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# CASTORIA

THE CENTAUR COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

## A MISTAKE

But It Made No Difference In the End

By LESTER ROWLAND

"Good night, darling!"

I had got into my berth in a sleeping car. It was late, and I was one of the last to retire. The lamps were turned low. Suddenly the curtains were divided. I could see the outline of a woman's head and bust leaning over me. A pair of lips were pressed against mine.

"Oh, heavens!" in the same voice as the "good night, darling."

Evidently the lady had expected to find the waxen lips of a child and had met instead the mustached lips of a man. Of course she had simply mistaken the berth. There are many such mistakes on sleeping cars, and it is a wonder there are not more. The moment one leaves his section at night when the curtains are all hung every curtain looks the same, and if he goes to the end of the car and returns he is lost in a wilderness of drapery. Perhaps the lady felt her mistake—in the dark she couldn't see it—before her lips touched mine, but a slight curve in the track threw her in my direction, and they were pressed down upon mine in an unintentional long drawn kiss—a kiss that neither of us could help, but to me a delicious kiss, so delicious that I lay awake half the night thinking about it.

The car was occupied by through passengers, and I believed I should in the morning find the lady who had said "good night, darling," and had given me that delicious kiss. I did not think she would likely know whom she had kissed, but fancied that I should be able to single her out from among the other women on the car. I could hear a child's voice in the next section, and doubtless the lady had intended to kiss the child good night.

Hardly had the berth near me been made up in the morning when I began my observations. In the section where I had heard the child's voice sat a little girl of ten, a young lady of twenty and a nursemaid. In the section next mine on the other side sat an elderly couple. There was but the one young woman near me, and though it had been too dark for me to see her the night before, I could not, at least I would not, believe that she was old. I listened for the sound of the voice of the lady who sat with the little girl, and the moment I heard it I knew it belonged to her who had said, "Good night, darling."

There were two of us in my section, I, who had occupied the lower berth, and a man who had slept in the upper berth. There was no reason to suppose that the young lady knew which slept below. Whether she knew that she had kissed one of us I had no means of knowing. It was quite possible that she had located the section after the mishap. I determined that she should not suspect from any betrayal of mine that I was the fortunate possessor of the lost kiss.

She was sitting with her back to me, and I could only see her side face when she turned to speak to the child who sat beside her. I was pleased to notice that the profile was attractive. I arose and went into a forward car for no reason in the world than to have a look at her full face when I returned. When I did return from the moment I opened the car door till I had passed her she was looking out through the window.

In this she made a mistake. In such matters between the sexes we find clues in very small things, just as the detectives do. By refusing me a single glance the lady caused me to suspect that she had made some progress in learning whom she had kissed. Women are far more adept at finding out such things than men, and there was no more reason why I should have located her as the one who made the blunder than that she should have located me as the one who had profited by it.

I was very glad to notice that the trio—the lady, the little girl and the nurse—had settled themselves for a long journey. They had a hamper containing food dainties sufficient for several days' journey. My lady settled herself down in a graceful and easy position. The little girl arranged her toilet for comfort, and there was every indication that they were there to stay. I had high hopes that I should be able to occupy the same car with them all the way to San Francisco, whither I was bound. But how should I get acquainted, for if I must refrain from a word with my lady what would it profit me?

It was not long before I saw the tickets of the party in whom I was interested and that they were the same as mine. I therefore had no occasion to hurry an acquaintance, but I formed my plans for one. As a good general will attack the weakest point, so did I. The little girl could not remain all the while in her section and soon began to race through the car, joining another child about the same age. I began on the other child, offering her fruits and sweetmeats, finally extending my gifts to the object through whom I desired to act. I offered her a large juicy pear. She put her little hand on it covetously, looking at me as though wondering if she might accept it, then ran away to her

guardian, and I knew she was telling of the offer and asking if she might take the gift. The lady did not look around, but the child came back to me and took the pear. I had gained nothing, the lady having, perhaps purposely, avoided any knowledge of the person to whom the child was indebted.

During the journey I laid every conceivable plan for making the lady's acquaintance and carried out many of them. She blocked every advance I made, not pointedly, but so adroitly that I had no reason to think she was doing so intentionally. When we reached San Francisco I was obliged to part with her without having had a word with her. She went off into the great world, leaving me entirely ignorant of where I might find her and with the probability that I would never meet her again.

I tried to forget the words and the kiss, but in spite of my efforts to drive both out of my head they remained there to tantalize me. It had never occurred to me how delicious it would be if some lovely woman should bend down over me and bid me "good night, darling," sealing the words with a kiss. I had been unconscious of what I had failed to enjoy. I had supposed bachelor life to be the contented state for a man to live in—no cares, no curtain lectures, no obligation to take a woman out to theaters, operas, social functions. And now, without being even engaged, I had been introduced to a momentary bliss such as is a married man's continuous possession.

Several years passed during which influenced by this incident, I tried to settle my mind upon some young woman that she might repeat my experience in the sleeping car. But if there is one thing beyond our control it is love. I met excellent young women, many of whom would have honored me by marrying me, but I did not want any of them.

One summer I was at a hotel in the country, crowded with guests. It was evening, and I stood at the foot of a stairway, about to part with a little niece of mine who was going upstairs to bed.

"Good night, darling," I said as I bent down and kissed her. A lady standing with her back to me turned and faced me. Her eyes and mine met. She flushed scarlet. She was the lady who had kissed me.

The blush gave me information that I was very glad to receive. It told me that the lady had known while on the journey that I was the man she had kissed. It told me that she had remembered me. While we stood gazing at each other I was not troubling myself what to do in the matter. I simply smiled. Something like a smile came to her lips.

"Your face is familiar to me," I said. "I think we have met before."

"You must be mistaken. I have no recollection."

Evidently she was too much for her. She stopped short.

"My memory is better than yours," I said. "We were on the same train traveling to San Francisco. A little girl was with you about the same age as the child I have just bidden good-night. I succeeded in scraping an acquaintance with her, but failed in attempting to do the same with you. I esteem myself fortunate in meeting you again and trust you may not take flight before I find some mutual friend to introduce me."

"It isn't necessary. I know a gentleman when I see one."

This was very nice of her, but would seem to be not consistent with efforts to avoid me while on the train with her. However I had no mind to find fault with my good fortune and with the remark that I should do myself the honor and the pleasure to see her again, not wishing to risk anything by haste, I bowed politely and passed on.

But my heart was light. I had found her who had been in my thoughts for several years. I was in the same hotel with her, and I vowed that she should not again escape me. But I did not propose to risk anything by putting off getting a better hold of the situation. I found her sitting on the veranda the next morning chatting with a friend of mine. I joined them.

"Will you kindly present me?" I asked of the mutual acquaintance in a formal tone.

A smile dawned on the lips that had kissed mine and broadened perceptibly. Perhaps there was something in the formality of the matter that seemed ludicrous to her in contrast with the unconventional incident that had occurred at our first meeting.

But that bit of unconventionality I refrained not only from mentioning, but gave her no hint whatever by which she could identify me as the man who had taken part in it. My object was to create an uncertainty in her mind as to my being the person she had kissed, thinking that sooner or later she would throw out feelers on the subject.

It was not long before she did so. She began by remarking upon the inconvenience of sleeping cars. I said that I had usually found them very comfortable. She tried me again far more directly by asking me if I had ever had any singular experience in a sleeping car. I couldn't remember any such.

I had gone to the hotel in question to spend a week, but I stayed a month—a most delightful period, during which the sun must have shone very bright, for I certainly made a luxurious crop of hay. That was some years ago, and I have since had many good nights sealed with kisses. While I admit they are still enjoyable, none have ever had the favor of that first one to which I had no right. Stolen fruit may be sweetest, but I found mistaken fruit still more to my taste.

But not till I had taken my first kiss did I admit that she had taken her first already.

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**D. & H. CO. TIME TABLE---HONESDALE BRANCH**

In Effect June 30, 1912.

A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	STATIONS	P.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.	P.M.
8:30	10:00	10:00	4:30	Albany	2:00	10:00	10:30	10:30	10:30	10:30	10:30	10:30
8:50	10:20	10:20	6:05	Binghamton	12:40	8:45	10:50	10:50	10:50	10:50	10:50	10:50
9:15	10:45	10:45	6:30	Philadelphia	4:05	7:45	8:15	8:15	8:15	8:15	8:15	8:15
9:45	11:15	11:15	7:10	Wilkes-Barre	9:35	2:55	7:25	12:55	10:05	10:05	10:05	10:05
10:15	11:45	11:45	7:35	Scranton	8:45	3:15	6:30	12:05	9:15	9:15	9:15	9:15
10:45	12:15	12:15	8:10	Carbondale	8:05	1:35	5:50	11:25	8:27	8:27	8:27	8:27
11:15	12:45	12:45	8:35	Lincoln Avenue	7:54	1:25	5:40	11:14	8:17	8:17	8:17	8:17
11:45	1:15	1:15	9:04	Whites	7:50	1:21	5:34	11:10	8:13	8:13	8:13	8:13
12:15	1:45	1:45	9:29	Quigley	7:39	1:08	5:24	10:50	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00
12:45	2:15	2:15	9:54	Farview	7:25	1:03	5:19	10:30	7:54	7:54	7:54	7:54
1:15	2:45	2:45	10:19	Canaan	7:10	12:56	5:11	10:15	7:39	7:39	7:39	7:39
1:45	3:15	3:15	10:44	Lake Lodore	7:19	12:51	5:06	10:09	7:11	7:11	7:11	7:11
2:15	3:45	3:45	11:09	Waymart	7:17	12:49	5:04	10:07	7:08	7:08	7:08	7:08
2:45	4:15	4:15	11:34	Kesee	7:12	12:43	4:58	10:02	7:03	7:03	7:03	7:03
3:15	4:45	4:45	12:04	Stevens	7:06	12:40	4:55	10:00	7:01	7:01	7:01	7:01
3:45	5:15	5:15	12:29	Prompton	7:05	12:36	4:51	10:05	7:06	7:06	7:06	7:06
4:15	5:45	5:45	12:54	Fortenia	7:01	12:32	4:47	10:01	7:02	7:02	7:02	7:02
4:45	6:15	6:15	1:24	Seeleyville	6:58	12:28	4:44	10:05	7:18	7:18	7:18	7:18
5:15	6:45	6:45	1:49	Honesdale	6:55	12:25	4:40	10:05	7:15	7:15	7:15	7:15

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WAYNE COUNTY.

Libel in Divorce.

No. 142 Jan. Term, 1912.

EDGAR W. DODGE, Libellant,

vs.

HATTIE DODGE, Respondent.

To HATTIE DODGE: You are hereby required to appear in the said Court on the third Monday in October, to answer the complaint

exhibited to the judge of said court by Edgar W. Dodge, your husband, in the cause above stated, or in default thereof a decree of divorce as prayed for in said complaint may be made against you in your absence.

F. C. KIMBLE, Sheriff.

Searle & Salmon, Attorneys.

Honesdale, Aug. 13, 1912. 65W4

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