



## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*After viewing the many wonderful palaces of the former President of Iraq, Mr Saddam Hussein, it struck me that, really, he had style. That is the reason, no doubt, that he rose to the highest rank in his country, of running Iraq for twenty four years. One has to be something special in order to outgun (excuse the pun) all competitors. Grandpa has many of the same qualities of Saddam Hussein, except he does not keep a rifle in the flat (I won't allow it) and he does not have palaces in the country. Also, and this is something with which I have been toying, mentally, I mean, Grandpa does not have a physical double. Saddam Hussein had a whole bunch of them, according to reports. It would be difficult for Grandpa to find a person that could double for him because of the puffy bags, underneath his eyes, and, if you saw the state of his tummy, you would appreciate the immense problems that plastic surgeons would face in trying to duplicate that corpulent hulk. Getting back to style and, specifically, the style of Saddam Hussein, it is very easy to make fun of the opulence that one sees on television, of exotic motor cars, of diamond rings and other expensive jewellery, of palaces, of furniture, of the number of servants one employs, and so on. But one has to remember that one has to adapt to the times, the place of one's residence, the perception of one's followers, and of the peasantry that look to you for guidance. I try very hard to set the pace where-ever I go. I hope that, by my example, my people will follow. When I went to visit a low-cost housing estate, recently, in order to give comfort to the people, suffering from SARS – **Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome** – I dressed from head to foot in a kind of plastic sheath, just like a condom, that I fashioned with the help of my dressmaker. Now, people refer to my gown as 'Betty's Bubble Gown' and, sometimes, 'The Plastic Bubble'. You see, I invented a new dress! That is what leaders of a country have to do: Set the pace for others to follow. Those people that I visited and the medical staff of hospitals and clinics of Hongkong have no appreciation of what I did: I braved SARS for their benefit. Now, they know how to dress and, I have been told, many nurses at our hospitals want to copy my example and fashion uniforms with my bubble design. That does not mean, of course, that the people of Iraq should strive to build a palace that is greater than that of their chosen leader, but they can, certainly, spruce up there flats and their personal hygiene. I only wore my bubble dress once, but I have put it in my closet to remember the time that I wore it. In time, I shall be able to auction it off and to give the proceeds to the poor of Hongkong, or, having another thought, I could donate it to our museum to be put on display in the Betty Wing. Never throw away clothes, Grandchild, because fashion, nearly always, makes a circle: What goes around comes around, as the saying goes.*

*I remember the wife of President Ferdinand Marcos of The Philippines and the horrible things that she had to endure, following that unfortunate incident in 1986 when that woman, completely of peasant stock, took control of the country via a little commotion in Manila. Mrs Corazon Aquino took control of the country, ousting Mrs Imelda Marcos, and her five thousand pairs of shoes. People made a lot of fuss at the fact that Mrs Marcos had so many pairs of shoes. I never understood that because, for more than twenty one years, she had to face the people of the Philippines and to set the pace. Her shoes were important, not just to her, but for her people. Her people would wait for the opportunity to view her latest footwear creations. At the annual Oscar Nomination Ceremonies, ladies are glued to their television sets, just to see what their favourite stars are wearing. One could*

*say that it is the greatest and most-important fashion show of the year. Those dresses are only worn once, you know. Ladies of rank and popular ladies, such as movie stars, can only wear a formal dress once and the same is true of a pair of shoes: One pair of shoes with one dress, suit, evening gown, etc. It would be wasteful for Mrs Marcos to have thrown away her once-used shoes, so she kept them in a special shoe closet. Eventually, she donated them to a museum, dedicated to shoes. Now, future generations may study the styles of footwear of her day. Have you ever seen Queen Elizabeth II wear the same dress twice? Have you ever wondered what she does with her dresses, once she has been seen in them? They, no doubt, are hanging in a special closet. And, do you know that she has the largest jewellery collection in the world? You may view the collection in the Tower of London. She created special sections of the Tower of London just to hold her zillions of pounds' worth of jewels. Yet, nobody complains about her and her wealth, her jewellery collection, her Rolls-Royce motor cars, her horse-drawn carriages, all hand-painted, her palaces, here and there, etc, etc, etc.*

*I suppose that, if Saddam Hussein had not been beaten in his little twenty one day war with the United States of America, he would have turned over his dozen or so palaces to the people of the country so that they could see just where their tax money went. One should not criticise people of nobility, such as Saddam Hussein, Ferdinand Marcos, Yasir Arafat, Queen Elizabeth II and Grandpa because one may not fully understand the motives of some of their actions at a certain time. Grandpa is, often, criticised in the Legislative Council for his alleged lack of definitive actions with regard to this or that. But people just do not understand that Grandpa has to be so careful that he does not step on a political landmine, one that may have been planted by somebody in Beijing. Grandpa has his enemies, too, you know. There is a great deal of jealousy abroad at the fact that Grandpa was chosen to lead Hongkong in its transition from British Imperialistic domination to the Chinese style of Communism. One-Country, Two-Systems, eventually, will be replaced with One-Country, One-System, you understand, and Grandpa is helping his people to accept the New Order.*

*Well, I have to go now, talk to you, next week.  
I love you, all: My people.*

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