

Eve

I've just met this wonderful chap. Well actually it was last night, at Bunny Neate's brother's birthday party. His name is - the chap I met that is, not Bunny's Brother - *his* name's David although everyone calls him Cheesy; I can't think why. Anyway, my chap is called Alexander and he's a civil servant that works for - now let me think - the Ministry of Agricultural Food and fisheries, which isn't as dull as it sounds; did you know for example that Scallops should only be caught in early autumn because before that they're not fully mature? I didn't. Alex is awfully clever; he went to Sherborne and then did a degree at Oxford - he did say what it was in, but I can't remember. It was something frightfully intellectual like philosophy or classics or something like that. Whatever it was it's more than I ever did; I mean, I went to a good school and then did two years at the Institut Villa Pierrefeu, in Glion, but I never went to University. I don't think Mummy did either. I'll have to ask my Aunt about that one. My mother is no longer with us, you see. She died in a car accident when I was very little, about two years old. I have only a few memories of her - just snapshots really. I remember her being very beautiful and of course there are photographs of her, but that's all really. I don't remember her scent or the sound of her voice. People tell me she was kind and loving, but aren't a lot of people. I wish I'd known

her. Sometimes I wish she was here so I could with her, and ask her the questions only mother could answer, and tell her the secrets that a daughter could only share with her mother. I wish I could tell her all about Alexander and listen to the advice she would inevitably give, as all mothers give their daughters when seeing a gentleman. Daddy is, of course, lovely but completely useless as that sort of thing, and mummy's sister, Aunt Georgina is nice enough but she lives in America now so we only see her every now and then. She writes of course, but you know how long it takes a letter to get across the Atlantic.

I have friends of course who are wonderful. Bunny who I mentioned before, is daft as a brush but quite delightful, Mary is quiet and thoughtful and then there's Katie, who is an odyssey in her own right. She is my best, my closest, my dearest friend, who I've known since we dormed together at Fernhill, yet sometimes I don't know her at all. She's maddening, complex, passionate, caring, gentle and sometimes all those things at the same time. She's a dancer, Katie, with the City of London ballet, and you know what those performer types are like, they're all a bit peculiar, aren't they? Unfortunately she wasn't at Cheesy's party because she was performing in some God awful part of Europe, Burges or Utrecht or some other dull town in the low counties. So I'll have to tell her about Alexander when I see her. She's always been a

bit, well, disinterested about you know - men- and last time I started seeing one she became, well, the only way I can describe it, was *jealous*. She said it was because that it meant that she'd be even less of me. She doesn't get much chance to get down to Hampshire these days because of her dancing and she got upset because she thought I'd want to spend it with whatever chap I was stepping out with. I said it wouldn't be like that. You know she almost cried and Katie never cries. It took me ages to reassure her, and I think in the end she understood that she would always be special to me. It would take something appalling for that to change and I can't imagine such a thing ever happening.