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The above are a few of the desirable properties in this locality for sale by the Western Real Estate Exchange. Farms advertised free until sold. For further particulars regarding these properties, apply to the owners, or to

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AMONG THE LILACS

By Virginia Leila Wentz

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It was a warm spring evening, so warm that they had ventured to sit out on the little wooden veranda. There was a suggestion of approaching summer in the breeze, and the air was redolent with lilacs. By glancing toward the right it was not difficult to see where the fragrance came from. On the other side of the hedge in the deepening twilight was a purple forest of plumes, and beyond that, white in the gray light, rose the old Howard house, the oldest in the tiny village as well as the largest. Selden Howard was the only living representative of the family.

Presently the group on Mrs. Jones' veranda began to speak of Selden, leading up to the subject from the fragrance of the bushes.

"Them lilocks is sickly sweet," observed Mrs. Jones herself.

"Really nauseating," acquiesced the boarder who had been spending the winter here in this little cottage among the Berkshire hills. "By the way, I saw a strange man at the postoffice this morning and I overheard some one say he was Mr. Howard. Very good looking man he was and seemed to know a thing or two."

"That's him," confirmed Mrs. Jones. "But why shouldn't he know a thing or two? He don't do nothin' but travel and trapse round the country. Hardly ever home and won't have a thing to do with the people in the village."

The moon was beginning to show red and low in the warm dusk, and the lilacs made superb black shadow effects on the lawn. The little tired out city girl who sat on the lowest step of the veranda and who had just arrived that day had nothing to say. She was filling her whole soul with the beauty of the coming night.

Pretty soon, carrying her lamp, she went upstairs to her bedroom. She looked at the high mound of feather bed and at the small window at the foot into which was already flooding the spring moonlight. For a moment she stood irresolute; then she lowered the shade, slipped on a chesscloth kimono, drew the pins from her hair, letting it fall about her shoulders, blew out the lamp and followed her whim to lean on the casement.

It had been a very long while since Katherine Hope had looked from a window over a garden when the moon was shining. True, from the window of their stodgey city lodgings on Eleventh street, her mother's and hers, she had leaned out at times when her head was hot and aching with too much work and had caught a breath of outside air. But that was so different. From that window she could look out only on clotheslines, sheds, the back windows of the boarding houses on the next street, and there whatever restful thoughts might come to her were made havoc of by an accordion, cheap songs or the enteravailing of feline creatures on the fences below.

And now—oh, the feathery, pale fluorescence of the lilacs over yonder! Katherine drew her breath in with delight as their dominant scent came up to her. If only her dear mother could be with her to enjoy the beauty of it all! But that had not been possible. When the physician had shaken his head gravely over his young patient's wornout condition and commanded an immediate change in the country it had been all that mother and daughter could do to scrape together the meager savings for Katherine's rest of a fortnight. And Katherine was not one to mew and whimper over impossibilities. She was here now, and she would make the best of every moment to grow strong and well again that she might go back with new life to her office work and the companionship of her sacrificing little mother.

The mild country air and the thousand odors of the spring played upon her face and lifted her loosened hair, gilded by the moonshine into the likeness of an aureole. Her white kimono fell softly around her; from the position in which she held her arms her soft elbows were plainly visible, and her exquisite face, leaning back a bit against the dark painted frame of the window, stood out like a cameo.

The girl was little conscious of anything except the wonder of the night, nor was she aware of one who watched her a moment from the shadow of the lilacs in the garden beyond the hedge. Selden Howard was returning from his dog kennels, whence he had gone to look after a sick collie, when his eye had chanced to fall upon the figure in the casement, and in sheer artistic appreciation had rested there.

"She's like some young princess," he thought to himself, pursuing his way toward the big house, "or a goddess. Her hair's like the silvery floss around corn. Her name ought to be Perdita, Marpessa or Ariadne. How ever in

the world did the Jones family stumble across such a creature? The glamour of the girl wove itself into his dreams, and in waking intervals he pondered on plans for an acquaintance. "Ah, ha, I have it!" at last laughed he.

Early the next morning he went fishing. As luck would have it, he secured a well filled creel. On his way home, without ceremony, he lifted the latch of Mrs. Jones' low back gate and entered. He walked right up to the kitchen window, for there stood Mrs. Jones rolling the dough for breakfast biscuit.

"Good morning, Mrs. Jones," said he. "I've got such a jolly big creel full of fish here that I don't know what to do with them. There's no one over there"—nodding toward the big white house—"but my housekeeper, and she's sick this morning; so I'm wondering if you'll accept these?" With the gallantry of a knight he held out to her his creel.

"Oh, Mr. Selden!" exclaimed the good woman, a bit flustered, but smiling with unmistakable appreciation. (Would the heavens fall next? When had Mr. Selden Howard last honored her humble dwelling like this? Surely not since his mother died, poor soul!) "Accept them? Well, I just guess I will! And so Mrs. Patch is sick! Well, you'll just stay here to breakfast. It'll be all ready in fifteen minutes." This was as much as Howard had hoped for.

"You're awfully kind, Mrs. Jones," he said, affecting surprise. "And—yes, I believe I'll stay. I've a sick collie over in the kennels. I'll go back and look after her; then I'll be back to accept your hospitality."

When Katherine Hope entered the dining room Mrs. Jones of course presented Mr. Howard. "How do you do, Mr. Howard," said she conventionally, with a smile, a little tired in spite of the play of childish dimples. But Selden was looking down admiringly on the fine, white parting that separated the braids of purest flax.

"And how d'ye like them, Mr. Selden?" asked Mrs. Jones a bit later, referring to the biscuit.

"I love them," answered he, referring to the girl's dimples.

Of course that was only the beginning. After that Selden Howard managed almost daily to meet Katherine, or at least to catch a glimpse of her. Her lovely, tired eyes and little, quiet ways appealed to him in an infinitely more tender and real fashion than had those of many a pampered beauty whom he'd met in the course of his varied travels.

One morning Katherine was reading "The House of Mirth" out on the veranda. At least she was supposed to be reading it. In reality she had closed the book, keeping the page marked with her slim forefinger. She had only two days more here in God's green earth, and the lilacs seemed to be calling her imperatively. She had been breathing in lilacs to that extent that her thoughts seemed to be fairly scented with them. All at once an impulse of yielding came to her. Why in the world should she not step over the low hedge and go into the lilac garden?

She did. Bees hung above the purple bloom, and a little attenuated fountain tinkled in the distance. Oh, it was altogether enchanting. Just then a golden eyed sable collie came leisurely down the curved walk to meet her.

"You beauty!" cried the girl exultantly, stooping to pat the dog's queenly head. The collie, with slowly swishing tail, gently kissed her behind the ear.

A commanding whistle from around the turn of the walk, and then:

"Mollie, Mollie, old girl, where are you?" Mollie sat with one ear up, the other down, and collie-wise when perplexed. She loved her master—but also she loved her new found friend.

"Ah!" cried Selden, coming upon them unexpectedly. "But it is beautiful to find you in my garden!" he said, looking gladly upon Katherine. "Do you know, last night I dreamed you were here. You are very, very welcome, little lady."

"You see," she explained helplessly, trying to hide her telltale blushes, "it was the lilacs. They called me."

Suddenly he took both her hands in his and drew her toward the bushes.

"Dear lilacs," he whispered whimsically, "she is here now—on enchanted ground—and we must keep her. You belong to my garden," he added merrily, turning full upon Katherine, "and I will not let you go. The house yonder is very lonely and waits for you. You will stay?"

Her answer? Well, she was a girl and very tired, and he was a man and strong—and it was spring—and they were among the lilacs!

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