

during my exalted mood at Murglebed-on-Sea. But then I knew little beyond the fact that Dale was fluttering round an undesirable candle. Till now I had no idea of the extent to which his wings were singed.

"Hasn't Dale spoken to you about this creature?" his mother asked.

"Young men of good taste keep these things from their elders, my dear Lady Kynnersley," said I.

"But you knew of it?"

"In a dim sort of way."

"Oh, Simon——"

"The baby boys of Dale's set regard taking out the cherus to supper as a solemn religious rite. They wouldn't think themselves respectable if they didn't. I've done it myself—in moderation—when I was very young."

"Men are mysteries," sighed Lady Kynnersley.

"Please regard them as such," said I, with a laugh, "and let Dale alone. Allow him to do whatever irrational thing he likes, save bringing the lady here to tea. If you try to tear him away from her he'll only cling to her the closer. If you trumpet abroad her infamy he'll proclaim her a slandered and martyred saint. Leave him to me for the present."

"I'll do so gladly," said Lady Kynnersley, with surprising meekness. "But you *will* bring him back, Simon? I've arranged for him to marry Maisie. I can't have my plans for his future upset."

By-law 379! Dear, excellent, but wooden-headed woman!

"I have your promise, haven't I?" she said, her hand in mine.

"You have," said I nobly.

But how in the name of Astaroth I'm going to keep it I haven't the remotest conception.