

THE FABULOUS HIGH LIFE OF THE HEIRESS WHO
COULDN'T SAY NO TO...

a lion in the bedroom



Pat Cavendish O'Neill

a lion
in the
bedroom



I followed the sun...

Pat Cavendish O'Neill was born into a world of enormous riches, eccentricity and intrigue. Her mother, Enrid Lindeman of the Australian wine family, was a famous beauty who married four times. Two husbands were millionaires, two had titles and none lived long. Somerset Maugham jokingly dubbed his dazzling friend Enrid "Lady Killmore" but other, including *Vanity Fair* magazine, were less kind. Here Pat tells the story of her charmed life among the glittering names of the twentieth century – Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Gianni Agnelli, Princess Grace and the Hollywood crowd ... and the day everything changed for her, when a lover in Africa presented her with a tiny lion cub and she entered a world more magical and inspiring than anything she had known before.

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a lion in the bedroom



BY PAT CAVENDISH O'NEILL

Edited by Shelley Gare



JONATHAN BALL PUBLISHERS
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DEDICATION

To my adored mother. Her love for her children was unconditional and her generosity had no end. She gave me my love for animals, both wild and domesticated, and the result has changed my life.

To my beloved Tana, an unbelievable lioness, who saved my life, who taught me the beauty of Africa.

I also want to dedicate this book to my wonderful staff without whose help and loyalty I could not exist. This is to thank Africa and the people of Africa for my wonderful life. I would not want to live anywhere else.

To my beloved brother Caryll Waterpark who over the years has had to put up with what he considers a psychiatric case as a sister and has renamed Broadlands, Broadmoor. Caryll read my manuscript and firmly red-pencilled many of the more daring stories and many mentions of himself. My editor and I made sure to put them back in. He is a man of remarkable intelligence and courage, and in his youth a great beauty too. So there is no reason I am not going to say so.

To my husband Frank O'Neill, who gave up in despair many years ago the notion of having a normal wife or even a normal life. To Shelagh McCutcheon who helped me with the horses and has dedicated her life to Broadlands and all the animals. To the wonderful Graham Beck family who have come to my rescue as did Sheila Southey and John Kalmanson. With their incredible generosity they have saved my farm and allowed me to continue my life with the animals.

To my beloved animals who are part of myself as I know I am part of them.

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Last, but certainly not least, is my beloved friend Elizabeth Wilson who worked so hard on my story of Kenya and was so good about making sure I didn't lose the plot!

Thank you everyone for making a dream come true.



PROLOGUE

T*his is a story that I heard in Swabili long after my lioness Tana and I had gone to live far out in the Kenyan wilds. It was told to me by one of my dearest friends, Mutete, who was also my cook, and he had been told it by the man I loved, Stan Lawrence Brown, the white hunter. Here is what Mutete said to me: “When you decided to go and live at Meru so that you could be with Tana, Bwana Safari was very worried as he realised that you would be living most of the time on your own and there would be no other women around. He wanted to make sure everyone would look after you as he knows how you love walking into the bush and are very forgetful of what happens around you. He said we all know you are very ‘bila uangalifu’. That is, without care. The bwana spoke to me about it and this is the story he told to those who were going with you.*

“He said that a long time ago, Tana and you were mother and daughter but they got it all muddled up when you went to heaven. They sent you back as a human and Tana was left behind. She walked all over heaven looking for you until the good God couldn’t bear her moans any more and sent her back to earth to continue her search.

But they made another muddle and sent her back as a tiny cub. Tana made sure that you found her but realised she would have to grow up fast and become very big and strong so that she could look after you. Her child, her *toto*, was doing lots of crazy things, like driving her at terrible speeds across the face of Africa. As if this were not enough, she would take her for long walks and charge around in the most stupid fashion amongst the elephant and buffalo. Therefore, she could never relax and lie in the shade of a tree for long to recover from the mad drives, before having to get up and follow her crazy *toto* out into the sun and prevent her from going back to heaven before her time.

“Tana then grew into a huge and beautiful lioness and now it was time for her to find her mate, so she is asking all the *toto*’s friends to stay by her side and look after her, so that eventually they can go back to heaven together.”

ACT ONE

CHAPTER

1

My Aunt Nanny looked like a bulldog and was such a snob she thought the upper crust Vanderbilt family of New York was nouveau riche. She generally hated women but adored my mother. Mummy was one of the world's six great beauties according to the press of the time. Her hair had turned silver at the age of 28 and this, combined with her extraordinary green eyes, flawless features and skin, made a remarkable impact on everyone.

Aunt Nanny, who had once been striking herself, told me that Mummy literally had stopped New York's traffic. Admittedly, at the time, that consisted mostly of hansom cabs!

Anne "Nanny" Cameron Tiffany was really my older half-brother Rory's American aunt. My mother had married her brother, the shipping broker Roderick Cameron when she was 21. She was just out of her Australian boarding school. He was 24 years older, a millionaire and owned a 16-storey skyscraper in Manhattan. My mother would emerge from the Cameron Building, near where the Empire State Building now is, and, Aunt Nanny said, the cars would come to a halt "the better to view this vision of perfection" as she put it.

Certainly, when my brother Caryl and I were children in London in the 1930s, people would wait outside our townhouse in Mayfair. As the chauffeur and Rolls drew up at the door, a crowd would collect to watch Mummy leaving for lunch, dinner, or the theatre. In the south of France, where we went often, I used to be overwhelmed with embarrassment accompanying her to Antoine, the glamorous hairdresser in Cannes. Ladies would duck from under the dryers to catch a glimpse of her as she walked in, so famous had she become. Alexandre always did her hair; he was young at the time and afterwards he became a name in Hollywood as hairdresser to filmstars like Greta Garbo, Sophia Loren and Elizabeth Taylor. In the 1920s and early 1930s though, there was just a very, very small circle of people who were well-known in England, Europe and America. Society was minute compared to today and beauties like my mother had the same kind of star status that film stars and celebrities have now. What they wore, who they saw, it was all gossiped about and covered by the newspapers.

The story is that the first time Mummy's third husband, Lord Furness, took his new wife to play at the big table at the casino in Monte Carlo, all gambling ceased as she entered the hall. Her tall, perfect figure was draped in a tight-fitting evening dress of white lace over a pale violet-coloured taffeta underskirt that clung to her curves and ended in a slight train. The dress, designed by Molyneux, one of her favourite designers, was appliquéd with lace flowers. In the middle of each flower was sewn a small real diamond. The Furness tiara of large pear-shaped diamonds adorned her upswept silver hair. To complete the toilette, around her neck and falling lovingly over her famous décolletage, was the three-tiered diamond necklace from Cartier that had been one of Furness's wedding presents to her in 1933.

There was, reportedly, a gasp of amazement at this image of perfect beauty. The giant chandeliers overhead picked up the sparkle from the diamonds in which she was smothered and, as she moved, she was caught in a thousand prisms of light. I was told, whether it is true or not, that it was the first time in the history of the casino that gambling had been brought to a standstill.

The Aga Khan, whom she had known for years and who was then one of the richest men on the planet, looked up when she arrived at

the main table and commented drily, "My dear Enid, could you not be more discreet with your entrance? Next time come in black..."

"No," he apparently corrected himself, "that might be even more disastrous. Allah should have made you a good Moslem and then you would have arrived smothered in veils and I would have been allowed to get on with my game, without the undoubted distraction your presence at my table is going to create."

My mother couldn't help herself: she incited great passion. She married four times. Two of her husbands were millionaires and left her large fortunes, and two of them had titles. She also had numerous lovers and admirers. There is an amusing story about one of her less well-known but equally ardent suitors, a General Erskine. As he was dying, his wife called me up and asked, "Where is your mother going to be buried when she dies?" Rather taken by surprise by her phone call, I said, "I have no idea."

"Well go and ask her," Mrs Erskine said. "My husband has always loved her and as he was not able to be beside her in life, he wants to be beside her in death. Tell your mother, she must make up her mind as I don't intend to keep digging him up."

My mother used to love these stories about herself. Nor was she above adding to them and exaggerating like mad for an appreciative audience. Fact and fiction would merge as she entertained us. She could also tell the dirtiest jokes with her eyes wide and innocent. Indeed, I don't think the harsh realities of life ever really touched on my mother until the very end of her life. She brought us up with three rules which she applied rigorously to herself: never be ill, never be afraid, and never be jealous. Showing any of them, she believed, was a weakness.

Being so generous with her own good fortune, Mummy enabled us, her three children – Rory, my younger brother Caryll and myself – to live our lives fully and each of us made the most of that privilege. She herself was one of seven children, and the grand-daughter of the man credited with being the founding father of the Australian wine industry, Dr Henry John Lindeman. He and my great-grandmother, Eliza, had emigrated to Australia to set up medical practice in the lower Hunter Valley, outside Sydney, but in 1843, he applied for a crown grant of land. He called it Cawarra, which means "running water" in the

Aboriginal dialect of that region. There he launched himself as a vigneron and three of his sons, including my grandfather, Charles, went into partnership with him.

Lindeman is a famous wine name now but then it was still a small family business. My grandfather took over from his father on his death and brought up his family in Strathfield in Sydney. My mother was soon sent away to boarding school to complete her education as a young lady. She had four older brothers though, whom she adored. They were all very good at riding, shooting and fishing. Mummy, being a tomboy, made sure she soon learnt too. The Lindemans were also famous for their looks.

Her first husband Roderick Cameron met her when she was 19. He came to Australia often on business for his company, the R. W. Cameron shipping line, which he had inherited from his father and which traded between the west coast of the United States and Australia. On one trip, he spotted Enid and knew at once that she was the one. Granny refused to let them marry for two years though, saying that my mother was much too young to know her own mind. Years later, I remember Mummy teasing her and saying, "You wicked old woman, you know you were in love with him yourself. That's why you didn't want me to marry."

Cameron took his young bride back to the States where his family lived on a 200-acre estate, Clifton Burley, on Staten Island. He died a year later of cancer in 1914 in a New York hospital, leaving Mummy a young widow, with a fortune of several million pounds, and a nine-month-old baby. This was my much loved half-brother Roderick William Cameron who was always known as Rory and who was born on November 16, 1913.

After her first husband's death, Mummy started an affair with the American financier Bernard Baruch, a liaison that was to last on and off until his death. He was very tall, with grey hair and quite a lot older than her. I know that my mother was the great love of his life because he once told me. Baruch was the elder statesman of the United States from World War I through to World War II and was so enormously rich that during the first war he bought over a million dollars of liberty bonds to help the effort. Later, he used his wealth to help finance the Democrats. My mother had lived for a while with Baruch, who we

called Bernie, but even after she left he remained in her life and for years after he handled her finances, something that she was entirely incapable of doing herself.

Another impassioned admirer was Uncle Walter, or Group Captain Walter Carandini Wilson, a director of White City, the greyhound racing stadium in London. Unlike most of Mummy's lovers he was marvellous looking, very Latin with black hair and an olive complexion. He was a hero too. As a Lieutenant-Colonel he was part of the British military mission to Finland and the Baltic states after the Bolshevik revolution. Then, in World War II, he was transferred from the army to the Royal Air Force administration as one of the officers inducted into the RAF without wings.

Baruch and Walter Wilson were my godfathers. When the United States joined World War I, Mummy left Baruch and went to London and then France. It was the fashionable thing to do for rich young women to help the war effort by volunteering for hospital or ambulance work with the soldiers wounded on the battlefields. Sometimes they even supplied their own vehicles or medical units. An ex-boyfriend of hers, the Earl of Derby, who later became British Ambassador to France, was Britain's Minister for War at the time. He adored his beautiful friend but was disconcerted at the havoc she was creating amongst the officers in Paris. One aide was already threatening suicide.

At the time, it was considered best to get rich, young widows safely married and then let them get on with whatever they wanted to do. Deciding a husband was what was needed for my mother, Lord Derby cleverly produced my father. Daddy was known as "Caviar" Cavendish and he was a good-looking cavalry officer and a 10-goal polo player, the highest handicap there is. Contrary to all the gossip since, he was far from rich, only having his army pay to recommend him, but he already had a formidable reputation for bravery and a penchant for lovely ladies. Lord Derby, having decided that they would be an ideal couple, convinced my mother to marry him. At least, that is what my mother told me.

They were married in Paris on June 18, 1917, and Lord Derby gave my mother away. Thereafter my father, Frederick Cavendish, returned to the front and my mother went back to driving her ambulance.

After the war and with many decorations for valour, my father was given command of the 9th Lancers in Egypt. Mummy, as she had done in Paris, now created uproar amongst the officers of my father's regiment. This young colonel's wife, stunningly beautiful and still in her twenties, would spend her day schooling my father's polo ponies. She rode as well as any of the cavalry officers. At night, she would often dress as a man and either play the piano or stand with her Swanee whistle and play in the band of the officers' mess. My mother used to tell a very funny story about this time in Egypt. I don't know if it was absolutely true but it was obviously a regimental tale. Apparently one of my father's troopers was brought before a court martial charged with having had sex with an ostrich. When questioned, the trooper said, "Sir, if I had known there was going to be all this fuss, I would have married the fucking bird!"

Mummy remembered Egypt as being one of the best times of their lives. The war was over and everyone who survived believed there would never be another war again. They now wanted to live life to the full. Egypt was beautiful: there were parties and polo, the races and rides by moonlight in the desert. There were picnics on the Nile and visits to friends who lived in vast sandstone villas surrounded by palm trees. My brother Rory remembered being one of the first to be taken down into King Tutankhamen's fabulous tomb after it was discovered in 1922. Lord Carnarvon, being a great friend of my mother's (and another of her lovers) had arranged for her and her little son to go down to view his wonderful find.

I often wonder if Mummy was ever really in love with any man. She loved their company and her whole life was centred on pleasing men but she certainly never remained faithful to any of them. Five lovers committed suicide over her; I imagine they were not able to take the strain. They also chose the most spectacular deaths.

During her next marriage to Marmaduke "Duke" Furness, who was fabulously wealthy, we went skiing for three weeks every year; St Moritz or Kitzbühl were the favourite places. Furness never went skiing but would spend a few days with us, or just fly in before getting bored and going back to his duties as a coal, steel and shipping tycoon. On one of these occasions Mummy met Franz Meissner, an Austrian scientist. I thought he was quite dreadful but obviously he

had something besides a horrible accent that Mummy found attractive.

Furness always had some detective keeping tabs on my mother's activities, even the few days he wasn't there with us. In London, because Furness's townhouse in Lees Place was not large enough to hide us children from his sight as he wished, Mummy used to rent a flat for our entourage and us. It was on Curzon Street in the same building where Rory lived. Franz Meissner was always turning up at our flat, waiting for Mummy's daily visits. They would then disappear for about an hour. I did not like him anyhow, and now I resented the time with her he took away from us. My mother refused to marry him, and broke off the relationship when Furness started getting suspicious, and so, on her birthday, Meissner blew himself up. I was delighted when I heard the news of his demise.

Another threw himself under *Le Train Bleu*, the luxury train that ran between Paris and the south of France, because he thought my mother would be on it with her new lover. In fact she wasn't; as was usual with her she was so late getting to the station that she missed it.

One besotted young man apparently threw himself overboard as the ship he and my mother were travelling on to Australia went through the heads of Sydney. Mummy had, by the end of the voyage, shown a marked preference for someone else. Leaving a pathetic suicide note of eternal devotion, he threw himself with magnificent abandon to the sharks, never to be seen again.

Certainly those who could bear the stress idolised her until their dying day. After she married Furness, he tried to put a stop to such intimacies: he could never bear other men having any contact with her. I don't know how much success he had.

Peter Coats, a garden designer, writer and man-about-town, once reminisced in a book of memoirs about my brother, that my mother, "the much-married Enid, Countess of Kenmare... had many close and infatuated friends, amongst them a cousin of mine, the rich and glamorous (and slightly second-rate) Jack Coats who, wife and child notwithstanding, left her his fortune, which Enid told me, and I am sure it was true, that she had refused."

My godfather, Captain Walter Wilson, had also been her lover. He took a vow that if she would not marry him then he would never wed again. He left his fortune to my mother on the understanding that it

would eventually come to me. My mother, although very impressed by Uncle Walter's commitment, felt that this was not a fair solution. For the last 10 years of his life, he had been living with a very nice woman who had also become a friend of my mother. Unlike my mother however, this lady had very little money of her own. Therefore, Mummy felt that in all fairness, that she and not my mother should be the beneficiary of Walter Wilson's trust. Explaining the reasons to me I was then taken to Uncle Walter's lawyer to sign the necessary documents.

My mother seemed to spend her life at lawyers reversing the outcome of wills! When Mummy married Furness, she signed her entire Cameron fortune from her first marriage over to Rory, as well as giving him the Cameron family flat in Mayfair on Curzon Street. I don't know whether Furness resented the fact that he had married a very rich widow and wanted all the money to come from him instead, or whether my mother realised that Furness would be very jealous of her elder son and she would have to make sure he was looked after. Unfortunately I never asked my mother why she did this.

Her generosity and sense of fair play were truly remarkable. I think again that her faith in human nature and sense of honour had a great effect on men. It always amazed me that my mother, who was brought up by four brothers to become a brilliant shot and who insisted on competing and doing everything as well as her siblings, could so transform herself into the quintessence of femininity for her husbands and lovers. Looking back, I can imagine that one reason men were so passionate about my mother was because she did excel at all the masculine sports like bowls, tennis, bridge, angling and golfing as well as horse-riding and shooting. The contrast between that and her femininity must have been irresistible.

She also devoted herself totally to whichever man was in her life at the time, and her children. She was a chameleon, a foil to everyone around her. With every new lover she would become his ideal woman and his interests would become hers. As she was a perfectionist in anything she took up, maybe that explains her multitude of talents.

All through my life, Mummy showed extraordinary attention to detail. I would accompany her on what, for myself, were long and boring visits to the White House in London. At the time, it was the

buying mecca of all things pertaining to the bedchamber. There, the purchase of silk sheets, embroidered silk and lace pillowslips, nightgowns, negligees, all in the most lovely of pastel shades, was a yearly occurrence. A great many of these would also accompany her on her travels.

I remember the nightly rituals of her lady's maids preparing the bedroom for my mother before she retired for the evening. All the bed linen had to be changed every day, and it would always be ironed before being put on the bed in case any wrinkle had appeared from the folding. The negligees and nightgowns were then laid out either to match or complement the sheets. Then, fetching a large bottle of Patou's Joy, which Mummy adored and which cost about three times as much as any other scent of the time, the maid would liberally spray them as well as the bed. Leaving the bedside light burning, she would open the door to the bathroom where she would run the hot water up to a certain level in the bath, and then she would add bath essence. Presumably Mummy, on returning, would only have to add more hot water. Miss Munday or Miss Lane would then open all the cupboards of nightgowns and negligees and once more, with the bottle of Joy, squirt a few drops of perfume into the air inside. When I asked why, I was told that Mummy might want to change during the night.

Looking back, I realise that during my entire life with Mummy and all her husbands and lovers, I never once saw her in bed with a man. I think she would have considered that vastly improper.

She was totally unconscious of the value of money and was the most completely generous being. Later, after Furness's death, she made her fourth marriage to the spendthrift Viscount Castlerosse, Earl of Kenmare, who had vast and magnificent estates at Killarney in Ireland but not the capital to maintain them in their glory. With Mummy's money, Castlerosse blossomed in confidence and the magnificent golf course that he had had laid out around the lakes of Killarney with the aid of the golfing writer Henry Longhurst came into its own. Castlerosse and Longhurst had brought in landscape gardeners with instructions to make it the most beautiful in the world. Mummy and Castlerosse, both being very keen golfers, would spend their time walking the course and planning the future together. He had met her years before, and had been determined to marry her then.

They had been married less than a year before he died of a heart attack. It was a family joke that my mother had murdered all her husbands. The writer Somerset Maugham, who became one of her great friends because they both loved bridge, dubbed her "Lady Killmore", a play on her title from her marriage to Castlerosse, Lady Kenmare. She thought it funny when he invented it, and often teased the press with it later on, but it pained her when others took up the joke and gossiped about it as if it were true.

Mummy, when she was discussing her many husbands much later on, also remarked to me that she had never allowed any of her lovers to break up their marriage for her. And she also told me that Furness was the husband she had loved the most. She said, "There was nothing in the world he was not prepared to give me. Of all the men that loved me, and some were as rich as Duke, he was the one who was prepared to lay the world at my feet."

I remember the conversation so clearly. She was sitting in her bedroom in Fiorentina, our villa on the Riviera in the south of France, with her painting table placed near the balcony while the light of the morning sun bathed her in its radiance. Surrounded by her parrots, she was bending over her tubes of paint, selecting the colours to place on her palette.

I thought, how typical of Mummy. What I remembered was Furness's obsessive jealousy of her, his dislike of us and his coldness towards his own children. But my mother, with her childlike faith in human nature and her fragility, had been sheltered by husbands, lovers, and children, and our love had cocooned her from the mundane. This quality of innocence transcended the beautiful facade and was the essence of her charm and the attribute that drew everyone to her. In return, she was our rock.

CHAPTER

2

It was at the resort of Biarritz in southwest France that I learned of my father's death, on December 8, 1931. I was six at the time. Mummy stood me on a table and, holding my hands, said, "My darling, I have some terrible news. Your father has died and I must leave you and go back to Paris." I remember knowing something dreadful had happened to Daddy, as my mother was hugging me and crying, but I wasn't exactly sure what the word "death" meant. Our father had suffered a cerebral haemorrhage at their apartment in Paris. Found by his valet, he died soon after the doctor's arrival.

I do not remember our father very well. His friends knew him as a fearless officer who loved the good life. My mother, the most incorrigible flirt, told me years later that she had managed to sleep with every officer in my father's regiment. Somebody at the time had dared her and that was something she could never resist. Whether she actually did manage to sleep with every officer one wouldn't know as she never let the truth interfere with a good story. What my father thought of all this, history does not relate. Certainly, as she was a very rich young woman and the soul of generosity, he was now able to

indulge in strings of polo ponies, hunters and everything his heart desired, except possibly the love of my mother. I can remember once sitting with my father at Le Touquet station, on the north coast of France, waiting for my mother to arrive from Paris. Mummy regularly visited Le Touquet; it was part of the English aristocracy's social round and it also had a very good golf course. For most of her life, she was a passionate golfer. On this day, she missed the first train and arrived on the second. We must have waited for hours.

My father was a Brigadier-General and commander of the 1st Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot barracks in Hampshire when Caryll and I were born. Our early years were spent at another White House, but this time it was our home in Cove, Farnborough, near Aldershot, and I believe it belonged to the army. I was born in London – on June 30, 1925 – and Caryll was born at home 15 months later. I have dim memories that the White House had a wooden gate at the top of the landing to stop us falling down the stairs. I remember I developed a passion for eating all the heads of the matches and used to rush into the rooms to get them before anyone could stop me. Another delicacy was the pebbles on the front drive. I used to grovel in the dirt and scoop them up quickly, shoving them into my mouth by the handful before Nanny could get there. The first time Nanny Peasley discovered what I had been about, she promptly fainted on the nearest sofa. In her striped uniform, starched white aprons and ruffled cap, she looked like one of my stuffed straw dolls. My pebble-eating is obviously why, years later, I developed such an affinity with my baboons, and if there is such a thing as reincarnation, then I was quite obviously one in a previous existence. This is very baboon-like behaviour!

The other thing I remember of Aldershot is my pony. I learned to ride almost before I could walk properly. As I could only have been two or three at the time, I had a wicker basket-type saddle, which supported me back and front and had holes for my legs and tiny little stirrups. Every day I would go out with my father or my mother or both. There was also a little donkey that I used to ride as well as the pony and they would be led off either Daddy's or Mummy's hunter or polo pony.

As a young lieutenant, my father had led cavalry charges during the Boer War, served in India and with the cavalry on the Belgian front

during World War I. He had been badly wounded on several occasions. Towards the end of that war, because he spoke fluent French, I am told he was made liaison officer to Ferdinand Foch, the Marshall of France who became commander of Allied forces for the closing months of the campaign. Certainly, one of the few things I remember about my father is the fact that he always wore the wreathed star of the Legion of Honour in the lapel of his blazer and dress uniform. Daddy was a champion polo player and a steeplechase rider; I still have some of his cups, and a large silver statue of a cavalry officer on his charger. It was presented to him by the regiment, the 9th Lancers, upon his marriage to my mother.

At Le Touquet, I remember my father taking me to what must have been some type of gymkhana which had a steeplechase course. I can still see the grass and the brush jumps. I was probably four or five at the time. He put me on one of his horses and tried to adjust the stirrups to fit my small legs. Finally he put my feet into the leathers, telling me to “hold the reins [which had been knotted short] and grip the martingale, and just remember, don’t do a thing except sit tight and grip with your knees. Don’t let go of the martingale and my horse will do the rest.”

He gave the horse a slap on the quarters and I was sent on my way. I can recall it all so clearly, his instructions, the intense excitement of going over the jumps: it felt like riding a magic broomstick. The jumps looked huge to a tiny child but I can still feel the excitement of sailing through the air. It was the first time I felt like a fairy princess. I was given a prize and my father was so proud of me. I remember him saying, “You would have been a great addition to my regiment.” From that day on nobody could keep me off a horse. It became a passion that has lasted me most of my life.

Daddy, apart from always taking me riding, taught me to drive. I would sit on his lap and he’d let me steer the car. One day I had to go to the lavatory, I was desperate. Although he wasn’t in uniform at the time, he was intensely embarrassed at having to stop the car and take my pants down as he led me to a ditch on the side of the road. He was obviously not used to the more intimate details of childcare and now being a Brigadier-General was horrified at the thought that someone might come along and see him trying to cope with a piddling child.

Of this period I also remember all the ballet classes I attended, wearing little tutus and ballet slippers. Sometimes Daddy would come and pick up Nanny and myself, or sometimes Mummy, but my disappointment used to be when the driver came. At this time I don't remember much about Caryll, except him burning my wax dolls on a bonfire to which I responded by picking up his toy train and hitting him over the head. He had to be rushed off to the doctor to have stitches while Nanny gave me a severe smacking. I felt he should have been smacked as well for burning my dolls!

Le Touquet was very fashionable at this time because the Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII before he abdicated, was also a keen golfer and liked to play there. The British high society set would follow him every summer, renting large houses for the season and there would be a scrabble for who could rent the best and biggest house. Le Touquet was just across the Channel, the food was better than England's and there was a casino. It became the Monte Carlo of the north. We used to rent too, but later on my mother built a large villa in the forest by the sand dunes overlooking the 18th tee. It was named The Berries and I was to spend happy summers there with my family.

My mother had a large Buick painted in black and white squares. I can still see her, wearing those small cloche hats, her Chanel suits with short pleated skirts and button shoes, showing lots of leg as she placed herself behind the wheel. Not many women drove in those days, so Mama was rather proud of her achievement. The children, the nannies and our Alsatian dogs would scramble into the car and we would set off for picnics, Mummy's favourite pastime. Caryll and I used to loathe them as whenever she had them on the beach, the wind would blow or the dogs would make sure that the food would be filled with sand as they charged around with gay abandon after the balls being thrown for them. "Not another sandy sandwich day," we used to grumble to ourselves as the six Alsations covered Caryll and myself in clouds of grit. They would invariably skid to a stop just where we were sitting, trying to get the food down our throats. The adults, being so much taller, didn't have the same problem so we could never complain.

What we did enjoy was being taken to La Grenouille (The Frog), a famous restaurant at that time. It had large china frogs, decorating the steps up to it, hence, I suppose, its name. The food meant nothing

to us, but what we did enjoy was the terrible effect frogs and toads had on Granny Lindeman on her visits to us. Before going to the restaurant, Mummy used to call up and ask them to cover all the frogs in linen bags before we arrived. One day Rory managed to uncover a large green one and much to our delight, Granny, giving a scream, promptly fainted.

The other thing we enjoyed on the way there was seeing all the tuberculosis patients being taken out for walks on long wheeled stretchers. Lying recumbent and covered in a light sheet, they would be taken for their daily constitutional. We overheard our nannies discussing the fact that most of them were dying, unless of course they were lucky enough to be saved by the healthy sea air of Pas-de-Calais. Rather vague as to what was about to happen to them but knowing it was unpleasant, we used to watch with ghoulish delight as the nurses wheeled them around. In my imagination, I saw wicked witches coming to drag them down to hell as they kicked and screamed and white sheets flew.

Caryll and I shared a twin pram and every afternoon our nanny would walk us and all the Alsatians. The hood of the pram was covered in white gauze net so that the heat of the sun would not spoil our rest. One day, when our grandmother was to push the pram, Rory bundled us into the bushes and put one of the Alsatians into the pram in our place. Telling the dog to lie down, he pulled the net into place, and then accompanied granny while she walked what she thought were her grandchildren. Unfortunately for Rory, after about 10 minutes the Alsatian had had enough of being pushed around. It chose to leap out, sending the netting flying and my grandmother into hysterics. A search party was sent out to find the missing babies.

When Rory turned 17 he was given the latest Ford convertible with a dickey seat at the back. If we were very good, we used to be tied to the open seat to accompany him into the town of Le Touquet. Great excitement!

Another incident that made a big impression was Rory hiding our grandmother's false teeth. In those days dentists were not very sophisticated, so any problems were solved by teeth coming out and false ones being fitted. The false plates were left overnight in a glass of water in the bathroom and it was a common sight of my childhood.

Even our nannies and staff kept their teeth in a tumbler and there were a lot of white and perfect smiles from the elderly. Granny was very proud of her looks; I remember my mother was always teasing her. She was very keen on hats with feathers and veils and would spend her time at the modiste having them specially fitted.

Rory came to our nursery and, showing us granny's teeth, announced he was going to hide them in the garden. There was uproar. The servants searched everywhere. One even had to open all the jaws of the Alsatians to see if they were the culprits. Finally, one of the gardeners found them under a bush. The dogs remained the chief suspects as the "teeth thieves". Rory, rushed up to join us with great glee, howling with laughter.

Every time we were naughty, which was fairly frequently, our nannies would threaten us with the "wicked witches". If we were good, we were told "the angels will bless you". Our nannies brought us up on fairy tales and read from books, which we loved, but they could not tell us the stories that Mummy could.

When my father died, I was driven with my nanny and entourage back to Le Touquet by the chauffeur. I kept crying for Mummy, for in my mind I thought she might now also be "dead", whatever that was, with Daddy. The nurse kept assuring me that he was in heaven. Not that that meant much. I did realise, though, that it was better to be in heaven than dead. But I was terrified that Mummy had gone with him to wherever heaven was.

CHAPTER

3

My mother could never resist rushing to the assistance and rescue of any bird or animal that was wounded or in pain. In fact, in my youth it used to be a continual source of embarrassment. She once came across a crow with a broken wing when we were staying with friends in the south of England. To her delight, my mother then found a large compost heap in the garden and with the help of a charming gardener, raked through the muck-heap looking for worms to feed the ailing bird while it recovered. I made a rapid exit as I saw Mama in her blue and white checked Chanel suit, with her pearls and diamond rings, happily digging through the manure with her bare hands. That crow became the bane of my life for years and my mother's friends loathed it.

When she had to go into the private and luxurious London Clinic on Harley Street for an operation, she somehow managed to persuade her surgeon to let her have both the crow and her pet hyrax, Tikki, with her. A hyrax is like a very large dark brown guinea pig but furrier and my mother used to carry hers around on her shoulder. The crow had to be hastily removed from the hospital after attacking the nurses

who were trying to assist my mother. The well-behaved hyrax was allowed to remain. Mummy even had a cradle made that she could put over her feet in bed and there Tikki would sleep. I had to come and make visits through the day to feed him with fresh rose petals and shoots and to take him to the loo. She had trained the horrid little beast to make his doo-doo's in the toilet bowl. Mummy used to spend hours in toilets around the world making throaty little noises. That was Tikki's signal and he always obliged, his little feet clinging to the toilet seat and an expression of utmost concentration on his face. He would then be wiped off, given a little spray of Joy and a great many kisses and told what a clever boy he was.

My mother always insisted that he understood everything that was said to him. She had him for so many years that in his old age he had tusks that descended to his bottom jaw which made him more hideous than ever. Therefore he had to be constantly told that he was beautiful, and in my mother's besotted eyes he was. There were other hyraxes after Tikki but as they were called Tikki too, it was as if it was always the same one.

During my younger brother Caryll's school holidays, and whenever Mummy was at home with us in the country, we would always spend the mornings with her. Unless Mummy had been out riding, she would have breakfast in bed at nine o'clock and we used to wait outside the door until the tray went in. By this time, the maid had opened the curtains and Mummy was awake and sitting up in bed. Her animals would have been brought in and taken up their various positions; the dogs, a cheetah she had rescued on safari in Kenya when it was a baby, foxes, the hyrax, a mongoose, parrots, and often there would be a budgie on her other shoulder. Although we had all eaten, we and the various members of the menagerie would then proceed to help her with her breakfast and it was a time of laughter, of hugs and stories. Often Caryll and I would dress up and do plays for her or get her to help with our homework. More often, we would just pretend to be horses and gallop around the room, neighing loudly and leaping over the precious pieces of furniture that we had arranged as a steeplechase course. All this activity was accompanied by the sound of barking dogs and screaming parrots – or our shrieks as we escaped one of the foxes sallying forth from under the bed to nip our heels as we charged by.

Mummy would go off to bathe and dress. She would emerge from the dressing room in one of her beautiful lace slips to sit before her dressing table and put on her false eyelashes for the next hour. They would go on one by one, and then be trimmed to just a bit longer than her own. The effect was very dramatic on her enormous green eyes. Then came her make-up and, last of all, the maid would dress her hair. When she was ready, she would spray herself with scent, and often us and the dogs and animals as well. Another extraordinary facet of her character was that she was devoid of vanity. Having spent so long in the morning surrounded by her maids and toiletries to arrange her appearance, she would then forget about it.

Even as children, there never seemed an age difference between us and her. She was our best friend, could tell us wonderful stories that she made up on the spot and we all adored her. All my childhood, I would take her photograph to bed with me instead of a teddy bear and lie cuddled up to my picture. I once read somewhere that my mother had started life as a chorus girl and there is also a rumour that she had once been an actress. I am sure she would have loved to have been one but she never was. The great studio boss, Louis B. Mayer, did talk her into having a screen test but she was married to the jealous Furness by then and there was no way in the world he would ever have allowed her to remain in Hollywood.

One of the rooms I loved best at Furness's country house in Leicestershire, Burrough Court, was the ballroom. Mummy also used it as a studio for her painting. I spent many hours there, either practising dancing myself, playing with my dogs or watching her paint. When her budgie Joey wasn't flying about, he would land and perch on her shoulder and she was always kissing him on the beak. Meanwhile, the cheetah spent most of its time asleep at her feet. When I was at our house in Mayfair with Mummy, I used to be sent out with the chauffeur, her lady's maid and my governess, to walk the cheetah in Hyde Park, which was just around the corner. Of course, the animal used to cause a sensation and I found it horribly embarrassing. I swore when I grew up that I would never ever have a wild animal. How little did I know. Even as I write I have a baboon lying in my lap.

In those early days, most parents distanced themselves from their children. Children were brought up to be seldom seen and certainly

not heard, very unlike the unbearably spoiled children of today. Like all children in those pre-war days, we were very strictly brought up, but on the other hand we were given anything we wanted. I now strongly believe that strict discipline harms no-one as long as they also get that great maternal love. Certainly our mother was unstinting with it and with understanding and we all knew it. The staff or anyone else were also forbidden to ever say to Caryll or myself that we couldn't do something or that it was dangerous. As a result, there were no boundaries and we grew up fearless.

My mother also instilled in us an intense love of family. She was passionate about her own family and various Lindemans from Australia were always coming to stay. From them she had inherited her green eyes and the auburn hair which later turned silver after a serious bout of pneumonia. I gathered through the servants' hall, where I heard all the gossip, that Furness was not too keen on having the Lindemans too often and tried to discourage this influx of relatives. Until I was in my thirties and went to live in Kenya, I never wanted to leave my mother or my family either. Indeed, both of my husbands had to learn to join the family, and to live with my mother and elder brother Rory and join in their adventures. After the last of my mother's husbands died, and as she grew older, she and Rory became inseparable. My half-brother was extraordinarily handsome, tall and of good physique. I remember he was very proud of his legs and it's true that they could easily have belonged to a sculpture of a Greek god. He had an enormous influence on Mummy even when he was still a very young man. They travelled the world together and he would boss her terribly. Until I settled in Kenya I was the spectator to their fantastical life and under their tutelage I got used to seeing anything and everything. It was only Caryll, who went to boarding school and then into the Grenadier Guards, who seemed to grow up outside Mummy's sphere.

She loved people and had an enormous number of friends. At Burrough Court, she was always entertaining. I think that is why Furness used to take her away to Kenya on safari every year for months at a time, so as to have her to himself. My mother had also kept on my father's staff from his old regiment. She used to get very distressed if she saw an ex-serviceman begging on the street and displaying his medals or a couple of them sitting on the pavement

beside their pathetic little watercolours in the hope of making a sale. Mummy would get the chauffeur to stop and to my great embarrassment if I was with her, would end up either offering the beggar a job or giving him money. While Mummy was out of the car, the chauffeur would say very disapprovingly, “Her ladyship is much too good, they won’t appreciate it. She is wasting her time. They will only go and spend it on drink.”

Mummy would sometimes take me on visits, to the suburbs, again much to the chauffeur’s disapproval – they were all the most tremendous snobs – and she would visit some of the ex-servicemen for whom she’d found homes. Even my nannies used to disapprove strongly of these visits.

Later in life, my mother was criticised for her lack of discrimination in her friends. Someone once said of our beautiful home in the south of France, Fiorentina, that you never knew if you were sitting next to a hobo off the streets or a Duke, and implied that this was because of my mother’s lack of breeding and Australian background. In those days if you were Australian, it was taken to obviously mean you had a convict background and knew no better! Mummy must have heard the gossip that she was the daughter of a convict. After that she never let any conversation about her Australian background go by without finding convicts coming out all over the family tree. None of which was true of course.

She was a terrific gambler and loved the races and the casinos. She carried a large handbag stuffed with notes and she often won. Maybe she had to win sometimes given how much money she lost. She used to like collecting her race winnings in cash. When she lost at the casino, she wouldn’t say anything but breakfast the next day would be a very silent affair. If she won though, she was very generous. She was extraordinarily fond of money but it never really meant anything to her except that it allowed her to do whatever she wanted to do and to indulge the people she wanted to indulge. She was very casual about such things, and although she had wonderful jewels she kept her ropes of pearls in Kleenex boxes. Probably because they were the closest thing to hand.

My brother Caryll remembers that after World War II, when you were hardly allowed to take £2 out of England, Mummy was staying

at the George V in Paris at the same time as the foreign secretary Ernie Bevin, who was there with his delegation and his detectives for a big post-war meeting. As my mother walked across the foyer of the hotel, rummaging in her big bag, £10 notes kept spilling to the floor behind her under the very eyes of these men who couldn't believe what they were seeing. But Mummy was so charming she seemed to be able to get away with anything. If she ever had to talk her bank managers or trustees into agreeing with one of her schemes that involved spending money, she would get them on the phone and entice and wheedle and convince... and then she'd come off the phone and wink and say, "Piece of cake."

As for me, I grew up being the quiet one in the background, dreaming away while all this was going on around me. Much later on, a former boyfriend of mine wrote in his memoirs that I had told him I had felt miserable as a small child sitting beside my glamorous mother with all her entourage about her and that I had trembled with shyness because of all the people I had to meet. Perhaps that is true but I also always felt that being with her was like being in the bright light. I particularly remember one evening at Burrough Court when I was little and Mummy and Furness were giving a ball. She came into my room dressed in a very tight-fitting satin dress, again by Molyneux, with a train. It was in her favourite colour of pale violet-blue. The dress had a rounded neckline; the low *décolleté* edged with perfect bunches of large embroidered flower buds. Mummy was very tall and slim and her high-heeled satin slippers matched the dress and were decorated with large diamond buckles. My bedroom was dark. When she switched on the lights it seemed to me that all the lights just shone on her. She was late and I didn't want her to leave me.

She was the fairy queen whose wand would wave and transform my world. Her beauty dazzled me. Every evening she would come to the nursery as I was being put to bed so that she could kiss me goodnight and read me a story before going downstairs. Even when there were no guests, she would wear her beautiful evening dresses. I can still see those gowns, the glittering jewels and in winter the long evening capes lined with fur that swirled around her. I would go to sleep and she would fill my dreams.

CHAPTER

4

I do not remember how Duke Furness came into our lives. I don't think we even met him until after Mummy had married him on August 3, 1933. At the time he was reputed to be one of the world's richest men. His father, a shipbuilder, had left a good business behind and an estate worth around £113 million in today's money. He had been knighted and then made a baron in 1910. Duke was also successful at business. He eventually sold out of the Furness-Withy shipping company but kept his interests in various coal, steel and banking companies and also advised the American shipbuilding industry. For the latter service, he was created Viscount Furness in 1918.

My first clear memory of Furness is at Burrough Court. We had been installed in an enormous wing of his Victorian mansion, which was near Melton Mowbray. We arrived from London with our governess, Miss Unger, our nannies and Hannah, a young under-housemaid whom we adored and who was to remain as part of the family until long after the war.

I realised there was a change in our circumstances when Mummy

arrived in the nursery at Burrough Court and, kneeling on the floor, took our hands saying something to the effect that we now had a new father. "Darlings," she said, "I do not know what you are going to call him, but I suggest that when I take you to meet him you call him Daddy and do not forget to kiss him on the cheek and do a little curtsy."

I was always made to curtsy to Mummy's friends, and Caryll had to do a little bow. I somehow knew that as far as she was concerned, this was a very important occasion. Mummy and nanny ushered us into the library where Furness was sitting with a drink in one hand and some papers in the other, smoking a cigar. He was a dapper little man, impeccably dressed and with reddish sandy hair that had been brilliantined flat. There wouldn't have been a single strand out of place. In all the time I knew him, I never saw him less than immaculate. My brother Caryll remembers him as being peppery, but to me he was always too cold, too icy to be described like that.

I went and did my curtsy and kissed him as I had been instructed but there was no warmth from him in return. When I addressed him as Daddy, he said, "I am not your father, and do not address me as such." I realised that he did not like me. For the entire time of Mummy's marriage, he was never actively nasty but he kept us at a distance and preferred us to be out of his view.

Viscount Furness, or Marmaduke, was commonly known as Duke and he met my mother while on a visit to Le Touquet. He told friends that from the moment he saw her walk into the casino there he lost all concentration, did not care what cards he held and the result cost him a fortune. "I have seen many beautiful women, but from the moment Enid entered the room my heart stopped," he always said afterwards. Furness, finally losing all interest in gambling that night, left the tables and went to find someone who could arrange an introduction. Mummy told me that from then on he pursued her relentlessly. Flowers and jewellery would arrive daily, only to be sent back. Planes, yachts, and chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royces were put at her disposal. Finally, he found out from Thomas Cook that she was booked on the deluxe train, the Golden Arrow, from Paris back to England. He cancelled her ticket and sent his plane to Le Touquet to pick her up, his Rolls and chauffeur met her at the airport in London and on arriving at her flat

in Chelsea she was handed a letter from him. Enclosed was a deed of sale. He had not only bought her the flat she was living in, but the whole building as well.

As she said, at that stage she had never even been to bed with him. That evening, he took her to the Savoy for dinner and their love affair started. From then on, my mother could have virtually anything she wanted. Furness had owned an ocean-going yacht, the Emerald, which he later sold to buy an even bigger yacht, the Sapphire. The only person who had a bigger one than that was the Duke of Westminster, who had had a destroyer converted. Furness used his steam yachts to go around the world. His first wife Daisy had died in 1921 during one of these voyages. There was always a doctor on board and a fully equipped hospital but at the time of her death they were somewhere far out from shore. Daisy was buried at sea, which caused quite a scandal at the time; the *on dit* was that the burial had been unseemingly quick because Furness had really given her an overdose.

I first heard this from the British journalist Godfrey Winn, at the time a famous columnist. I can still hear him addressing the dinner table at large, saying with great glee, "Of course, if it had ever come to trial and he had been found guilty, he would have to have been hanged with a silken cord, being a peer of the realm." I really don't remember for what reason I was in the dining room at Burrough Court. I often used to come down when coffee was being served and stand by my mother's chair. But she was not at the table during this conversation, so presumably one of the guests must have asked for me. Being a child with a vivid imagination I had nightmares about silken cords and dangling bodies for months afterwards.

Years later, I asked my mother. She said, "Darling, don't be ridiculous. He might have been a dreadful stepfather and an even worse father, but he was a man of honour and anyhow, it was impossible to keep a dead body without the proper facilities. It would have been days before the ship could get to land. Of course he had to bury her at sea. People love to talk but there was nothing sinister in that and there was always a doctor on board."

Apart from the yachts, Furness later acquired a private plane and a personal pilot, Tom Campbell Black. When Caryl was home from school, Tom used to allow him to sit on his lap and fly the plane,

although not of course when Furness was aboard. Caryll became an absolute flying addict. At the age of seven, he had been sent off to Hawtrey's, the prep school for Eton, and there were always fountains of tears when he had to go back at the end of the school holidays. Even I felt sorry for him, that pale little face, sick with the trauma of departing from Mummy – and his bloody aeroplanes.

Furness's first plane was a single-engined Puss Moth. He had met Tom in Kenya when he was the pilot who used to fly all the supplies in to Furness's safari camps. On his advice, Furness rapidly bought a De Havilland Dragon, then a De Havilland Dragon Rapide in which he and Mummy often flew to Baden Baden for the racing and the casino. They would be met by German Nazis in full uniform; they were dead keen for English people like Furness to visit Germany at the time. Finally, Furness acquired the ultimate in flying machines available in those days, the Lockheed 12 Electra. He always had to have the best and the latest as it came off the assembly lines. The 12E was a high-powered, scaled-down version of the twin-engined 10 Electra in which the American woman pilot Amelia Earheart made her last fatal flight, a bid to circle the globe which ended in the Pacific. I believe it was also an Electra, the model 14, that took the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, for his historic flight to meet Adolf Hitler in Munich in late 1938 to negotiate Germany's annexation of Czechoslovakia. And it was from the steps of this plane that Chamberlain, on his return to Britain, triumphantly waved his piece of paper, and later declared infamously, "I believe it is peace for our time... Go home and get a nice quiet sleep."

Furness had an obsession with neatness. Even his shoes had to have new laces every day. There was a special room for all the shoes and riding boots, next to the butler's pantry. A boot boy spent his whole day polishing and cleaning them but the final shine was left to one of the valets. With a green apron over his uniform, he would apply the finishing touches. It was a daily ritual that I used to watch with amazement. Even new shoelaces were ironed before being taken up to "His Lordship".

Furness was one of the richest men in the world at the time and he certainly lived like one. We children became used to a style of living

that was very different from that of most children of our age. Apart from the yacht, plane and his private train carriages, and an utterly distinctive Rolls Royce, which had room for two chauffeurs, solid silver door knobs, the Furness crest on the doors and a very long silver bonnet with a maroon body, Furness entertained a lavish lifestyle. He had two valets, Mummy had four lady's maids, and there were six cooks in the enormous kitchens, plus butlers, footmen, masseurs, boot boys and maids by the score.

The livery of the Furness footmen was plum knee breeches with yellow stockings for eveningwear and long plum-coloured trousers for daywear. They also wore long plum tailored cutaway jackets with yellow waistcoats. At dinner parties, footmen in the livery would stand behind each chair; a butler and two footmen would escort in every dish. The dining room had lovely paintings by George Stubbs and John Frederick Herring and overlooked a large topiary garden, its box hedges cut into designs of peacocks, pyramids and columns with ball tops. There were innumerable other gardens, all divided up by large clipped hedges; water gardens, rose gardens, vegetable gardens, herb gardens and so on.

Burrough Court itself was a very large house covered in ivy creeper, with two large courtyards. The front entrance in one of the courtyards had columns over the front door at which stood a butler flanked by two footmen to greet his lordship or any new arrivals. The gate lodge would notify them so they had time to be in place when the car drove up.

The mile-long avenue leading to the house, the stable yard, and the pathways in the gardens were of small white pebbles and had to be raked twice a day. Six gardeners were employed to keep them pristine; any staining and the pebbles were immediately replaced. When Furness rode or drove out, he wanted no sign of hoof prints or tyre tracks to mar the road's surface.

We children were expected to keep out of the way, and with such a huge house that wasn't difficult. One wing was kept for myself and Caryll. We had our own staff and our own staircase. There was a large nursery, rooms for Miss Unger who looked after us and also for our various other governesses, Nanny Peasley, and the nursery maid. There were also several empty rooms for any friends who came to

stay. Our staircase led into the staff quarters next to which we had our own dining room. We had very little contact with the rest of the house. Furness himself we hardly ever saw. At the beginning, Mummy asked us to go and say goodnight to him in the evenings before we went to bed but the dreadful experience of having to kiss goodnight to that coldly proffered cheek soon came to an end.

Rory, being so much older, seldom came to Burrough Court. He was *persona non grata* with Furness. When he did come during the holidays he had to stay in our section of the house. He was 14 years older than I was and was studying architecture in Germany. He would have been about 20 when Mummy married Furness. Even in his teens, Rory had a great influence on Mummy. He was the one who told her that he did not see any reason for me to go to school and it was his suggestion that I be educated at home. Rory laid out the studies in which he wanted me to become proficient. A lot of ancient history and not much arithmetic. From the age of 10 I had two governesses and a tutor. Miss Unger, who was German-Swiss, was in charge of us and also of my French lessons.

Miss Unger, who was to remain with us until the war, was a strange woman. A lady who had fallen on hard times, she was a better-looking replica of Thelma Furness, Duke's second wife who had had an affair with the Prince of Wales, Edward, before the future king took up with Wallis Simpson. Miss Unger even did her black hair the same way, parted in the middle with a bun at the back. Miss Unger, Thelma Furness and Mrs Simpson were indeed all look-alikes and that was another reason why Furness could not bear to see any of us. Miss Unger once escorted me down to pay a visit to my mother and her friends at teatime. I had duly made my curtsy to the guests and was sitting in Mummy's lap. Meanwhile, Miss Unger in departing had run into Furness who arrived on the teatime scene in a fury. "Enid, get rid of that fucking bitch. She looks just like that other fucking bitch. I finally managed to get rid of that bloody cow, now get rid of this one." His choice of language was always exceptional. In all the years she was with us Miss Unger was never seen in the front of the house again. Furness was paranoid about us and Miss Unger, and even, as it later turned out, his own children.

I spent my early childhood alternately adoring my little brother

Caryll and hating him because of Miss Unger. He was so beautiful with his blond hair and bright blue eyes that everybody made a fuss of him. That made me immensely proud to be his sister but it also had its drawbacks. Miss Unger loved him and disapproved of me. Caryll and I were dressed like twins, brown and white tweed coats and hats in winter and in summer, the same coloured shirts. I would wear a skirt and he would wear shorts but of the same colour. When we were in public places, I was made to walk behind. In London, when Miss Unger was in a bad mood, I dreaded crossing streets, as she could not leave me to negotiate the traffic on my own. On joining them for the safe passage, she would grab my arm and pinch it. What a relief when once more I could fall back so that she could pretend I was not with them. In spite of Miss Unger's unpleasantness, I felt sorry for her. Unconsciously I must have realised she was a very lonely woman, she had no friends and she did not fraternise with the staff.

I don't think she actually disliked me but she was a great disciplinarian and I think I was a wilful child. I can only be intensely grateful now for the fact that she was so strict with me. Without her I would have become the most ghastly spoilt brat. Instead, through the discipline she meted out, I became a model of good behaviour. I was much too frightened not to be. Any major misdemeanour and I was lashed around the legs with a horsewhip. Any rudeness on my part and she would pull my hair and slap my face or pinch my nose. If I ever chatted away to anyone and tried to take over the conversation when she was present she would say, "Be quiet, nobody is interested in what you have to say." Which of course gave me a great complex, not only at the time but also later on in life.

When Caryll and I were playing games and we did anything wrong, I was the one that got punished. Then I would slyly try and get back at him by slamming his fingers in the door when nobody was looking. One day Miss Unger caught me and I realised that something terrible was going to happen. I was sent to my room. Mummy was away and in desperation I got down on my knees and, weeping, I prayed to my father and to God to help me. There were double doors between Miss Unger's room and mine and while still on my knees I heard Miss Unger opening her door. Then she came to a halt. I waited terrified, expecting my door to open any moment. Then to my amazement, I

heard her turn away. I wasn't punished and that incident was not mentioned. From then on, I have always used my father as an intermediary in my prayers.

I had another experience with her that I won't forget. I had two crooked front teeth and the dentist had fitted me with a plate with a wire in front and two hooks around my back teeth. I was always sucking it up and down as it was a bit loose. One day having breakfast, I half swallowed it; Nanny went to get Miss Unger because when she had tried to extricate it, it hurt. Miss Unger had a look and pulled hard whereupon I screamed with pain. I got my face slapped and told not to be such a cry-baby. She then tied the front section of the plate to the dining room door and slammed it. Of course the plate came out but I poured blood as well. She told me to keep my head down and gave me a towel, which was soon soaked. How I did not bleed to death I don't know. Years later when I went to a doctor in Australia for all my sore throats, he remarked that part of one of my tonsils had been torn out. My plate had obviously got hooked around it.

Looking back, I am sure Miss Unger must have had cancer. During the time she was with us, she had to go back to Germany for three breast operations. The last time, they removed her breast entirely, which upset her greatly. Miss Unger, being very psychic, always knew when she was about to have another operation. She used to sit in front of the fire staring at the flames and she would pick at a small mole on her chin. She told me she could see the operating theatre in the embers. She also used to read cards and teacups very well.

Miss Unger earned £10 a month, which were good wages in those days. She also had the use of the children's car and a chauffeur, as she could not drive. Still, she used to worry about the cost of the operations. I used to get very good pocket money and lots of £5 notes were handed to me for birthdays and Christmas, so I was extremely well off. As I had every conceivable thing that money could buy, I saved a lot of my pocket money and hid it in her bag so I could help towards her expenses. In a strange way, I was quite fond of her. Although I was a child, I was the only person she had to talk to and she used to tell me her dreams and ambitions. Sitting in front of the fire, she would treat me as if I were her greatest friend and confidante. Whether she ever suspected that I used to put the notes into her bag

I don't know, but she would act very surprised when she found them there and mention that the good angels were looking after her, that she had forgotten she had so much.

Caryll and I used to charge around playing horsey, followed by my dogs. It was my favourite game. I called myself Best and he was Second Besty, and I used to give him hell when I would turn round and find him with his little arms outstretched pretending to be an aeroplane instead of a horse. I even used to walk like a horse when nobody was looking.

At Burrough Court there was an enormous Tudor stable yard, all black and white gables. Built in a square with cobblestones, the entrance was through an archway with a large clock tower. There must have been 100 loose boxes. On the right hand was the magnificent tack room and up the middle of it were glass display cabinets with silver cups and trophies. Along the side were the saddles and bridles on their racks, each one looking as if it were new and never used. The blankets and sheets lay on their shelves, just below the bridles, and were washed and ironed after every use so that no stain would blemish their pristine beauty. To ensure that there were no marks, each horse had four of everything, all in the Furness colours of plum and gold. As with all Furness's belongings, nothing was left to chance; all was kept in the most immaculate condition. Not a speck of dust, everything polished to a high shine. The tack room smelled of saddle soap and lavender wood polish. One hardly dare tread on the floor in case one left a mark on its gleaming surface. Neatness was carried to such extremes that the bedding in the stable boxes had to be plaited at the entrance to the stable doors so that no stray bits of straw would hang untidily. Then an area in front of the doors was freshly painted with white chalk each day, before the evening inspection tour began.

Next door to the tack room was the smithy and large furnace. I used to watch fascinated as the blacksmith hammered away at the shoes. Holding them on long tongs, he would inspect their fiery red surface, hammer away some more, sparks flying, then finally the shoe would be plunged in a bucket of cold water. Still smoking, it would be fitted on to the hoof of the patiently waiting horse. Never satisfied, the smithy would repeat this procedure until he considered the shoe a perfect fit.

The blacksmith had been in my father's regiment and he had a very battered book about the regiment that he proudly used to show me. There was a photograph of my father and he would tell me of his heroic deeds. My mother had also kept Sergeant-Major Higgins, who was now my full-time riding instructor.

Apart from the main house and the stable yard, there were various cottages housing the senior members of the staff. The lands stretched as far as the eye could see, set in lovely rolling countryside, with fields surrounded by hawthorn hedges, spinney and coppices. Furness had several farms, including a dairy farm and a cattle farm. He liked seeing cattle on the rich pastureland – Aberdeen Angus and Scottish longhorns. I think he used to enjoy looking out of the windows to see their yellow shaggy coats and long horns emerging from the early morning mists. The dairy farm consisted of jerseys, all with names and excessively tame. I used to love putting my arms round their necks and burying my nose in their soft, sweet-smelling coats. The head dairyman used to allow me on occasion to help with the grooming and washing of their tails. It was done every morning at 6am so they would be in immaculate condition in case his lordship rode up during his daily rounds of the farm.

There was another farm and stable block for the percherons, the strong draught horses originally from France. Furness loved these huge grey horses and he won many prizes at the shows. Again, all their equipment and the horses themselves, with their shining silver manes and tails and their feet beautifully polished, looked as if they were about to leave for the show ring, not as if they were to work in the fields.

There were also enormous kennels for the various types of dogs: Rhodesian ridgebacks, beagles, hounds, and 50 poodles that belonged to my mother. Each section had its own kennel boys and maids. Occasionally, I would go to the shows and watch them perform for the judges.

Furness and my mother would go out riding most mornings, surrounded by a pack of dogs. They were always accompanied by the head stud groom and various outriders. A tour of the farm would take place. Until he started out, nobody knew which section of the farm he would be visiting that morning. I can still see him in beautifully

tailored, tight-fitting jodhpurs, immaculate shining boots, a tweed jacket and waistcoat and tweed hat. My mother would ride sidesaddle, either in navy blue or black, with a felt hat to match. Of course, when she went out hunting she wore a top hat and veils.

Furness loved cobs and the stable yard consisted mostly of cobs of various colours. I couldn't bear it when one of his agents found him a new one, as on arrival it would have its tail docked. Mummy's hacks of course were left with their tails as were the hunters and all my ponies.

It was, apart from the occasional punishments from Miss Unger, a fabulous life for a child who loved animals. I had a gym instructor who would come twice a week and give me a workout in the gymnasium and we had a permanent German masseur. I would also be driven into Leicester for ballet lessons twice a week. My daily lessons had to fit in around my riding activities. Sometimes, I would be ready for lessons at 6.30 in the morning and they might last for the two hours before breakfast. At other times, they would go into the late afternoon. Apart from Miss Unger, there was another governess, Miss Carruthers, and various nannies. I also had a German tutor but I couldn't stand him, so I loathed learning German. I had an enormous nursery where I did all my lessons and it was filled with toys.

When breakfast was finished I would rush to the stable yard and spend the rest of the morning riding out with Higgins, who was never without a bowler hat. There was an indoor and an outdoor arena. Higgins's idea of schooling was cavalry-style. Before saddling up, he would make me do a round of jumps without saddle or bridle and with my arms crossed. "Grip with your knees and lean into your horse. Learn to feel him," he would say. It was a daily litany. "Feel your horse. Feel your horse." Gradually one did. Through one's legs and body, one could read almost every thought and so become an extension of the horse. I could never resist in later years climbing onto any horse that was supposed to be unrideable. I never found one that was. Not in Ireland, in Texas nor Australia. I found that as soon as I could feel them, I could ride them. The feeling was euphoric, and it was thanks to Sgt Higgins and his cavalry training that I gained such a wonderful understanding of horses. It has remained with me all my life and, although I do not ride any longer, it was that knowledge that enabled

me in later years to take over the training of my mother's racehorses in South Africa and become so amazingly successful. I am also sure this training with horses in my youth taught me how to become part of my wild animals later on. I can feel their emotions and read their thoughts to such a degree that when I eventually shared my life with my lioness Tana, I did not even have to be in the same room to know what she was feeling and thinking.

My friends and companions at Burrough Court were the stable boys and the staff. There were dozens of them, so I was never lonely but unless Caryll was home I had virtually no other real playmates. So, naturally, in my mind I became a horse. When I was not riding I played horses. At night, I made up stories about them to send myself to sleep. I had numerous 14.2-hand thoroughbreds, the size considered right for a child. As long as it was a thoroughbred and beautiful, it was bought for me, and each horse had to be exercised every day. There was a very beautiful skewbald pony called Joseph that had a problem I soon discovered. It used to rear very badly. As soon as something upset it, it would go straight up on its hind legs. "Drop your reins, put your arms round its neck and go with it," Sgt Higgins used to shout. It became second nature.

Caryll came home for the holidays and, being a boy, was considered perfectly competent to handle rearing horses. It was good training for the army. In spite of Sgt Higgins's instructions though, Caryll, who was no horseman, ended on the ground. I remember being unspeakably cross, for he was letting the side down.

"What are you doing crawling on the road? Get up at once," I said.

"I am not getting on that horrid creature. I would rather walk home," said my mewling brother.

"Stop crying. You should be ashamed of yourself," I barked. "Get on the horse or I will never speak to you again."

In spite of all our efforts, Caryll never showed the slightest real interest in horses. He was brilliant at trick-cycling and we used to practise for hours in the back courtyard. Of course his biggest thrill of all was when Campbell Black allowed him to fly the plane. He could not talk of anything else. I found it extremely boring. Also, one of the drivers used to allow us to practise our car-driving skills on the airstrip, which was on top of the rise of a fairly steep hill. A large field

A LION IN THE BEDROOM



Enid Lindeman couldn't help herself: she dazzled men and incited passion.



Roderick Cameron, a shipbroking millionaire from New York, became Enid's first husband.

A LION IN THE BEDROOM



Enid's father, Charles Lindeman, above, shared her fine mouth and firm jawline. Right, Frederick "Caviar" Cavendish, known for his bravery, with his two children, Caryl, front, and Pat and stepson Rory.



Egypt after World War I was bliss, remembered Enid, centre, with Frederick, left.



Walter Carandini Wilson, far left, adored Enid, next to him, and tried to leave her fortune. Below, Enid with Lord Furness in Baden Baden.



A LION IN THE BEDROOM



Enid, at Burrough Court, could shoot and ride as well as any man.



Marmaduke Furness liked Enid to himself and took her to Africa on long safaris each year. On one trip, she shot a massive elephant and the tusks, above, went back to Burrough Court. Left, the ubiquitous hyrax, Tikki. Below, one of the Nile houseboats that took rich tourists.



A LION IN THE BEDROOM



Furness was called "Champagne Lordy" because of his opulent safaris, left. Below, Enid with either Idina or Joss, her two pet porcupines.



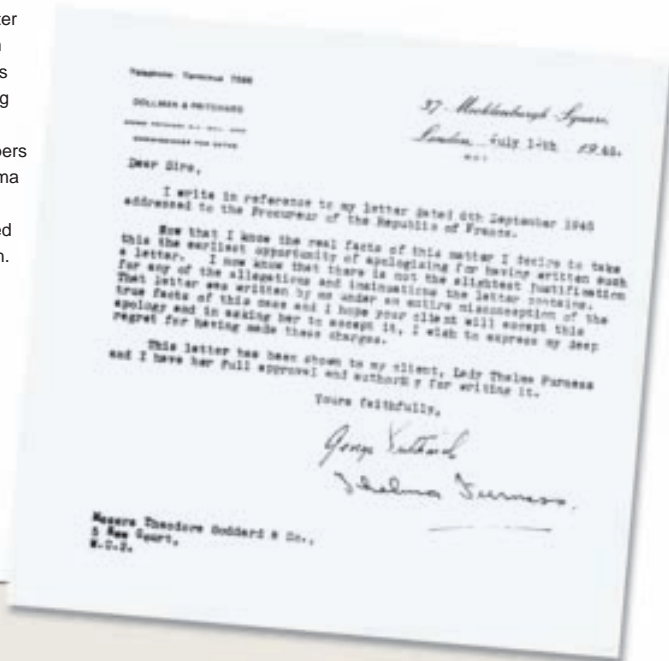
PAT CAVENDISH O'NEILL



Top, Enid and Furness, right, flying into Baden Baden. Tom Campbell Black is centre.
Above, Miss Unger with Caryl and Pat.

A LION IN THE BEDROOM

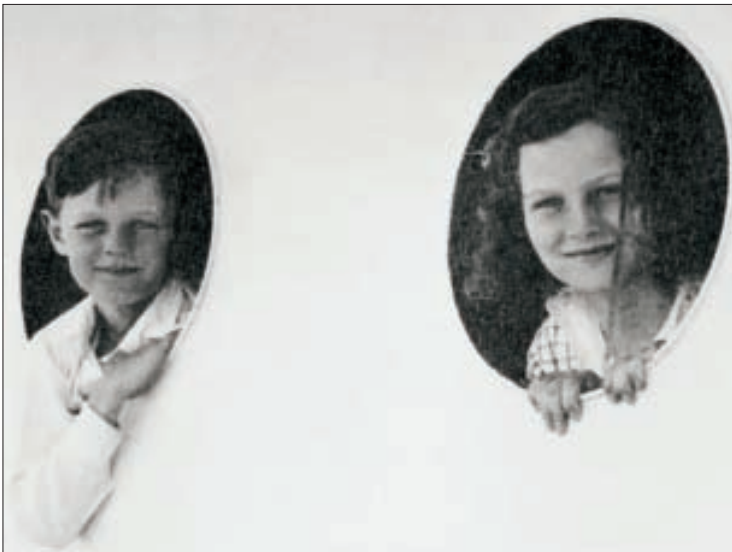
The famous letter of apology from Thelma Furness now kept among Sir Walter Monckton's papers at Oxford. Thelma had insinuated that Enid caused Furness's death.



Enid kept as many as 50 poodles at Burrough Court.

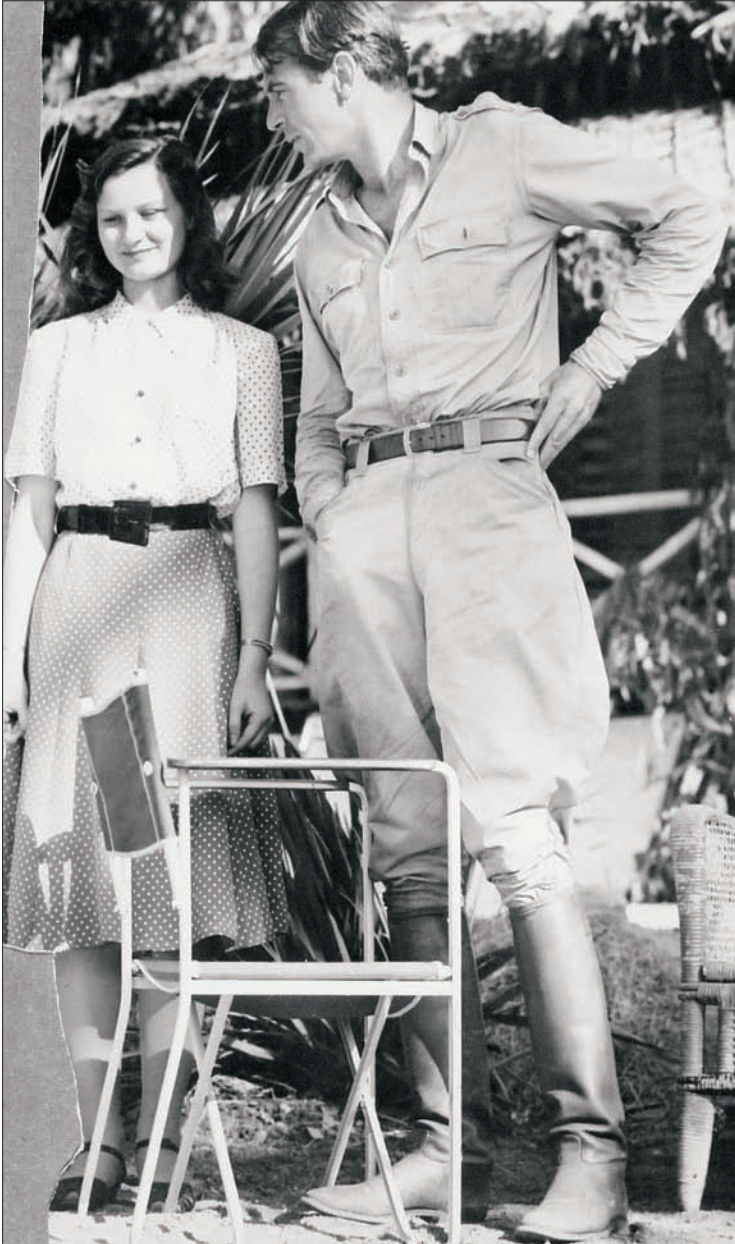


Pat's childhood revolved around horses, right, and she rode almost before she walked. Aunt Nanny, above, thought Pat an unbearably spoiled little girl.



Caryl and Pat joined Enid on one life-changing journey to Kenya.

A LION IN THE BEDROOM



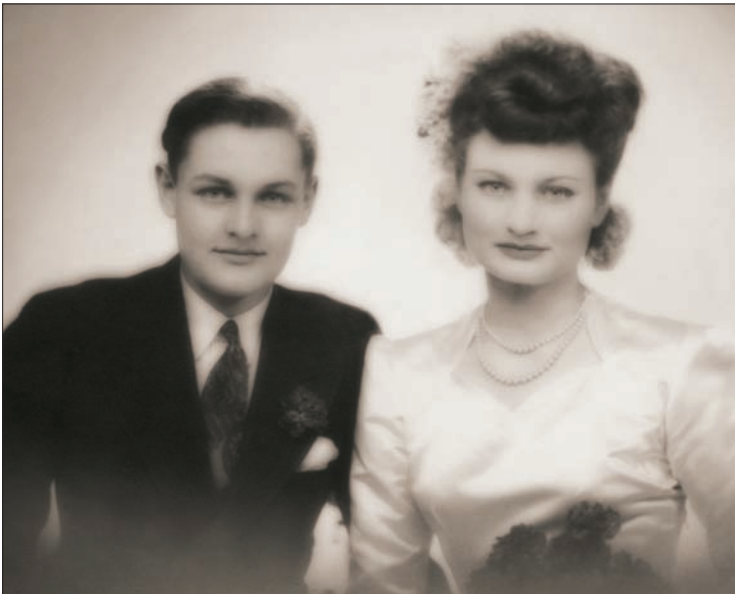
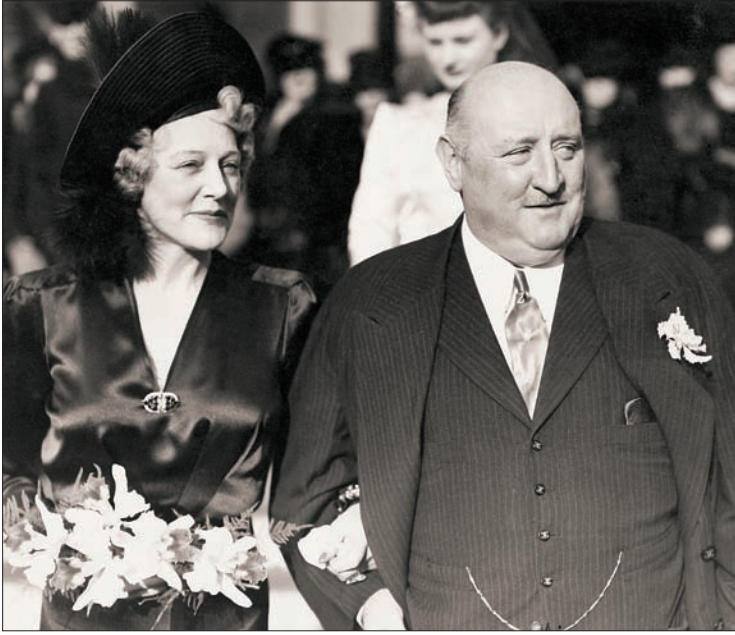
Among the film stars Enid knew was Gary Cooper, here with Pat.

PAT CAVENDISH O'NEILL



Enid in her robes for King George VI's coronation in 1937.

A LION IN THE BEDROOM



Enid's third marriage was to the brilliant Castlerosse. Caryll and Pat attended their mother.