

Dinner With A Song Thrush

by Jessica Bellas Carter

13/7/1957 Raby Castle residence of Lord and Lady Nevill

My Aunt sent me a hidden letter:

I hope you find this. Pens under your dress are two pistols. Somethings going to happen at the dinner party. Do not trust Mr Gale.

X

Being involved in my aunt's detective society can affect plans...

When the day came, my aunt me and Maria were opposite Mr Gale and his business partners, his son and Mr Parker. Anderson served us dinner and the conversations started. My aunt turned to me after a while and complimented me on my dress.

"The colour suits you, Penelope it really does" she glanced over at Mr Gale "Stay with Maria, he's here to settle a debt, his chauffeur waiting – yes and well I said –"

She carried on with her story, and I half listened, wishing she would stop so I could talk to Maria. We got to the end of the second course and nothing had happened but then, over the sound of his son's cutlery I heard a pistol click in front of me. I didn't know who it was aimed at but I knew it was aimed at one of us. I looked at my aunt- she'd heard it too. Everything went on normally for a minute and then Mr Gale stood up pushing the chair back aiming the pistol at Lord Nevill. His wife screamed and young Mr Gale aimed a pistol at her. Maria grabbed my hand under the table.

"Now terribly sorry for the interruption everyone but Lord Nevill debts must be paid, did you think I'd forget" Mr Gale said with a sickly grin

"Charles?" Lady Nevill said faintly

Mr Gale looked at me and Maria and smiled as he looked back to Lord Nevill.

"You love your daughter don't you my lord, so what's it to be? The money or lovely Miss Maria?" he jumped on to the table in front of Lord Nevill

I let go of her hand and slipped it into my pocket pulling out my pistol. This was where Aunt Angelica came in. She stood up, pulling a pistol from her purse.

"But Mr Gale she's a child!" she said looking deeply worried

He turned to see her pistol pointed at him "Now Lady Fethergill is this really necessary"

"You seem to think so" she said

Mr Gale was losing his patience "So have you decided?"

"We- well I dint have that sort of now but I can–"

“Marvellous...” he grinned

Mr Parker got up from his chair and headed for Maria.

“I wouldn’t” my aunt said, I heard her pistol click.

I noticed Mr Parker pull a gun from his blazer, the three of them had guns but so did we.

“Lady Fethergill, you’re outnumbered, give us the girl”

“No I think you’ll find you are...”

Mr Gale looked confused, he’d heard three guns click. Mine, Marias and – his sons.

“This isn’t right -” his son said

As I watched his eyes meet his fathers, Mr Parker rushed round and grabbed Marias arm. She shrieked and pulled out her pistol and hit him in the side. He fell to the floor, groaning in pain.

The three of us smiled at Mr Gale as if nothing was wrong. The other guests, who hadn’t dared to move, were shocked that two teenage girls knew how to fight. Mr Gale didn’t move his pistol from Lord Nevill, who sat in shock at what his daughter was capable of.

“Mr Gale please get down” my Aunt said, already bored of the situation.

The grandfather clock on the landing chimed eight and screams and a clatter came from downstairs.

“Ah, back up” Mr Gale grinned.

I looked at my Aunt worriedly and she gave me an unimpressed look. A man in a chauffeur’s uniform came bursting in with a pistol. He froze when he saw Mr Gale’s son pointing a gun at his own father and me, Maria and my Aunt doing the same.

“Mr Gale, sir-” he spluttered

“Don’t be stupid, they’re girls” Mr Gale said, completely ignoring us.

The chauffeur seemed stupidly reassured by that and then he saw the injured Mr Parker “Very skilled girls, sir”

“Why did I hire you?” Mr Gale said under his breath “Just shoot!”

He shot at me and missed. Maria and I fired back, I hit his shoulder and Maria shot him in his leg. He cried out and stumbled out the room.

“You’ve improved girls” my aunt said

I aimed my pistol at Mr Gale’s and shot it out of his hand he jumped back, smashing glasses of wine. My aunt nudged me and I guessed what she wanted. I grabbed Marias’s hand, who stood trying to understand everything that had just happened. I ran down the grand staircase to the telephone and called the police.

The phone stopped ringing and before the person on the other end could get a word in I said “send help, Song Thrush case”

I heard a bang upstairs and a horrible feeling of worry ran through me. We ran back up the stairs and into the dining room to see the guests talking and whispering like school girls. Chairs were pushed out or tipped over and the table was a mess. I looked over at my Aunt who seemed rather pleased with herself calming lady Nevill down. Her husband hadn't moved. I looked around for Mr Gale and I saw him in the corner tied up with dress belts

Lady Nevill spoke up "I'm ashamed, Charles! I'm ashamed you let your daughter, her friend and Angelica fight for you, we could have died and you just sat there. Girls-

I prepared for the worst

"Thank you, Just please don't ruin your social reputation. I wonder if while legal matters are sorted-

"Maria is very welcome and Fethergill hall, Lady Nevill" my Aunt said

I am over the moon. Maria is spending the hols with me and my Aunt. This is going to be fun!

Song Thrush x