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The Other One

Written for The Western Home Monthly, by S. Jean Walker, Edmonton, Alta.

DR. Harvey Graham had barely time to swing himself on the moving train, but he did it and laughed victoriously at the porter's grinning exclamation, "You nearly got left that time, Boss."

In his first rapid glance on entering the coach every seat appeared to be taken, but on scanning the condition the second time he saw a place at the opposite end where he thought he might possibly find room. In a moment he was asking, apparently, of the morning paper that concealed the face behind, "Is this seat occupied?"

A careless but courteous "No" came from behind the paper.

The voice seemed agreeably familiar, and as though in answer to his mental wish the paper was lowered.

"Miss Hastings." "Dr. Graham" was the surprised exclamation from each, followed by a quick hand clasp.

"This is really most unexpected good fortune," Dr. Graham said delightedly as he sat down beside her. "For I thought you were in Europe. Then to walk straight to you. There must have been some pleasant psychic power controlling me."

"You have been too self-engrossed" she coolly told him. Her words seemed like a challenge flung over the barrier of years. He instinctively felt it so, and quickly replied in self-defense, "No, not that, but I have been too eternally hurried running the race to get within sight of my goal to keep in line with other things."

"And so you threw aside the weights that might hinder you."

Her tone and manner puzzled him. Her old-time friendliness seemed to have vanished. He felt the conventional restriction, and chafed at its being there, yet a self-inflicting conscience chided him. His decision that had seemed the only wise and common sense one to make loomed up in a different perspective now. He did not reply, so she asked in a cool, level, colorless voice that irritated him, yet he would have been baffled to explain why it did, "Have you won?"

Concealing his chagrin at being thrust back upon calm acquaintanceship he replied in a matter-of-fact way, "as far as obtaining my degree, and being in a position to work up a good practice is concerned, I have won, but—"



The Winnipeg Hunt Club, St. Vital

"Oh, a mere coincidence, most likely." She remarked carelessly. Then added: "You evidently do not read the papers if you thought that I was still in Europe."

He felt a covert rebuke in her words and hastened to explain: "Oh yes, I do read them, but never the personal column. I did not think that it would have anything to interest me, and see what I have missed."

"When did you return?" He tried to speak conventionally, but the undertone of gladness could not be concealed.

"Two weeks ago," she answered with quiet indifference.

"Why," he returned with a slightly wondering element in his voice. "I passed your home a week ago, and it was not lighted, so I naturally concluded that you had not returned."

"Well we had," she explained. "But father and mother went at once to see sister Kate and her husband, while I went to visit an old friend in Lenwood who was very curious to hear all about my travels. We had a good old time talk. Possibly you may remember her, Jennie Elgie. She is now Mrs. Grant, wife of the Presbyterian minister there."

"Yes I do remember her," he said. "I was out West when she married. I have lost trace of so many of my acquaintances that I shall have to take a few lessons in modern history before I become eligible to meet them without wounding their feelings by not recognizing them."

"And are you not satisfied?" she interrupted, surprise and sarcasm blending in her voice.

"No I am not satisfied," he returned passionately, and his tone emphatically declared that his decision had been made before her question suggested it. "I have other sweeter, dearer dreams than this," he continued, "but—but the realization of them is so improbable that I almost despair of succeeding."

Something in his voice and manner precluded further questionings, or possibly her courtesy, subjugated her curiosity, but for some reason she made no reply, while something on the flying landscape appeared to demand her attention.

"How does Mrs. Grant like living in Lenwood?" he asked, feeling that the conversation should be maintained rather than this unexplainable silence and reserve should continue.

Miss Hastings turned from the window, and her reply was prefaced by a low reminiscent laugh. "I never saw her more wonderfully alive. Her husband, home, baby and church activities keep her happy and busy. She is the most satisfied woman of my acquaintance. In fact, I am secretly envying her."

"You are," he echoed, much amused at this confession.

"Which of the four things did you envy most?"

"Oh, not any of them in particular." She hastened to explain. "Just the general happiness and satisfaction of the combination."