



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

I am certain that you know this, but just in case you have forgotten, I am a musical person. I hear music in most things because there is form in music. Sound is a jumble of audible frequencies with little to no form, whereas music follows a continuous and logical sequence. It is what I call harmonic progression, just like in mathematics. When I heard that The National Grand Theatre of China was in financial difficulties, I started, immediately, to tap into some of the richest people of Hongkong in order to come to the aid of my National Grand Theatre. I got a rude awakening from one Hongkong mogul, however. Without mentioning his name, all that I want you to know about him is that he married the boss's daughter, some years ago, when the boss was alive, that is, and, when the boss died, he took over part of his late father-in-law's empire. Anyway, when I approached him, he said that he could not see his way clear to donate any material sum of money to The National Grand Theatre of China because he thought that there were more important programmes that needed his, and his companies' money. He talked about the poor people of Hongkong and their needs, about the requirement for more free medical facilities for Hongkong, the growing demand for more and improved educational institutions, etc, etc, etc. Of course, he was correct in all that he said, but one can always make excuses for not contributing to charity, can't one? What could be more important than enriching a man's soul? He was seated in my office at home, sipping some of my best Chinese tea, which was more than fifty years old, and, on seeing that he appreciated it, I said to him: 'What is the use of bread if one has not water to wash it down?' Peter, that is his first name, looked at me, quizzically, as though he did not understand that which I had uttered. I explained: 'Bread is dry and requires a liquid in order to allow one to digest it. Just like the tea that you are drinking.' He said that he was enjoying my good tea and that he understood the concept of bread and water, but what had water, or tea, got to do with the subject at hand? I was dumbfounded that he did not understand my metaphor, but persevered, nevertheless. To feed the poor, I went on, is noble, but what is food without music? Do you see the point, now, that I am making, I asked. Peter did not seem to understand. I went on, getting more and more frustrated: 'Peter, my friend, you must raise your thinking, moving from one plateau to a higher one. Poor people are the same, all over the world, even in their misery. Anyway, misery likes company, you know. What is bread without water? What is life without music?' My Dear Grandchild, this man, dressed in his best finery, just looked at me as though I were speaking a foreign language! At last, he said that his company would donate something to my cause, but 'don't expect too much, please' he quickly added. Gad! I had expected his company to fund the entire project! Peter has no music in his soul. That was my conclusion. I talked to Grandpa about the situation, stating that the coffers of Hongkong had money, sufficient, in my opinion, to fund The National Theatre building project. A grunt was all that I heard from him and, then: 'Ai yah! I am criticised for everything in the territory, from the virility of the stray cats to not understanding the plight of the poor. Do you want me to be criticised for funding your project, too, while the lousy democrats of Hongkong are nipping at my trousers? And the civil servants are complaining that I have cracked their rice bowls.' Grandpa was correct, of course, because he has been under a lot of pressure from Beijing, of late. Poor little frog! I was thinking that, perhaps, the money, needed for The National Grand Theatre could be raised via The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd. After all, most of the listings on The Growth Enterprise Market of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd are losing money. For what reason should there not

be one more loser? The playing of music, I know, rarely makes money, except if one is an Elvis (The Pelvis) Presley. But, for compatriots of the Motherland, I am certain that they could be persuaded to apply for shares of a new listing on The Growth Enterprise Market in order to support the building of The National Grand Theatre. This is where you come in, My Dear Grandchild: Do you know anybody in The Securities and Futures Commission and The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd whom you could approach in order to make certain that not too much scrutiny is paid if, and when, my idea reaches fruition and The National Grand Theatre company is floated in my territory? I have it on good authority that that is the way that things are done, these days – just talk to the correct person. Of course, in keeping with tradition, I would allot some free shares to you for your hard work.

*Please write to me, quickly, because I am really excited about this idea of mine.
Love music! Love The National Grand Theatre! Love to all!*

Chief Lady

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