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SENSATIONS OF SAM

By Elliot Walker

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To the casual observer the personal appearance of Sam was far from prepossessing. He was too long, too thin, too red of hair, countenance and neck. From beneath bristling eyebrows of a sandy hue gleamed a pair of small eyes, unnaturally blue and bright. There was a significance about Sam's expression. He impressed a stranger as one who would get mad easily, and, worse, strike violently if irritated. This was an error, as Sam was as mild as milk. His voice, too, was against him. It held a low, thunderous quality, most alarming when taken in connection with other apparent attributes of temper.

If John Simpson, on whose farm Sam assiduously labored, told his menial that a man was fishing in the posted brook in the meadow, Sam went over right away and made what to him seemed a polite and gentlemanly request to depart from forbidden ground.

One invitation always sufficed, unless the angler appeared to know Sam. In that case a parley ensued and the bellicose looking guardian returned to his master with one invariable report:

"Ain't ketchin' nothin'! Won't do no harm, I guess."

If Mr. Simpson, a little man whose lower teeth overlapped what was left of the upper ones, thought differently he would sometimes interview the trespasser with a horsewhip. It depended upon mood and a careful calculation of the offender's probable physical activity; but this has nothing to do with Lura Belle Wilcox.

Miss Wilcox, who was short, dark and vivacious, now came over three times a week and assisted Mrs. Simpkins, who a month before had unfortunately sprained her thumb in an effort to use that member as a staff to her 187 pounds when she fell down the back stairs. The thumb after proving its incapacity in the sustaining relation immediately swelled to twice its natural size.

Sam at the first introduction bent his eyes upon the piquant features of Miss Wilcox in a glare of admiration. Lura shrank. Then he spoke. Lura visibly shuddered. It was not until Sam smiled that she recovered her equanimity and appetite, both unquestionably good.

The smile of Sam was remarkable for good nature and extension. It came quickly and quivered away just this side of his ears, transfiguring his repellent aspect to one of unbounded amity and good will.

Before this transformation steadied the nerves of Lura she mentally decided that it would take just fifteen minutes for unalterable arrangements of

"HOLD ON!" EXPOSTULATED MISS WILCOX, RETAINING HIS HAND.

departure. After three of these bewildering facial displays she admitted to herself that Sam was not a bad looking man.

Their social status was about on a par. Lura Belle worked out. Sam worked round. The distinction was practically invisible, the odds if any being in favor of Miss Wilcox.

Sentiment had never troubled the healthy makeup of Samuel. He simply craved universal liking without regard to sex. Nothing was ever any trouble, and it is unnecessary to state that he was kept busy.

Lura Belle had a dream book and when Sam let fall his load in the wood box was consulting it studiously in the twilight by the window.

"Ye'll spoil them black eyes of yourn," growled the man humorously, brushing bits of bark from his arm. "What yer got thar?"

"A dream book," replied Miss Wilcox coyly, putting the volume behind her. "Nothin' ter int'rest ye, I guess."

"What's it fer? Ter cure nightmares?" Sam shifted over to the window in curiosity.

"Gracious, no! It tells what's goin' ter happen from the dreams a person has, an' all about signs."

"Gee! Thet ain't a bad idee. Anything in it about cures fer mean feelin's? I'm a-lookin' fer somethin' of thet sort."

"I—I guess so," hesitated the girl. "What sort of feelin's? Pains?"

"Waal, not exactly pains. It's a kinder goneness comes over me lately about in the pit of my stomach. 'Tain't really unpleasant, but sorter weakenin'. I'm a noticin' of it now."

"I'll look it up," said Miss Wilcox with a comprehensive glance. "Go on about yer chores. If ye ever hev any dreams I'll tell yer thar meanin'."

"Hev 'em ev'ry night 'most," grinned Sam, going out, "but ye hunt in perticler fer this feelin' thet's botherin' me. It kinder ketches my breath."

Lura Belle gazed after him serenely. "Ain't he a fool?" she thought with a rapturous smile. "I see what was allin' him ten days ago. Dear me! I'm afraid I've ketched the same trouble. Waal! I'm the one fer him. He hadn't orter be playin' 'fetch an' carry' fer Simpson—a smart man like him. With my $400 in the bank an' me he'd hev a farm of his own purty soon. Jest wait till tomorrer night."

"Hev any dreams?" she inquired coquettishly the following evening. "Set down. The old folks is upstairs."

"Waal, I did," returned Sam, smiling, "an' a good one. 'Twas about a calf runnin' round a lot an' buntin' his head. Did ye look up thet other thing? It's worried me bad terday."

Lura peeked in her book. "Here 'tis," she announced solemnly. "Oneasy sensation; onexpected sighin'; warm an' cold creepin's"—

"Thet's the article!" cried Sam, pulling his chair nearer. "Ye've got it, Lura Belle. Kin ye read by thet light?"

"Oh, yes. Lemme see—sign of a distressed heart."

"Gosh!" ejaculated the startled sufferer. "My gran'ther died of heart disease."

"You won't, I guess," consoled his adviser. "Lemme take yer hand a minute. Thar!" running her fingers across the great red palm. "Life line's good fer forty years, barrin' accidents. Feel any wuss?"

"By cracky, I do!" exclaimed Sam anxiously. "My heart is a-beatin' now, I tell ye. I'm goin' ter see a doctor right away."

"Hold on!" expostulated Miss Wilcox, retaining the formidable hand. "Ye dreamed of a calf runnin' an' huntin'. Here 'tis. Thet's a sign—oh, my!" bending her eyes on the page. "What a queer—waal, I s'pose I'll hev ter read it. It says—it says"—

"Go ahead!" cried Samuel. "I must be goin'."

"It says," went on the exponent of mysticism in a trancelike tone, "thet the dreamer weds a maiden short, plump an' of lovin' disposition, dark hair an' eyes, pug nose, red cheeks an'—an'—a leetle mole on the left corner of her chin."

"Lura Belle, thet's ye!" gasped the man in an illumination of joy and astonishment.

He reached out a long arm and drew her to him.

Miss Wilcox nestled her head on the big, bony shoulder.

"Thet's me, Sam!" she whispered

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