

**THE  
YOUNG VISITERS  
OR, MR SALTEENA'S PLAN**

Daisy Ashford



**THE AUTHOR**

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YOUNG VISITERS  
OR, MR SALTEENA'S PLAN**

BY  
**DAISY ASHFORD**

WITH A PREFACE BY  
**J. M. BARRIE**



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## PREFACE

The "owner of the copyright" guarantees that "The Young Visitors" is the unaided effort in fiction of an authoress of nine years. "Effort," however, is an absurd word to use, as you may see by studying the triumphant countenance of the child herself, which is here reproduced as frontispiece to her sublime work. This is no portrait of a writer who had to burn the oil at midnight (indeed there is documentary evidence that she was hauled off to bed every evening at six): it has an air of careless power; there is a complacency about it that by the severe might perhaps be called smugness. It needed no effort for that face to knock off a masterpiece. It probably represents precisely how she looked when she finished a chapter. When she was actually at work I think the expression was more solemn, with the tongue firmly clenched between the teeth; an unholy rapture showing as she drew near her love chapter. Fellow-craftsmen will see that she is looking forward to this chapter all the time.

The manuscript is in pencil in a stout little note book (twopence), and there it has lain for years, for though the authoress was nine when she wrote it she is now a grown woman. It has lain, in lavender as it were, in the dumpy note book, waiting for a publisher to ride that way and rescue it; and here he is at last, not a bit afraid that to this age it may appear "Victorian." Indeed if its pictures of High Life are accurate (as we cannot doubt, the authoress seems always so sure of her facts) they had a way of going on in those times which is really surprising. Even the grand historical figures were free and easy, such as King Edward, of whom we have perhaps the most human picture ever penned, as he appears at a levée "rather sumshiously," in a "small but costly crown," and afterwards slips away to tuck into ices. It would seem in particular that we are oddly wrong in our idea of the young Victorian lady as a person more shy and shrinking than the girl of to-day. The Ethel of this story is a fascinating creature who would have a good time wherever there were a few males, but no longer could she voyage through life quite so jollily without attracting the attention of the censorious. Chaperon seems to be one of the very few good words of which our authoress had never heard.

The lady she had grown into, the "owner of the copyright" already referred to, gives me a few particulars of this child she used to be, and is evidently a little scared by her. We should probably all be a little scared (though proud) if that portrait was dumped down in front of us as ours, and we were asked to explain why we once thought so much of ourselves as that.

Except for the smirk on her face, all I can learn of her now is that she was one of a small family who lived in the country, invented their own games, dodged the governess and let the rest of the world go hang. She read everything that came her way, including, as the context amply proves, the grown-up novels of the period. "I adored writing and used to pray for bad weather, so that I need not go out but could stay in and write." Her mother used to have early tea in bed; sometimes visitors came to the house, when there was talk of events in high society: there was mention of places called Hampton Court, the Gaiety Theatre and the "Crystale" Palace. This is almost all that is now remembered, but it was enough for the blazing child. She sucked her thumb for a moment (this is guesswork), and sat down to her amazing tale.

"Her mother used to have early tea in bed." Many authors must have had a similar experience, but they all missed the possibilities of it until this young woman came along. It thrilled her; and tea in bed at last takes its proper place in fiction. "Mr Salteena woke up rather early next day and was delighted to find Horace the footman entering with a cup of tea. Oh thankyou my man said Mr Salteena rolling over in the costly bed. Mr Clark is nearly out of the bath sir announced Horace I will have great pleasure in turning it on for you if such is your desire. Well yes you might said Mr Salteena seeing it was the idear." Mr Salteena cleverly conceals his emotion, but as soon as he is alone he rushes to Ethel's door, "I say said Mr Salteena excitedly I have had some tea in bed."

"Sometimes visitors came to the house." Nothing much in that to us, but how consummately this child must have studied them; if you consider what she knew of them before the "viacle" arrived to take them back to the station you will never dare to spend another week-end in a house where there may be a novelist of nine years. I am sure that when you left your bedroom this child stole in, examined everything and summed you up. She was particularly curious about the articles on your dressing-table, including the little box containing a reddish powder, and she never desisted from watching you till she caught you dabbing it on your cheeks. This powder, which she spells "ruge," went a little to her head, and it accompanies Ethel on her travels with superb effect. For instance, she is careful to put it on to be proposed to; and again its first appearance is excused in words that should henceforth be serviceable in every boudoir. "I shall put some red ruge on my face said Ethel because I am very pale owing to the drains in this house."

Those who read will see how the rooms in Hampton Court became the "compartments" in the "Crystale" Palace, and how the "Gaierty" Hotel

grew out of the Gaiety Theatre, with many other agreeable changes. The novelist will find the tale a model for his future work. How incomparably, for instance, the authoress dives into her story at once. How cunningly throughout she keeps us on the hooks of suspense, jumping to Mr Salteena when we are in a quiver about Ethel, and turning to Ethel when we are quite uneasy about Mr Salteena. This authoress of nine is flirting with her readers all the time. Her mind is such a rich pocket that as she digs in it (her head to the side and her tongue well out) she sends up showers of nuggets. There seldom probably was a novelist with such an uncanny knowledge of his characters as she has of Mr Salteena. The first line of the tale etches him for all time: "Mr Salteena was an elderly man of 42 and fond of asking people to stay with him." On the next page Salteena draws a touching picture of himself in a letter accepting an invitation: "I do hope I shall enjoy myself with you. I am fond of digging in the garden and I am parshal to ladies if they are nice I suppose it is my nature. I am not quite a gentleman but you would hardly notice it but can't be helped anyhow."

"When the great morning arrived Mr Salteena did not have an egg for his breakfast in case he should be sick on the journey." For my part I love Mr Salteena, who has a touch of Hamlet, and I wished up to the end that Ethel would make him happy, though I never had much hope after I read the description of Bernard Clark's legs.

It is not to be wondered at that Mr Salteena soon grew "rather jellous" of Bernard, who showed off from the first. "My own room is next the bathroom said Bernard it is decerated dark red as I have somber tastes. The bathroom has got a tip up basin." Thus was Mr Salteena put in his place, and there the cruel authoress (with her tongue farther out than ever) doggedly keeps him. "After dinner Ethel played some merry tunes on the piano and Bernard responded with a rather loud song in a base voice and Ethel clapped him a good deal. Then Mr Salteena asked a few riddles as he was not musicle." No wonder Mr Salteena went gloomily to bed, not to sleep, but to think out the greater riddle of how to become a gentleman, with which triumphant adventure the book is largely concerned.

To many the most instructive part of the story will be the chapter entitled "Bernard's Idear." Bernard's "idear" (warmly acclaimed by Ethel) is that she and he should go up to London "for a few weeks gaierty." Something of the kind has often been done in fiction and in guide-books, but never probably in such a hearty way as here. Arrived at the "Gaierty" Hotel Bernard pokes his head into the "window of the pay desk. Have you a couple of bedrooms for self and young lady he enquired in a lordly way."

He is told that they have two beauties. "Thank you said Bernard we will go up if you have no objection. None whatever sir said the genial lady the beds are well aired and the view quite pleasant. Come along Ethel cried Bernard this sounds alright eh. Oh quite said Ethel with a beaming smile." He decides gallantly that the larger room shall be hers. "I shall be quite lost in that large bed," Ethel says. "Yes I expect you will said Bernard and now what about a little table d'ote followed by a theatre?"

Bernard's proposal should be carried in the pocket of all future swains. He decides "whilst imbibing his morning tea beneath the pink silken quilt," that to propose in London would not be the "correct idear." He springs out of bed and knocks at Ethel's door. "Are you up my dear? he called. Well not quite said Ethel hastily jumping from her downy nest." He explains his "idear." "Oh hurrah shouted Ethel I shall soon be ready as I had my bath last night so won't wash very much now."

They go up the river in a boat, and after they had eaten and "drunk deeply of the charming viands ending up with merangs and chocklates," Bernard says "in a passionate voice Let us now bask under the spreading trees. Oh yes lets said Ethel." "Ethel he murmured in a trembly voice. Oh what is it said Ethel." What it was (as well she knew) was love eternal. Ethel accepts him, faints and is brought back to life by a clever "idear" of Bernard's, who pours water on her. "She soon came to and looked up with a sickly smile. Take me back to the 'Gaierty' Hotel she whispered faintly. With pleasure my darling said Bernard I will just pack up our viands ere I unloose the boat. Ethel felt better after a few drops of champagne and began to tidy her hair while Bernard packed the remains of the food. Then arm in arm they tottered to the boat, I trust you have not got an illness my darling murmured Bernard as he helped her in, Oh no I am very strong said Ethel I fainted from joy she added to explain matters. Oh I see said Bernard handing her a cushion well some people do he added kindly."

"So I will end my chapter," the authoress says; and we can picture her doing it complacently, and slowly pulling in her tongue.

Ethel was married in the Abbey. Her wedding dress was "a rich satin with a humped pattern of gold on the pure white and it had a long train edged with Airum lillies." "You will indeed be a charming spectacle my darling gasped Bernard as they left the shop," and I have no doubt she was. She got many delightful presents, the nicest of all being from her father, who "provided a cheque for £2 and promised to send her a darling little baby calf when ready." This is perhaps the prettiest touch in the story and

should make us all take off our hats to the innocent wondering mind that thought of it.

Poor Mr Salteena. He was at the wedding, dressed in black and crying into his handkerchief. However he recovered to an extent and married Another and had ten children, "five of each," none of them of course equal to Ethel's children, of whom in a remarkably short time there were seven, which the authoress evidently considers to be the right "idear."

It seems to me to be a remarkable work for a child, remarkable even in its length and completeness, for when children turn author they usually stop in the middle, like the kitten when it jumps. The pencilled MS. has been accurately reproduced, not a word added or cut out. Each chapter being in one long paragraph, however, this has been subdivided for the reader's comfort.

J. M. BARRIE.



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# The Young Visitors

## CHAPTER 1

### QUITE A YOUNG GIRL

Mr Salteena was an elderly man of 42 and was fond of asking people to stay with him. He had quite a young girl staying with him of 17 named Ethel Monticue. Mr Salteena had dark short hair and mustache and whiskers which were very black and twisty. He was middle sized and he had very pale blue eyes. He had a pale brown suit but on Sundays he had a black one and he had a topper every day as he thought it more becoming. Ethel Monticue had fair hair done on the top and blue eyes. She had a blue velvet frock which had grown rather short in the sleeves. She had a black straw hat and kid gloves.

One morning Mr Salteena came down to breakfast and found Ethel had come down first which was strange. Is the tea made Ethel he said rubbing his hands. Yes said Ethel and such a queer shaped parcel has come for you Yes indeed it was a queer shape parcel it was a hat box tied down very tight and a letter stuffed between the string. Well well said Mr Salteena parcels do turn queer I will read the letter first and so saying he tore open the letter and this is what it said

MY DEAR ALFRED.

I want you to come for a stop with me so I have sent you a top hat wrapped up in tishu paper inside the box. Will you wear it staying with me because it is very uncommon. Please bring one of your young ladies whichever is the prettiest in the face.

I remain Yours truly  
BERNARD CLARK.

Well said Mr Salteena I shall take you to stay Ethel and fancy him sending me a top hat. Then Mr S. opened the box and there lay the most splendid top hat of a lovely rich tone rather like grapes with a ribbon round completely.

Well said Mr Salteena peevishly I dont know if I shall like it the bow of the ribbon is too flighty for my age. Then he sat down and eat the egg which Ethel had so kindly laid for him. After he had finished his meal he got down and began to write to Bernard Clark he ran up stairs on his fat legs and took out his blotter with a loud sniff and this is what he wrote

MY DEAR BERNARD

Certainly I shall come and stay with you next Monday I will bring Ethel Monticue commonly called Miss M. She is very active and pretty. I do hope I shall enjoy myself with you. I am fond of digging in the garden and I am parshial to ladies if they are nice I suppose it is my nature. I am not quite a gentleman but you would hardly notice it but cant be helped anyhow. We will come by the 3-15.

Your old and valud friend  
ALFRED SALTEENA.

Perhaps my readers will be wondering why Bernard Clark had asked Mr Salteena to stay with him. He was a lonely man in a remote spot and he liked people and partys but he did not know many. What rot muttered Bernard Clark as he read Mr Salteenas letter. He was rather a presumshious man.

The Young Visitors  
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to hap 1  
Quite a young girl

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**THE FIRST PAGE OF THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT**

## CHAPTER 2

### STARTING GAILY

When the great morning came Mr Salteena did not have an egg for his breakfast in case he should be sick on the journey.

What top hat will you wear asked Ethel.

I shall wear my best black and my white alpaca coat to keep off the dust and flies replied Mr Salteena.

I shall put some red ruge on my face said Ethel because I am very pale owing to the drains in this house.

You will look very silly said Mr Salteena with a dry laugh.

Well so will you said Ethel in a snappy tone and she ran out of the room with a very superier run throwing out her legs behind and her arms swinging in rithum.

Well said the owner of the house she has a most idiotick run.

Presently Ethel came back in her best hat and a lovly velvit coat of royal blue. Do I look nice in my get up she asked.

Mr Salteena survayed her. You look rarther rash my dear your colors dont quite match your face but never mind I am just going up to say goodbye to Rosalind the housemaid.

Well dont be long said Ethel. Mr S. skipped upstairs to Rosalinds room. Goodbye Rosalind he said I shall be back soon and I hope I shall enjoy myself.

I make no doubt of that sir said Rosalind with a blush as Mr Salteena silently put 2/6 on the dirty toilet cover.

Take care of your bronkitis said Mr S. rarther bashfully and he hastily left the room waving his hand carelessly to the housemaid.

Come along cried Ethel powdering her nose in the hall let us get into the cab. Mr Salteena did not care for powder but he was an unselfish man so he dashed into the cab. Sit down said Ethel as the cabman waved his whip you are standing on my luggage. Well I am paying for the cab said Mr S. so I might be allowed to put my feet were I like.

They traveled 2nd class in the train and Ethel was longing to go first but thought perhaps least said soonest mended. Mr Salteena got very excited in the train about his visit. Ethel was calm but she felt excited inside. Bernard has a big house said Mr. S. gazing at Ethel he is inclined to be rich.

Oh indeed said Ethel looking at some cows flashing past the window. Mr. S. felt rather disheartened so he read the paper till the train stopped and the porters shouted Rickamere station. We had better collect our traps said Mr Salteena and just then a very exalted footman in a cocked hat and olive green uniform put his head in at the window. Are you for Rickamere Hall he said in impressive tones.

Well yes I am said Mr Salteena and so is this lady.

Very good sir said the noble footman if you will alight I will see to your luggage there is a conveyance awaiting you.

Oh thankyou thankyou said Mr. S. and he and Ethel stepped along the platform. Outside they found a lovely carriage lined with olive green cushions to match the footman and the horses had green bridles and bows on their manes and tails. They got gingerly in. Will he bring our luggage asked Ethel nervously.

I expect so said Mr Salteena lighting a very long cigar.

Do we tip him asked Ethel quietly.

Well no I dont think so not yet we had better just thank him politely.

Just then the footman staggered out with the baggage. Ethel bowed gracefully over the door of the carriage and Mr S. waved his hand as each bit of luggage was hoisted up to make sure it was all there. Then he said thankyou my good fellow very politely. Not at all sir said the footman and touching his cocked hat he jumped actively to the box.

I was right not to tip him whispered Mr Salteena the thing to do is to leave 2/6 on your dressing table when your stay is over.

Does he find it asked Ethel who did not really know at all how to go on at a visit. I believe so replied Mr Salteena anyhow it is quite the custom and we cant help it if he does not. Now my dear what do you think of the scenery

Very nice said Ethel gazing at the rich fur rug on her knees. Just then the carriage rolled into a beautiful drive with tall trees and big red flowers

growing amid shiny dark leaves. Presently the haughty coachman pulled up with a great clatter at a huge front door with tall pillars each side a big iron bell and two very clean scrapers. The doors flung open as if by magic causing Ethel to jump and a portly butler appeared on the scene with a very shiny shirt front and a huge pale face. Welcome sir he exclaimed good naturedly as Mr Salteena alighted rather quickly from the vehicle and please to step inside.

Mr Salteena stepped in as bid followed by Ethel. The footman again struggled with the luggage and the butler Francis Minnit by name kindly lent a hand. The hall was very big and hung round with guns and maps and ancestors giving it a gloomy but a grand air. The butler then showed them down a winding corridor till he came to a door which he flung open shouting Mr Salteena and a lady sir.

A tall man of 29 rose from the sofa. He was rather bent in the middle with very nice long legs fairish hair and blue eyes. Hullo Alf old boy he cried so you have got here all safe and no limbs broken.

None thank you Bernard replied Mr Salteena shaking hands and let me introduce Miss Monticue she is very pleased to come for this visit. Oh yes gasped Ethel blushing through her red rouge. Bernard looked at her keenly and turned a dark red. I am glad to see you he said I hope you will enjoy it but I have not arranged any parties yet as I don't know anybody.

Don't worry murmured Ethel I don't mix much in Society and she gave him a dainty smile.

I expect you would like some tea said Bernard I will ring.

Yes indeed we should said Mr Salteena eagerly. Bernard pealed on the bell and the butler came in with a stately walk.

Tea please Minnit cried Bernard Clark. With pleasure sir replied Minnit with a deep bow. A glorious tea then came in on a gold tray two kinds of bread and butter a lovely jam roll and lots of sugar cakes. Ethel's eyes began to sparkle and she made several remarks during the meal. I expect you would now like to unpack said Bernard when it was over.

Well yes that is rather an ideal said Mr Salteena.

I have given the best spare room to Miss Monticue said Bernard with a gallant bow and yours turning to Mr Salteena opens out of it so you will be nice and friendly both the rooms have big windows and a handsome view.

How charming said Ethel. Yes well let us go up replied Bernard and he led the way up many a winding stairway till they came to an oak door with some lovely swans and bull rushes painted on it. Here we are he cried gaily. Ethel's room was indeed a handsome compartment with purple silk curtains and a 4 post bed draped with the same shade. The toilet set was white and mauve and there were some violets in a costly vase. Oh I say cried Ethel in surprise. I am glad you like it said Bernard and here we have yours Alf. He opened the dividing doors and portrayed a smaller but dainty room all in pale yellow and wild primroses. My own room is next the bath room said Bernard it is decorated dark red as I have somber tastes. The bath room has got a tip up basin and a hose thing for washing your head.

A good notion said Mr Salteena who was secretly getting jellus.

Here we will leave our friends to unpack and end this Chapter.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE FIRST EVENING

When they had unpacked Mr Salteena and Ethel went downstairs to dinner. Mr Salteena had put on a complete evening suit as he thought it was the correct idea and some ruby studs he had got at a sale. Ethel had on a dress of yellow silk covered with tulle which was quite in the fashion and she had on a necklace which Mr Salteena gave her for a birthday present. She looked very becoming and pretty and Bernard heaved a sigh as he gave her his arm to go into dinner. The butler Minnie was quite ready for the fray standing up very stiff and surrounded by two footmen in green plush and curly white wigs who were called Charles and Horace.

Well said Mr Salteena lapping up his turtle soup you have a very sumptuous house Bernard.

His friend gave a weary smile and swallowed a few drops of sherry wine. It is fairly decent he replied with a bashful glance at Ethel after our repast I will show you over the premises.

Many thanks said Mr Salteena getting rather flustered with his forks.

You ought to give a ball remarked Ethel you have such large compartments.

Yes there is room enough sighed Bernard we might try a few steps and meanwhile I might get to know a few people.

So you might responded Ethel giving him a speaking look.

Mr Salteena was growing a little peevish but he cheered up when the Port wine came on the table and the butler put round some costly finger bowls. He did not have any in his own house and he followed Bernard Clark's advice as to what to do with them. After dinner Ethel played some merry tunes on the piano and Bernard responded with a rather loud song in a base voice and Ethel clapped him a good deal. Then Mr Salteena asked a few riddles as he was not musical. Then Bernard said shall I show you over my domain and they strolled into the gloomy hall.

I see you have a lot of ancestors said Mr Salteena in a jealous tone, who are they.

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