

True love triumphant

The definitive Canadian short story

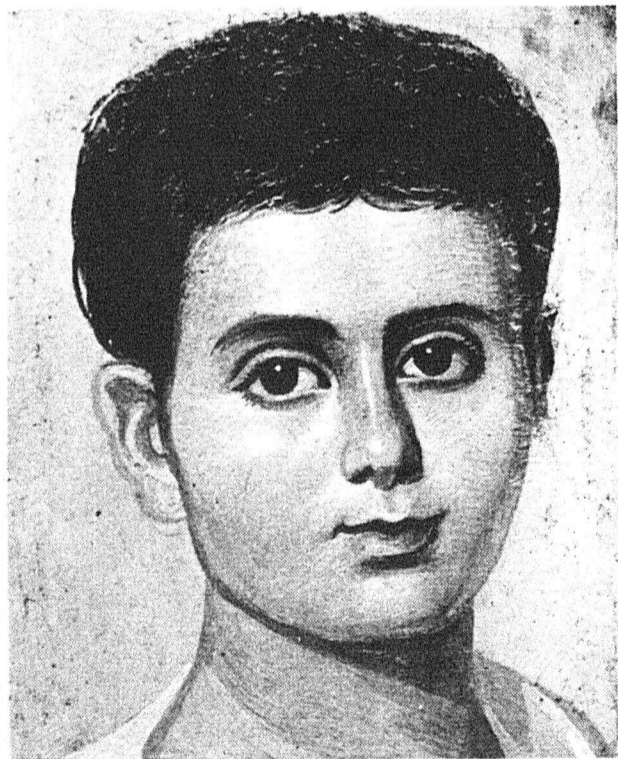


MISS WILLIAMA LYONA MACKENZIE-KING

It was a beautiful, cold day in Rhododendron, Saskatchewan, when Miss Williama Lyona Mackenzie-King set out briskly for her first day of teaching at Cheepapakwatamawakahahaha Elementary School. She wore a colorful distinctively Canadian buffalo blanket under her distinctively Canadian Hudson's Bay coat, and her apple cheeks glowed redly in the crisp December morning air. She clambered into the sleigh and snuggled her feet up to the hot bricks.

"Oh Goody," she said, as she felt the sensual warmth of the bricks seeping through her toes. "How glad I am to be living in Rhododendron, Sask." She cracked the whip to send old Pretender, her valiant Clydesdale, on his way. But to her horror old Pretender did not move. "Gee up!" she said, clubbing him with her Lacrosse stick. But old Pretender could not move, for he was frozen stiff.

"Oh dear, oh dear," said Miss Williama Lyona Mackenzie-King. "What shall I do? It is twenty miles to the nearest outpost of civilization." She fell to the ground, weeping, and her tears formed



PIERRE LE PIERRE THE MAD TRAPPER

little frozen droplets on the frost-encrusted ground. Discouraged, she looked up. Horror! What did she see? It was a pack of lean, hungry, menacingly-circling WOLVES!!

She dashed into the house, only to discover that there was no firweood, no ammunition, not even any salami to throw to the ravenous beasts. "Oh dear," she said. She tiptoed outside again. "Nice wolves", she murmured tentatively.

Broad grins spread across the faces of all the wolves. Suddenly a speck was seen approaching on the horizon. "A speck! A speck!" she cried. "I'm saved." A guilty flush spread over her freezing cheeks. "Oh dear, I should not have said that. I have betrayed my Elementary English Teachers Oath, in which I swore—well, I did not really swear, because that too would have contravened the oath—but at any rate I promised faithfully I would never sully the English tongue by making use of contractions." She stiffened her upper lip, and awaited her deliverance patiently.

The speck grew and grew until it became a blob, and as it grew, so did Miss Williama's hopes. But that so-promising blob, it gradually appeared, was none other than PIERRE LE PIERRE, THE MAD TRAPPER!!! As he coursed over the snow in his husky-drawn sled, his cry rang out over the barren wastes. "AAGHAAAFRIIOOPHIMMIA-ARGHAAAAGHAAGODDAMNEENGLISHPEEGS!!!" he shouted merrily.

Miss Williama gasped in fear as she remembered all those stories she'd heard in the staff room about Pierre le Pierre's exploits. She dashed back into the house, muttering "Oh what a terrible fate awaits me!" She headed straight for the bathtub, the only safe place she knew, as Pierre le Pierre had never been known to wash.

Meanwhile, in the nearby woods, LT. DALE OF THE MOUNTED was patrolling his accustomed rounds—wrestling grizzly bears, healing wounded spruce trees, and collecting rabbit spoor. He always looked forward to this time of the week, the time when he patrolled the area around Miss Williama's simple log cabin. For Lt. Dale was secretly in love with the pretty young school teacher; he loved her with a pure and simple love, unalloyed by baser elements. He did not hope for any return of affections from the fair maid—it was enough that he loved.

The moment he heard Pierre le Pierre's impassioned cry, he feared for the safety of Miss Williama, and dashed through the underbrush towards her dwelling. Unfortunately, he chanced to step on a carelessly-thrown-away beer bottle left, no doubt, by one of the native Tekkawheepawawa Indians, and had his head forcibly inserted into a snow-covered gopher hole.

Pierre le Pierre had by this time reached the cabin door and was striving mightily to batter it down. "Open up in dere, you no-good Eenglish sow!! I am Pierre le Pierre, ze Mad Trapper, and I lov you!" He laughed diabolically.

Miss Williama's voice was heard feebly to reply "Oh spare me, spare me, Mr. Mad Traper. I have done you no harm. Do not, I pray you, take from me that which I can never replace, that which I prize more highly than life itself!"

"Do not worry, leetle sheevering cabbage, I do not want your feelthy capitalist money." And again he crashed head-first into the weakening door. He was interrupted by a shot from a .45 calibre horse pistol crashing through his spinal column. He crumpled to the ground, gasping "Feelthy Anglo-Saxon pegs!"



LT. DALE OF MOUNTED

Yes, Lt. Dale of the Mounted had extricated his cranium from the gopher hole in time to effect Miss Williama's rescue. He emerged from the woods and approached the prostrate, dying Pierre. "You should have tried the doorknob," he said smiling urbanely. A look of pain came over Pierre's countenance, as he realized his error. He cast one last anguished glance of hate at the policeman, and died.

Lt. Dale strode purposefully into the cabin and discovered Miss Williama senseless in the bathtub. He gently lifted her from the laviorial basin and looked lovingly into her glassy eyes.

"Oh, Williama," he murmured, and, overcome by emotion, emplanted a tender kiss upon her alabaster forehead. "If only I dared express to you my boundless love." At this, Williama returned to consciousness, and perceived the look of adoration upon Lt. Dale's features.

"How little you know of my feelings, Mr. Lt.," she said in accents strained by strong emotion. "I love you, and have loved you many a month."

"Ah what bliss! What unbounded happiness!" he replied. "I have always longed for the pure love of a noble woman, and now, though beyond my wildest expectations, that happy lot is mine!"

And the whole of that brave and new frontier land, Canada, rejoiced at their happiness. The Rocky Mountains reduced themselves to rubble; the Fraser River overflowed its banks, the Canadian portion of the polar ice-cap melted; and Sir Wilfred Laurier was elected Prime Minister.

—T.P.D./W.R.B./J.O.T.



THE AUTHORS