

possible that my necktie was fringing the top of my collar? A dignified movement of my hand assured me that I need have no fear on that score.

The awkwardness of my position was relieved somewhat when the conductor came round for the fares. My young lady, whilst fumbling in her purse for a ticket, dropped a small parcel, which she was carrying. I was down like a shot before the conductor could stir, and, as I handed it to her, she cast one quick flash into my eyes, and blushing deeply, "Thank you, so much," she said, in a low, sweet voice.

The blushing on her part rather surprised me, though, of course, I took it as a very favorable sign, and felt somewhat encouraged. I began to consider that I had the advantage and was no longer afraid to look at her. I made a careful examination of her features, and apart from her extreme beauty, I decided that she must be very intellectual. In fact I discovered that I had almost fallen in love with my fair unknown.

This condition of affairs continued for some time, and I was growing anxious for fear that the end of the ride would come and find me no further advanced. I longed for something to happen, which would break down the barrier between us. If she would only drop that parcel again, or ask me some question, or do anything, except sit with her eyes cast down.

All of a sudden my desires were fulfilled in a startling, unforeseen manner. Whilst the car was bowling up the hill at a lively rate, and when we least expected it, the lights went out, the speed of the car slackened, and we came to a standstill. For a moment, all was blank darkness. Then, as the dim light from outside shone into the car, I began to discern the outlines of the passengers. A man at the far end of the car, who knew all about it, informed us in a very audible voice: "Power's off." Then I heard a boy behind me whisper softly, "Tell us somethin' we don't know." I felt as if I had been transported to a shadow-world. A sullen chilly silence settled on the passengers. This lasted for a seemingly endless time, till at length a man yawned audibly, and set the whole car into a titter. This served to put everybody into a good humor again, and tongues wagged freely. Now was my chance! How darkness emboldens us! But, do you ask, was I going to take a cowardly advantage of the darkness to speak to a young lady whom I did not know? Yes, I was.

I made a slight movement, bent down towards her, and remarked boldly, "This delay is very awkward, isn't it?"

Her face was shaded by a large hat, so that I could not mark the immediate effect of my words upon her, but her answer was frank and free.

"Yes, indeed! And it must surely be very tiring for you to stand up all this time. Won't you change places?"

"Oh, no! I wouldn't think of it!" I expostulated, as she made a motion to rise.

Then, to change the subject, I added, "Have you much farther to go?"

"Quite a long distance, and I am too tired to walk, or I would. I hope we won't be kept long?"

"I hope so, too," I answered. "I don't mind so much for myself, for I consider it quite a joke but, I suppose you want to get home."

"Yes, indeed, I do," she replied, emphatically, "And I can't see what pleasure you see in it?"

Then I grew very bold. "Why, it's a very great pleasure to me to be talking to you."

She gave a queer little laugh, as I said this, and I saw that she was looking at me curiously.

"You speak quite as if we were old friends, and—dear me—we haven't even been introduced."

"I don't think in our case we need any introduction," I answered, insinuatingly.

"Don't you?"

"Why, no! When you come to think of it, an introduction is nothing but a form. And, believe me, when you came into the car, I felt as if I had known you all my life."

"That's strange, isn't it?"

The absolute candor of her answer suddenly reminded me that I was going too far. The magic influence, which played around her, had been overcoming me. I was head over ears in love.

"Please don't be offended at what I say," I continued, regardless of all around me. "I really mean every word of it."

Hardly had I uttered the last sentence, than to the infinite delight of everyone, except myself, the lights shone out again, the bell rang, and we were off once more. The interior of the car resumed its former appearance, the shadows became human beings, and my young lady emerged fairer than ever. She looked up at me and smiled—such a bewitching smile! Her eyes lit up so brilliantly, and the dimples in her cheek were superb. I thought I read a depth of meaning in that smile. Might it not be love at first sight? Unfortunately the return of the light took away all my boldness, and we conversed on very ordinary topics until we approached my corner. Then I made one more effort.

"I hope I shall see you soon, again? Perhaps—an appointment?"

"Why, of course," and she blushed deeper than ever. "My address is 73 Blank Street, and you may come as often as you like in the evening. Come for tea, you know. My husband knows so few young men that I am sure he would be pleased to see you."

Words cannot express the consternation which overwhelmed my mind at this disclosure. Thank goodness, I was able to control my feelings, before she looked up again. I knew she felt ashamed of the way she had treated me, but it was too late to mend. The car stopped, I said goodnight, and got off, a miserable man.

"Let this be a lesson to you, my boy," I said to myself, on the way home. "Beware of beautiful women, they're like spiders."

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