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IN THE LAND OF DREAMS
 By LESTER GRAY
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The setting sun burned through the river mists with lurid smoke. Its dying splendor silhouetted the drooping figure of the girl on the park bench and revealed pitilessly every line of discouragement and weariness.

The lower river walk was quite deserted, and so she kept her sunset vigil alone.

The day had been stifling. In the busy office the whirling fans had brought no breath of coolness. The keys of her machine had felt hot to her fingers, and the lines of typewriting had danced waveringly before her eyes. Somehow, with a strength born of the long ago days of childish freedom in field and wood, she had managed to drag through her work. And now the evening found her here, too weary in mind and body to realize that the river breeze was blowing freshly and the city noises were hushed by distance.

Her face was turned toward the western hills, already shadowed by the approach of night. Her fevered glance seemed to pass beyond them and see the peaceful valleys where rippling grain murmured in the night wind, where in the thickets by the splashing brook came the last faint calls of sleepy birds and drowsy cattle lay in the lush bottom grass.

The girl saw clearly, for in just such a valley she had once lived. She had waded in that clear brook and laughed joyously at her image mirrored in its flower fringed pools. Hark! That was the note of the whippoorwill. Faint and still more faintly it sounded. The scent of the evening primrose was in the air. Its sweetness was overpowering. Her head fell forward on her breast. She had fainted.

She looked around her dizzily. Her face and hair were wet and her head

arm. "Is there no one left there who loves you," she asked softly—"no one who wants you to come back?"

She almost thought he had not heard the question, he sat so silently looking at the water rippling in the moonlight. Or perhaps he was angry. If she could recall her words.

Suddenly he caught his breath thickly, as if to choke back a sob. "Yes, there is one," he half whispered—"my mother."

Again the silence fell. Then the girl spoke. She did not look at him. He almost had to bend to hear the low monotone of repressed feeling.

"My mother! She has been dead these three months, but I—I did not appreciate her when she was alive. I was dissatisfied with the calm of my quiet country home. I wanted the glitter and the glare of the city. I forgot that she needed me, and I came here. Of course I meant to make a home for her, but that did not come first—no, my own pleasure came first. And when I was gone she faded day by day. I was all she had, so there was no one to tell me. I wrote of gay times with new friends, and she was too loving to worry me with complaints. Then one day the word came she was very ill; I must go to her at once. She had been down for several hours when I threw myself down beside her. It was too late—too late to hear her dear voice whisper that she had forgiven me."

Great tears were slowly rolling down her cheeks. There were tears in the man's eyes, too, but they shone with the light of new resolution.

"You have shown me your heart to-night, little girl," he said huskily, "and I thank you. You have shown me what I must do. I will go back to-night at once. I will face the shame and live it down for her sake."

The girl had forgotten her own pain in joy for another. His mother would have her own again. She stood up and held out her hand in goodby. She must not keep him a moment; his mother was waiting.

"You will go back and be a man for her sake," she said firmly.

"For her sake," he repeated, "and—for you."

And one day her land of dreams became reality.



SHE LAID HER HAND IMPLOINGLY ON HIS ARM.

lay back on a man's arm. Yet she felt neither fear nor surprise. The peace of her dream was still upon her, and her lips half parted in a smile.

The man had been gazing down wonderingly.

"Don't be frightened," he said gently, "You were tired and faint, I was close by and came to you. Rest quietly."

The girl lay back passively. Realities were still dim uncertainties to her; conventionalities but a part of the forgotten heat and burden of the day. The moon had risen, and in its white light her small face looked very pure and childish.

After awhile the man spoke again, hesitatingly, apologetically: "I sat down some time ago, but you did not seem to notice me. You were too busy watching the sunset. Your face was transfixed. Where were you then?"

"I was in the land of dreams," she answered softly—"in the land of long ago. It is far away from the hurrying crowds, the noise and the heat of this great city, and there one never knows weariness and heart hunger. I know, for I was there once."

"Why do you not go back?" he asked.

"I cannot. Those who loved me and whom I loved are all dead. There is no place for me there."

The light of peace had faded from her face, for a sickening sense of reality had come to her as she spoke. But she had caught the note of bitterness in the man's voice, and now she turned to him, eagerly, gratefully. The moonlight showed a handsome young face, worn and haggard, its beauty dimmed by the too plain marks of dissipation. In the dark eyes was the shadow of despair. But the girl's face only softened into pity.

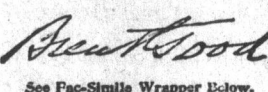
"Where is your dream country?" she asked wistfully.

He shrank a little from her clear gaze. Then he shrugged his shoulders with reckless nonchalance. "Oh, I am not as lucky as you. I dare not even dream of my country, much less go back." And he laughed bitterly.

"Then you mean you are afraid to go back?"

"Afraid? No!" he cried passionately, as though stung by her words. "I do not wish to go back. What's the use? I have burned my bridges behind me."

She laid her hand imploringly on his

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A SENSE OF HUMOR.

IT IS A POTENT FACTOR IN KEEPING LIFE SWEET TO THE END.

One Need Not Be a Youngster In Mere Years to Have and Enjoy Fun. Age May Be Made as Green, as Jolly and as Gay as Giggling Youth.

"Take your fun while you may; you'll never be young but once," is a popular fallacy. It presupposes two things—that the young, because of youth, must have fun and that as soon as it is passed the capacity for enjoying it is over.

Some never grow old, and some are never young. Age lies in the individual and is not a question of dates.

Because a person ceases to be able to giggle at every remark, to bubble over with gleefulness at the slightest provocation, is no criterion that real mirthfulness has fled. The delicate sense of humor that may take the place of this showy buoyancy is far more to be prized.

A sense of humor is a potent factor in keeping life sweet to the end. A green and jolly old age is as jolly as a gay youth.

A sense of humor can be cultivated, and it should be as assiduously as forbearance, kindness or any of the cardinal virtues.

With the slipping away of youth despair asserts itself only when it is thought joy and mirth must flee also.

Are we sure that youth is so positively happy as it is supposed to be? Is there not a restlessness, an uncertainty, in the steps of a young girl that causes anxiety to be mingled with every move? She is full of theories, is imbued with ideals, but how to obtain the desired ends is a mooted question. She can never be as securely happy as is the married woman, or unmarried, who has, as it were, found her feet surely and knows how to get what she wants, or, at least, knows what she wants to get. There is a restless looking forward for pleasures each day, an unhappy killing of time before some promised joy arrives in the young that all who have passed it can painfully remember.

Girls are so imbued by the thoughtless, with the idea that all joy ceases with youth, that they have a feeling of commiseration for those who have bid farewell to this ephemeral period. Little do they realize how the study of all life, the enlarged power to feel, to see, to bear, to live, to enjoy, is the priceless gift of every added year.

There is something pitiful in watching the nervous grasp at joy in youth. We see constantly young girls literally afraid to loosen their hold on one day or one pleasure to fulfill an act of simple duty.

There is a not unfamiliar story of a young girl in a ballroom who was stopped as she walked about the floor on the arm of one of her partners by an old family friend, who inquired, with interest, for her mother.

"My dear, I'm glad I saw you," he repeated. "How's your mother?"

No reply. She only clung to the arm on which she leaned and was hastening by when the old gentleman, seeing her fear lest her escort should slip away, laid his hand on the young man's coat collar.

"My dear, I'll hold him," he cried, twinkling his eye wickily. "How's your mother?"

He was not a very nice old gentleman, perhaps, but that he got a full share of fun out of life none could doubt, and the attitude of the young girl, holding fast to her prize lest he should escape, is exactly the attitude of youth that looks to the early days for all its share of joy.

I was in a group of young unmarried women, some nearing thirty, others who had just overstepped this critical date. They were expressing in graphic language their sensitiveness about their age.

I have taken some pains to hunt up statistics about the attractions and accomplishments of women who were past this age which I commend to their perusal. In the first place novelists are taking women between thirty and forty for their heroines. It is the woman who dares to have thoughts and has cultivated herself to the point of expressing them who commands friends and lovers who are worth while.

Helen of Troy was over forty when she perpetrated the most famous elopement on record, and as the siege of Troy lasted twenty years she could not have been very juvenile when the ill fortune of Paris restored her to her husband, who, it is said, received her with love and gratitude.

Cleopatra was past thirty when Antony fell under her spell, and her fascinations for him had not lessened when she died ten years later.

Pericles wedded Aspasia at the age of thirty-six, and she wielded undisputed influence over men for thirty years afterward.

Livia was thirty-three when she won the love of Augustus, over whom she maintained her ascendancy to the last. Louis XIV. wedded Mme. Maintenon when she was forty-three years of age. Ninon, a celebrated beauty and wit of her day in France, captivated the love of the Abbe de Beras at the age of seventy-three.

Anna of Austria was thirty-eight when Buckingham and Richelieu were her devoted and jealous admirers.

There are women ready to die of senile debility at forty and women who first begin to taste the full perfection of womanhood's development at that age.

It may be noted in passing that old age must be full of mortification if the ghosts of wickedly spent time haunt the mind.—Susan W. Ball in Terre Haute Gazette.

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