

## EMILY / ALFRED / CYNTHIA / HASTINGS

EMILY:

Then you'll write to the Princess after tea, Alfred? I'll write to Lady Tadminster for the second day, myself—or should we wait until after we hear if the Princess— Why, Lieutenant Hastings, after all these years. Alfred, darling, Lieutenant Hastings.

ALFRED:

This is a pleasure, Mr. Hastings. Emily dearest, I think that cushion is a little damp. Allow me...

EMILY:

Oh, there's Cynthia! Cynthia works at the Tadminster Red Cross.

CYNTHIA:

But I'm not a nurse, thank heaven, I work in the dispensary.

HASTINGS:

*(smiling)*

How many people do you poison?

CYNTHIA:

Oh, hundreds!

EMILY:

Enough! What a gruesome conversation! It makes me feel as if a goose were walking over my grave. Cynthia is my protégée, the daughter of an old schoolfellow who married a rascally solicitor. The girl was left an orphan and penniless. Fortunately, I came to the rescue, and Cynthia has been with us nearly two years now. Cynthia, do you think you could write a few notes for me or are you *still* eating?

CYNTHIA:

Certainly, Aunt Emily.

ALFRED:

*(to Emily)*

Allow me to take your delicate hand and assist you to your feet, my angel.

EMILY:

Thank you, Alfred darling. Hastings? John will show you your room. Supper is at half-past seven. We have given up late dinner for some time now. Lady Tadminster—she was the late Lord Abbotsbury's daughter—does the same. She agrees with me that one must set an example of economy. We are quite a war household; nothing is wasted here—every scrap of waste paper, even, is saved and sent away in sacks.