



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

What is all this fuss over a little Japanese motor car? The Japanese do everything sideways, in any case. Mr Dear Grandchild, I keep thinking to myself: This is nothing more than a storm in Japanese teacup. So, I summoned Mr Antony Leung to my office, which is next to Grandpa's office, and I said to him that, as the Financial Secretary of Hongkong, he should realise that what he has done is to curdle the crème de la crème. As far as the pecking order of Hongkong is concerned, he is right up there, within the top five of the inner circle of Grandpa – the crème de la crème of Hongkong society. I said to him, for God's sake, Antony Leung, just quit as Financial Secretary of Hongkong and save everybody's trouble. Grandpa is just too much of a gentleman to sack you, so, Please! Please! Please! just resign and, then, there will be no loss of face to anybody. If you step down, now, then, Grandpa can, probably, get you a job in his family's shipping company – where it would not be wrong of you to buy a new motor car just before you announce anything and everything. As I see it, Antony Leung, I went on, everybody makes mistakes, at some time in one's lifetime, and you just made a massive and very unfortunate one. More important, you were found with your fingers in the cookie jar, so to speak, and, almost, immediately, you were discovered, your 'fingerprints', being everywhere. It was bad luck for you. But I can understand that it is difficult to break old, established habits. It is just like smoking, isn't it? Difficult ... difficult ... difficult. This is, clearly, not a good fung shui year for you. That you made an atomic fart of a mistake is clear to anybody and everybody, but mature people, such as I and Grandpa, forgive you. That's all there is to it: We forgive you of everything, your greed, notwithstanding. The fact that you saved yourself \$HK150,000 is neither here nor there when you look at the size of the multi-billion-dollar Budget Deficits that Hongkong will be enjoying over the next few years. And, in view of the fact that your new wife was about to give birth to a little baby girl at the time that you determined to save a little bit of money for yourself, it is understandable that you could not concentrate on your job. After all, what is more important: You wife; or, the affairs of Hongkong? The pressures of life must be overpowering for you, just now. I bet that you can't even get a good night's sleep because of the baby crying. I think, viewing the entire situation, you had better concentrate on your family, not on the complicated matters of Hongkong's financial affairs. If Grandpa is still the Chief Executive for the next few years, then, it is assured that things in Hongkong will not change, appreciably. Then, as soon as a new batch of Ministers is installed, you can come back to work for him. Just like the bankruptcy laws of Hongkong, in four years from now, you will be like a new man. It won't take longer than four years for the scars of your humiliation to heal. Just now, some people may not trust you, but I can assure you that I do not distrust you, very much, although, of course, I do have some reservations about having you over for dinner: That would be putting too much temptation in your view.

You know, I continued to tell him, I do understand how it all happened because, when I first became the Chief Lady of Hongkong, about six years ago, I had to undergo a great number of changes in my life: Hairstyles had to be changed so that I fitted in with Beijing's hoity-toity; suitable dresses had to be fitted to my exact body shape – which is, still, like a model – so that I would not upstage Mrs Zhu Rong Ji and other tai-tais, and all the others of the Inner Circle of Chinese Government; security had to be increased at the flat in order to keep out the riff-raff

(neighbours included); my cooks had to undergo security clearance and special training in order to cater for special guests from Beijing (they have different tastes from Hongkong people, you know); speech-writers had to tell me when to raise my voice in order to attract attention of my people, etc, etc, etc. Now that you are a daddy, you will have an increased number of responsibilities and, no doubt, you will want to visit the home of your wife in Hunan, China, and to give a party to her family when the baby is one month old. You have so many things to do that it is doubtful that you can apply yourself to the job at hand in Hongkong. Don't worry about Hongkong, I told him, because it will continue with its problems: Troubles have a tendency to lodge themselves in the weakest part of a body or economy. And don't worry that Legislative Councillors don't like you any more because that is the price of fame. After you step down as Financial Secretary, no doubt, you will be asked to give speeches about this and that and, most likely, you will be able to earn even more money than you are receiving today from the Government of Hongkong. Do you remember when US President Bill Clinton was found with his cigar up a lady's twat in the White House and the world was complaining about his actions. Well, he got over it, didn't he? In fact, the actions of President Bill Clinton were much more serious than your making full use of the position of Financial Secretary of Hongkong to earn a little bit of money on the side. President Bill Clinton was found to have committed perjury as well as cheating on his wife, and he was disbarred for life as an advocate. You didn't do anything like the former President of the US, did you? Anyway, you don't smoke, do you? You only tried to save a little money by using information that was sitting on your desk. Nothing is wrong with you, and it, probably, was not even your fault when all is said and done. The information about the revised First Registration Tax on imported motor cars to Hongkong should not have been sitting on your desk, in the first place. The question is: Who provoked you? There should be an investigation into the person who tempted you. Whoever did this to you should be jailed. If you like, I have some friends in the Independent Commission Against Corruption, who, I am sure, would like to investigate this matter. I do feel so sorry for you, Tony! (I suppose it is alright if I call you, Tony, now) Just think of the Bible, my dear: Was it Eve or Adam who took the first bite of God's apple? Poor Adam! It is so easy to blame him for the acts of that first-known hussy. It is clear to me that, at most, there was contributory blame or contributory negligence on your part when you succumbed to temptation. But you, clearly, did not initiate the little matter of using your privileged position to make a little money for yourself by buying a new motor car to take your little daughter to the doctor, the dentist, etc. Who, Tony, I ask you, did this to you? Talk to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and tell them whom you suspect of this crime. They will help you, I am certain of it. And, if you have any trouble, just talk to me and I shall whisper some sweet things into a certain person's ear. I am your friend, my dear Tony. Don't forget that. I forgive you for everything. By the way, are there going to be any more pronouncements from your office in the coming weeks? Let me know, first, will you?

My Dear Grandchild, I have to go now because Grandpa is expecting some guests for dinner.

Love you,

Chief Lady of Hongkong

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