

# The Face in the Moon.

(Gleason Murdock in the Continuation.)

What had all observed for some time that Tom Eaton had been unlike himself. Originally a good-natured sort of chap, without much facility in painting, to be sure, but with any amount of ambition, he had pleased himself with the one or two pictures that had been accepted by the hanging committee and the innumerable rejections he had sustained at their hands, seemed at last to have really turned his temper. He grew blue, sombre, now and again gruff, and singularly loquacious on the subject of his art. He would orate by the hour on theories of painting, and was sometimes ingenious, if obscure. He was talking to Gleason Turner about him one day, and Gleason, who deals in caustic speeches, said: "Sum up, Tom Eaton, and he is a good example of a limited man with an unlimited ambition. He was supposed to have great talent, and started out in life under the impression that he was a genius. He lived in this dream for a while; now he is waking up, and he is only an ordinary sort of man like the rest of us. It makes him mad, or if he is not mad, he soon will be," if he goes about with his notions and talk.

A week or so later, Eaton monopolized an evening at the Kit-Kat club by giving us his new views on art. Art meant only portraiture. Everything else, from still life up to landscape, was a mere accessory. He really dived on with his thought, though his words flew fast enough, and I felt as if he were killing his friendships as I glanced about the room and saw numerous indications of suppressed yawns.

It was so. Gleason Turner said: "Eaton has rung his own death-knell. He belongs in an insane asylum, not in an art club." "I really think his brain is cracked," suggested Bob Langley. "They say he has an uncle who—"

But some one broke in with tidings of a new model, and we dropped Tom Eaton. I do not believe I gave the fellow a thought again until he chanced upon me the next summer while I was staying in an out-of-the-way village in Maine, on a sketching excursion. One day, in July, I stumbled upon Eaton sitting out under his umbrella, painting.

"Hello, old man! given up portraits?" I called, remembering by the association of ideas his talk the last time I saw him.

"No, this is a portrait," and he turned his easel toward me to display a most indifferent figure of an Irish woman with a basket in her hand.

He held his brush idly for a moment, and then looked up at me quickly.

"I have come here to see you," he said abruptly. "I heard you were here, and I was rowing with you to-night! I have some thing to say to you—a secret. I have come all this distance to find you, for say it I must—"

"I will confess to a vague remembrance of Eaton's queer ways, but I am not a bad fellow, and was, moreover, a trifle flattered at this proof of confidence and friendship, so I consented.

"At 8 P. M. he asked: "At 8 P. M. I answered: "Meet me here at this point if you will, I shall be busy until then, and I do not care to see you and tattle that over nothing which my secret chokes in my throat."

He laughed uneasily. "In love," thought I, "and I shall be in a boat and listen to descriptions of her beauties and her charms all night. Heigh-ho!"

At 8 o'clock precisely I had reached the point, but Eaton was there before me sitting in the boat, ears in hand, paddling about uneasily. He had pulled up his coat, and he was a fine, brawny fellow. I looked at him with some admiration.

"What a Hercules you are!" I cried. "And what a crab, a turtle, are you! Get in."

If I was cool, so was he. I must try to get back, unseethe the fixed idea that anchored his wild fancy and gave him this terrible strength of purpose.

"A woman's face would have been better," I suggested. "Something really pretty about that, now! Ah, look there!" I cried, an idea striking me, and pointing as I cried out to the moon mirrored in the water. She had risen, but had been cut off from us in the heavens by a ledge of rock on our left, just behind the boat. The picture swam before my eyes, and full and full in the water. "Look there!"

"What do you see?" cried Eaton, his voice trembling with excitement, his whole body eagerly lent forward.

"A woman's face in the moon in the waves!" I called, gazing fixedly as if at a vision. "What a brooding face! What shadowy hair! What slow smile! And her eyes! Ah! do you see her eyes! She has opened them! Have you killed her?"

"I swear to you, no!" cried Eaton. "I swear to you, no! I know no such woman! I have never killed her! I have not even broken her heart! Tell me more about her!"

"She is young, very mystical, yet very real, with a smile at one side of her mouth, while the other side is a stern, almost a frown. This was a characteristic of Anita's mouth, and it was she I was describing—Anita as I fancied her grown older, for I had not seen her, scarcely indeed thought of her, since that day when we were children."

"It's a pity you can't paint her for me," said Eaton impetuously, as he gazed at the moon. "I don't quite see her, but she sounds great."

"I might try to paint her to-morrow," I suggested, taking a cigarette from my pocket, and relapsing into my calm manner again.

"You forget—to-morrow will be too late. But you shall paint her to-night—now, before I kill you."

He put up his oars as he spoke and came toward me, drawing a rope through his hands. He was a fine fellow, with a wild excitement, and I felt my light, airy manner slipping away as he approached. I was still as a statue, my eyes fixed on his face, and I felt as if I were in a dream.

"I was introduced to the aunt in black. My father had been one of the old family friends. So in a few moments I was talking like an old friend myself. Mrs. Grayson touched on my recent loss, and then, as I turned to leave, said: "I would be glad to know your father's son. Can you dine with us on Sunday next?"

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Those golden gates were opened for me, and Sundays came and Sundays went, and I was faithful, and my father was proud of me. I could not talk. I heard a good deal of music, and I suppose—black and blue—read poetry. Fatal habit of lovers. And so at last it came to the point when I must tell her. Armed with a sheet of music, I went to her aunt's drawing-room one Sunday again toward twilight. A day in April it was, and spring was in the air.

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