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In Time of Storm.

By Sarah Cone Bryant.



THE sun was just sliding below the low hills, westward. Above the red menace of his upper arc violet and crimson stains patched the sky; below, the tide-pools on the marshes flared with reflected color till the inlet seemed to glimmer and undulate up to the strip of built road which stood between the flats and the higher ground formed by the push of tides on the sea beach. The girl walking briskly along this road laughed as the gust caught her skirts, and took an involuntary dancing step toward a young man in the uniform of the coast guard, who smiled at her with a "Hullo, Martha!"

"Hullo, David," she answered; "you aren't on, this evening?"

He turned to walk with her, taking the windward side of the road and shielding her with half turned body, "I

soon," the girl said, rather breathlessly. They had paused midway across the dike and were looking out over the harbor. Out beyond was the solemn vagueness of space, and the edge of the world just touched with luminous prophecy of the climbing moon. The eternal mystery of the sea whispered to them both; were they not both his children?

"It means leaving—this," said David more soberly.

"Yes."

"It's going to be hard, Martha."

"Yes; awfully hard."

"I wish I could take you with me! It doesn't seem fair that my chance should come first; you deserve it more than I do."

"Thanks, David, but you know I couldn't leave father now, even if it did come."

"I know; you're good, but I hate to leave you."

"Oh, you'll have lots of other people."



The eternal mystery of the sea whispered to them both.

was coming round to your house," he said: "I wanted to see you a minute. Are you too cold to walk down the dike, a piece?"

"Cold!"—she drew a long breath of the keen, delicious air—"I'm warm as toast, and I would rather walk than not. What a splendid night?"

"Great!" lifting his head to look over her hood at a deep gloom of the sea; "looks some like a weather breeder, though."

"I shouldn't wonder. I hope it won't come in your watch. You look—has something nice happened?"

"That's what!" He took her arm in a boyish pinch. "Martha, I've got the position! Honest. They are willing to take me on as soon as father can fill my place on the beach. I've got it, Martha, got it at last!"

"David."

"Yes; I knew you'd be glad. I can hardly believe it, though. I had about given up for this winter, you know. Jove, I'm glad."

The girl squeezed his arm in turn, exclaiming at him: "Oh, David, I'm so glad, too; it has all come right, hasn't it? I knew it would; I'm so glad!"

"I am going right off," David said importantly, "in a week, I guess."

"A week?—why,—that is pretty

the girl said with a touch of coquetry in her voice.

"They won't none of 'em be you," said David, practically.

Martha blushed in the dusk. "There'll be Miss Lawrence, for one," she said, tentatively; "she lives right in Cambridge."

David laughed in an embarrassed kind of way. She laughed back at him with sudden daring. "I expect you'll be seeing her most every day," she said, twisting her cape fringe.

"Oh, I don't know," said David hesitatingly.

"Yes, you will," she teased; "you will be so handy to her house."

"That's a fact," said David.

The girl stopped laughing, suddenly. She looked at David in astonishment. Then she said uncertainly, "Why, yes; it will be pleasant for you won't it?"

David had his hands in his pockets; he drove them deeper in, as he broke out, in a boyish fashion, "Say, Martha, Miss Lawrence is a mighty pretty girl!"

There was a long pause; then Martha said:—

"Yes, indeed she is; and a nice girl, too." She was looking at him with wide, startled eyes, through the dusk.

"It's funny," he went on impulsively, "about her; the way she makes you

feel acquainted; I suppose it's only what they call 'society,' but she makes it mighty pleasant." He paused for a reply, then went on with the expansiveness of one sure of a sympathetic audience. "Do you know—she seems like—all the rest of it, somehow—that I've never had; the city,—and traveling,—and doing things up fine—I can't explain it; but the way she shakes hands, and her clothes, and that funny way she says things with her voice up, as if she was asking a question—oh, you know what I mean, Martha!"

Martha's lips moved stiffly; she did not answer at once. "She—she makes you feel—sort of as if you were at a party; have you noticed it, Martha?"

The girl clenched her hands together under her cape. "I know what you mean," she said.

"I—I like things like that, even if I don't have 'em; don't you? I mean to have them some day, too."

"I—think you will; I hope you will have all you care for." Her voice came unevenly.

"Caring is easy," said David, "it's the getting that is hard."

"But the getting mostly depends on caring?"

"Not always your own."

"Oh," fiercely, "it is easy enough for a man to make others care!—a great, strong man, with all the world before him."

David thrilled at her tone.

"That's the talk," he said, squaring his shoulders. "A fellow can't do less than make a fight for it. I never thought much about such things—till lately."

Again Martha was silent. Amy Lawrence had been at the Rock since September, recuperating in the post-summer quiet from an illness of the nerves. David laughed with unfamiliar embarrassment; "We'll have our party yet, Martha!"

The girl gasped. "You really want—like—the party so much?" she said.

"I guess so," said David.

Martha stood very still for a moment, looking at the great saffron moon swinging clear of the black sea. Then she said: "I hope you will get to the party, David; I hope you will get everything you want, always."

"You are mighty good. I guess if it depended on you your folks would get all there was going, wouldn't they?"

"Perhaps. You feel like one of my folks, don't you, David?"

"Well, I rather guess! You are all I ever had. All the sistering—or mothering, either—I ever had I've had or guessed, from you; you are—my own, Martha!"

"Ah!" The sound forced itself from her clenched teeth. Then suddenly; "Oh, I am so cold; let's go home."

"Why, Martha! why didn't you tell me before? He tried to wrap the tightly-held cape still closer about her, she suffered it passively. "Take hold, and we will run a bit," he said cheerfully. But Martha's weight sagged against his hand. He looked at her uncertainly. How wearily she moved!

"You poor little Martha!" he said drawing the limp hand within his arm, "we have been letting you work too hard, that's what. I ought to have had more sense than to keep you standing in this cold. Lean on me, dear."

Martha swallowed hard. "You mustn't mind me," she said unsteadily. "I did not know I was tired before. I shall be all rested to-morrow."

David shook his head proestingly. Ah, the pitiless wind, how it pushed and baffled her! How it stung her face! Yet half an hour before it had been sport to oppose it. At her door David spoke anxiously; "You go right to bed—there's a good girl—and rest."

She smiled at him faintly as she drew her hand from his strong, warm grasp. Her eyes were very large and

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