

THE BISHOP'S PALACE
LONDON

December 4th 1911

Dear Dr Watson,

My name is Desmond Light, Lieutenant Desmond Light of the Fourth Ghurka Regiment.

I have been in India for six years now, and I arrived in England two weeks ago for six months holiday. I came home with a secret hope - to find a wife - and on my second day in London I met the woman of my dreams - on top of a bus, of all places!

Anne is beautiful and intelligent - all that a woman should be. I don't mind that she is a few years older than me. The day after I met Anne I asked her to marry me and she agreed. It is the Ghurka tradition to give your fiancée your kukri - the traditional boomerang-shaped knife all Ghurkas wear. And I gave Anne mine when she said she would be my wife. I also gave her a silver swastika, the Hindu religious sign symbolising good.

The next Saturday I took Anne to the Bishop's Palace for tea to meet my father and mother. Mama seemed to like my fiancée, but Papa's face went white when she walked into the room, and I noticed his hands were shaking as he took his tea.

That night I told my father I wanted to marry Anne. A look of horror passed over his face. 'Marriage!' he exclaimed. 'Never!'

'Is it that you don't like Anne?' I asked nervously.

'It isn't that, my boy,' answered my father after a short silence. 'It's just that you can't take an English woman out to India. The climate would kill her. No, Desmond, you can't possibly marry her. I will never give you my permission to marry a woman and take her to India.'

Well, Dr Watson, I cannot marry against my father's wishes because it would break my mother's heart. I know from your books that you lived in India for some time. If you wrote to my father as a medical man stating that it is perfectly safe for an English woman to live in India he might agree to our marriage. That would make me the happiest man in the world.

Yours sincerely,

Desmond Light