

with the approach of the train and then died away as we receded.

I looked at the woman. Her eyes met mine for a second.

"Are they toads?" I questioned.

"Yes."

The face of the young lady as she spoke underwent a remarkable change. Before, there had been a dreary barrenness and a pitiful sadness attached to it. Now it was like the sun peeping through a rift in a very dark cloud. The calm of the face was either the imprint of great sorrow, or it was an error on the part of Nature on a work otherwise nearly perfect.

She had no sooner spoken than the sky beame clouded again. I never knew eyes, lips, cheeks and mouth pass so rapidly and radically from one extreme to the other. There was strange reading between the lines.

Indeed the contrast between the features at rest and the features in motion was the difference between the dark of a dungeon and the light of sunshine.

Nothing more was said for some time, and then the woman continued:

"It is so wearisome waiting for a train."

There was that in her voice to convince me that my companion was the very impersonation of weariness. That was no doubt what ailed her face—it was tired of its outlook. Was she weary of her home, of her life, of her husband, of her baby.

"Yes," I replied. "Especially at night. Do you live in Canoe?"

"No. I live in Salmon Arm."

And then, as often happens with those who meet on trains, we discovered that we had mutual friends in that city. After that we spoke much more freely.

And while we talked the door between the dungeon and the daylight of the woman's face continued to open and close as the occasion warranted.

I began almost to dread the calm of her features while its illuminated surface was like a drink to my thirsting soul. I sought a channel of escape from the dead, motionless, barrenness of the inactive lips, cheeks and eyes. I found it in an effort to make the woman smile and to keep her smiling. The face required light that it might function to please me. I supplied that light by engaging all the genius that I possessed to incite her sense of humor. I threw out my life line and she seemed to grasp it eagerly.

But across the aisle a storm was gathering. I began to notice to my shame and horror that the new situation had rendered the husband more impatient than he appeared when I first saw him. Although this phase was so embarrassing to me, however, it did not effect my companion in the least. Then, why should I worry? I had not created the situation. It had been created by the man's wife herself. I argued myself innocent, but I could not escape a guilty conscience.

From that moment forward I permitted the lady to take the initiative in our perhaps too friendly conversation. I even fell down in the desire to furnish light for the gloom of her dungeon.

"I am going East," I said in reply to her inquiry.

"Oh, what a long way! I am just going to Revelstoke," she said with more weariness that spoke between the lines again.

Was there a tragedy in this woman's life from which she was eager to escape?

"How far East are you going?" was her next inquiry.

"I may visit all the cities before returning. Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, Win_____."

"Oh, lucky you!"

The storm across the aisle became more threatening. There was a volcano within the husband which might burst forth at any moment. He cast wicked glances across at the two of us at alarmingly short intervals. I longed for Revelstoke as Wellington longed for Blucher.

I was still innocent, but the woman was rendering me more guilty in the eyes of her husband and in my own conscience as the intensified moments went by. My magic had deserted me, and the face of the woman reverted more and more to resemble the dismal surface of a desert.

I was about to rise and excuse myself that I might escape a danger that I had been dragged into, for I had no desire to be the means of widening any breach which might already exist between the husband and wife.

But just at that moment the infuriated husband jumped to his feet, hastened down the aisle and disappeared from the car.

In all this there was apparently nothing of an alarming nature to the young woman. She did not see, or pretended not to see the departure of her husband; nor did she once look over to where the baby, most luckily, still slept motionless on the seat.

The storm having passed I regained composure and the old association was renewed again for a time. The young wife seemed anxious to be happy, and I encouraged the sunshine. An hour or more went by.

Suddenly in the midst of the freedom I looked down the aisle and saw the bulky form of the still enraged husband filling the doorway leading into the car. His face betrayed signs of ungovernable temper, and I feared the pent-up storm was about to break over our heads.

Just then the approach to Revelstoke was announced by the trainman.

I maintained a quiet exterior, although inwardly I was none too happy.

"Your husband!" I exclaimed under my breath, for the wife was sitting with her back to him.

"Oh, never mind him."

The husband stood guard until the train stopped at Revelstoke, and then he came savagely forward.

The wife rose from her seat and reached for the lilacs.

"Take the baby," ordered the man with a growl.

Having failed to reach the flowers, the lady turned on him sharply:

"What is the matter with you?" she snapped.

The man picked up the baby meekly. She was no doubt his master.

The wife again reached for the lilacs and the man passed from the car with his fragile bundle.

"Permit me," I said.

The lips blossomed forth for a few moments into the usual rich smile as she accepted the gallantry:

"Thank you."

"The pleasure is all mine," I said.

"I wish I was going east," she continued boldly, as I handed her the flowers.

"Hush."

There was something of resignation and regret in the tone of her voice as the face lapsed back to its desert gloom. She put out her hand:

"Good by."

"Good by."

In a short time the train again plunged into the night.

For many miles I was haunted by that face. What was beneath that smile? What was behind that cloud?