulder?

Gemma He reckoned an Egyptian did it somewhere or other.

Stuart Suez – that's where it was. I read it up after he told us about it. It was true – in 1956 – protecting the Suez Canal – it really happened.

Gemma But did he really get shot there? I thought it was just a story.

Stuart The bullet hole might be a tale but fighting at the Suez Canal wasn't.

Gemma That's the trouble with Grandee's tales – there's always a grain of truth in there somewhere.

Stuart Or it's all the truth – who knows? *(Gill enters with a cardboard box)*

Jill I thought I'd better bring these down.

Stuart What are they?

Jill It's a load of stuff Grandee left here – all kinds of junk.

Gemma Oh Grandee's stuff? Let's have a look. *(They both ferret about in the box)* Hello, hello, hello what's this? *(She holds up a pack of postcards)* Rudy Nudies!

Stuart Great! Let's have a look. *(He snatches them)*

Jill I'll take those thank you very much. It's not the sort of thing you should be looking at.

Gemma I don't know why. They're not as porny as page 3 girls.

Jill *(Looking at them)* I suppose you're right. Times change. When Grandee got them in Paris in 1945 they were considered very racy.

Gemma Amazing! *(She picks out more photos)* Is this Grandee in uniform?

Jill Yes that's him – the bold warrior.

Gemma Was he an officer? Are these his medals?

Jill Yes he's got a tinful.

Stuart Really? What did he do to get them?

Jill I don't know – he never spoke about it.

Gemma I don't believe that. Grandee was full of tales about everything he did.

Stuart I'm sure if he'd have been a hero – we would never have heard the end of it.

Gemma Yes – he'd have defeated the whole Germany army and killed Hitler by himself.

Stuart And without any help from the Americans. No I'm sure if these medals were real – he'd have boasted about it.

Jill That's where you're wrong. You don't know Grandee as well as you think. Real heroes don't boast about what they did.

Gemma So you think he was a real hero?

Jill I know he was.

Stuart How do you know that?

Jill Well your father and I read the citations.

Gemma Citations?

Jill Yes – that’s the description of the events that earned him the medals.

Gemma So Grandee didn’t tell you himself.

Jill No, quite the reverse, we found the papers by accident. It was the only time I saw Grandee embarrassed. He snatched the papers from us and said we were never to speak of what we’d read.

Stuart Why did he say that? Were they embarrassing?

jill Not at all – only to a real hero. This was something he was very private about.

Gemma You wouldn’t believe it looking at this. *(She holds up a framed picture from the box)* It’s our Grandee in the nuddy.

Stuart Let’s have a look. Ha ha I can see why Grandad was so upset by these paintings. *(He dives into the box)* I don’t believe it – look – here’s another one.

Gemma Whoo-oo. Grandee’s bits are even bigger in this one – ah I see why. This one was painted by a woman.

Stuart This one was painted by a man.

Gemma Yes – she exaggerated a bit.

Jill Or perhaps not.

Stuart What? You never saw Grandee’s.....

Jill Of course not, but I did see all the other paintings. Your Grandmother Elizabeth, who bought these, picked the more modest ones.

Stuart Go Grandee!

Jill Now put those back before your Grandfather comes in.

Stuart Can I have one?

Gemma Perv!

Stuart You shut up!

Jill We'll see – now put them back.

Gemma (*Finding a photograph*) Oh here's Grandee looking very smart in his uniform.

Jill Yes he was a captain – well until he – er – until

Stuart Until what?

Jill It's not important.

Gemma Come on – what did he do? He did something didn't he?

Stuart Really Mum – come on – we're entitled to know about the skeletons in the family cupboard.

Gemma You may as well tell us. I'll soon get it out of Dad. (*Dave enters*)

Dave Get what out of me? If it's money you can forget it.

Stuart We'll talk about that later. What we want to know is why did Grandee stop being a Captain?

Dave Well – he – er – you see.... as far as I can remember.... well he just left the army.

Gemma We'd worked that out. Why did he leave?

Dave (*Suddenly getting a brainwave*) Because the war was over.

Gemma And?

Dave That's it.

Stuart Oh no it's not – something happened. Come on you may as well come clean.

Jill Oh for heaven's sake tell them Dave. It doesn't matter now – everybody's dead.

Dave We were sworn to secrecy.

Stuart Secrecy? Come on Dad you've got to tell us now.

Dave Alright – but you must keep it to yourselves.

Gemma Keep what to ourselves?

Dave Well Grandee had fought all the way from D-Day to the German border. He started in 1940 as a private and ended up as a Captain. But as you

can imagine he was a great soldier. When peace was declared he and a few others decided to celebrate a bit.

Stuart He was great at celebrating. Do you remember last Christmas with that blow up banana?

Dave Yes I remember – do you want to hear this story or not?

Stuart Sorry

Dave For some reason best known to himself he decided to chop down the flagpole on the parade ground in Germany. He said the Union Jack shouldn't be on this Nazi pole.

Gemma Why was it a Nazi pole?

Dave By all accounts they had taken over a German army camp in Hamburg – but that's not important. He got the fire axe and he chopped it down to tremendous cheers from the rest of the troops.

Stuart Is that it? It doesn't seem much to me.

Dave I wish it had been. The Adjutant – a certain Major Frisby-Smythe, much disliked by the Regiment and particularly by Grandee, decided to intervene. He shouted that he'd have him court-martialled and that his conduct was unbecoming to an officer, that he was disgusted and that Grandee could consider himself under arrest.

Gemma Oh dear.

Dave Exactly. Grandee let go. He told this creep he'd always wangled it so that he'd never been under fire, always stayed safe at headquarters while good men had gone forward and died. He called him a "bloody coward" and said he'd managed to go through the war without even blancoing his own belt.

Stuart Blancoing?

Dave Ah yes – it's like boot polish. You shine your belt with it. By all accounts old Frisby-Smythe had a batman to do that for him.

Stuart Is that it then?

Dave Hardly. Grandee decided to do a bit of blancoing himself.

Gemma I'm not with you.

Dave Well Grandee knocked him down, pulled down his trousers in front of the Regiment and blancoed his privates until they shone.

Stuart Really? Good old Grandee! That showed him!

Dave You might laugh but in the forces this was a very serious crime. Striking a superior officer, conduct unbecoming etc. etc. Court martial at best – perhaps even jail.

Gemma Did Grandee go to jail?

Dave Old Frisbee-Smythe wanted him to stand court-martial and get a dishonourable discharge or go to jail, but it was decided to hush it all up if Grandee would resign his commission and leave.

Stuart Why did they hush it up then?

Jill Well it appeared that Frisby-Smythe was a second cousin to the King and they didn't want the bad publicity.

Stuart *(Doing a little jig)* Great! Great! My Great Grandad polished the King's Cousin's balls! Not many people can say that.

Jill I shouldn't think there's many people who'd want to.

Stuart The more I hear about Grandee, the more I love and admire him.

Jill Yes. Unfortunately you take after him.

Gemma What about me?

Jill Yes – in a strange way – you do too. *(The doorbell rings)*