

## Shadow Shapes

(Memoirs of a Chinese Student in America)

Anonymous.

PART VIII

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### MORNINGSIDE

**A**T LAST Lee found himself in the "wonder city" of America. The mornig mist was thick and keenly cold. People told him he could take an underground train to Columbia University. Instead he went into a taxi-cab. He was afraid of the subway. Perhaps because he never rode in one.

In the semi-darkness there were crowds of people moving in all directions. The oaths of the drivers, the horns and bells of automobiles and trams, made a deafening noise. The electric lights flickered like candles on the point of going out. The streets reeked with the heavy breath of the town. The roar, the clamor, the smell of it all, struck fearfully on the mind and heart of Lee.

His friends took him to Livingston Hall, where they showed him a small room, facing a side street. He accepted any arrangement. He was eager to be alone. When the door of the room closed behind them, he felt restless. If Edna were only here, they would dream together about the big money they were going to make, the pretty little home they were going to build. Why in another year they would have each other always. He walked excitedly about the narrow room. Poor little Edna! She must be thinking of him. He seemed to hear her whisper to him of her love and devotion. The thought that he was alone in a great, hostile, stranger city worried him, but he did not feel that bitter anguish that had given him such great agony in Missouri. He was stronger, riper. He knew that it must be so.

One of his pet diversions, when acquainted with the city, was to walk the

streets. New York appealed to him with its magnificent sensuality. The theatres at Times Square, the elaborately decorated show-windows on Fifth Avenue, the roaring "L", all fascinated him with an ugly glamor. The closer Lee observed into the women in that cosmopolitan community, the stronger was his impression of their absurdly disproportionate importance. It was not enough for her to be his helpmate. It was not enough for her to be his equal. Her pleasure was law both for herself and for man. Woman, no doubt, has in many instances been the uplifting influence of men, but the women of New York drag them down. Lee found the women there pretty, but they belonged to an age of utter materialism, of luxury and uproar. At subway stations, in restaurants, during lectures, they peeped at the reflections of their faces, which were more interesting to them than anything or anybody else. Their shapely legs and charming knees generously exposed to view, lured men to unspeakable follies. Their pleasure was the God of Manhattan!

Beside taking a full schedule at Columbia University, Lee worked in the evenings as a wire-filer with one of the smaller news services. Bowery was within walking distance from the place where he worked. One rainy evening, he went as a curious sightseer. The dim, filthy alleys, yellowly aglow with the lights of dingy shops, told him he was in New York's famous Chinatown. Jutting fire escapes scaled the ugly brick walls. Here and there Chinese shuffled over the sidewalks, and lounged indistinctly in the dark, obscure doorways. High up on balconies lanterns, swaying



in the wind, glimmered doubtfully. The air was hot, heavy and foul, reeking with the noxious odors of putrid fish, garbage and the refuse of the streets. In the shops the walls were decorated with tapestries and ornamented with rich carvings. Stolid forms sat on low benches along the walls and drew slowly on their long water pipes.

Groups of tourists crowded down the narrow streets, listening open-mouthed as their guides invented stories of mysterious disappearances, subterranean passages, and opium dens. A few steps from Chatham Square was the Chinese Theatre, gaudy with multitudinous and glimmering lanterns. Lee shivered with disgust and bowed his head in shame as he hurried through the narrow streets. Could he blame the Americans for being prejudiced against the Chinese? He could not. Should not the Chinese themselves wipe that place off the map, for their own pride and to prevent the further spread of false impressions of their race in America? He dared not even look at people in the face when he went to the office. He seemed to have smelled the pungent odor of poppy in his coat. Then he felt so miserable, so wretchedly disgraced that he had not even the strength to denounce his people at the Bowery. He relapsed into a state of despair.

And yet a change had taken place in Lee since he left China. No man can live in a foreign country and go away without sucking up, like a sponge, the essence of the new civilization and bearing away its image in his soul. Though unknown to Lee, his contact with the men and women of the new world had set its seals upon him. Within him the old self was staggering and tottering. Not the young boy who felt reluctant to accept teachings different from those of Confucius. Not the one who would follow blindly the footsteps of his forefathers. A new force had revolutionised his ideas, his thoughts, and his philosophy of life.

He felt in his heart the magic beams of an invisible sun. He was no longer alone. Edna was praying for his success. A God was holding him by the hand, and leading him to the predestined goal of his endeavors. Who was He? Lee never knew, but he trusted in this unknown God like a little child. He plunged into his work whole-heartedly. Day and night he worked. Sleep? Just a few hours were enough to refresh him for his next day's work. He seemed never exhausted, although for many months he had been continually on the alert and strained. He was determined to win. But Edna was deeply worried over his strenuous schedule—

Dearest Tommy:

My little Tommy, how are you ever going to do all that work and get your degree in one year? Promise me, dear, if you feel the least strain on your health, give up your present schedule and take a year and half to finish the requirements. Don't you ever work so hard that you will have a nervous breakdown. Every night I shall pray for you that you will be given the strength to do all your work without any injury to your health. Don't you neglect to pray too.

But just the same your Edna is more worried than ever over you. You are attempting too much, dearest. Please remember your health is the first thing to take care of. I know I will always be worried until I have my arms around you and can see for myself whether your health has been injured. Your Edna loves you so much that she relies entirely on you to do what is best for our future. I went down to church this afternoon and lit one of those candles in the big heart by the altar. I lit it by our Mother Mary's altar, and said my prayer there. This month is dedicated to her, and I hope she will hear my prayers.



Try not to get discouraged and blue, sweetheart of mine, and try to keep a smile on your face. Remember that if it happens that things don't turn out as we planned, if we lose everything else, we still have our wonderful love for each other. And with that, honey boy, we are, after all, richer than most of the wealthiest persons today.

I wear that old shirt of yours to bed every night over my pyjamas. There is not much warmth to it, but it makes me feel better to have something of your right close to me.

Your Edna.

Some days Lee would be queer and depressed, but he attributed that to his work. When he came home from work, very late at night, he was so worn out with the boredom of it all that he could hardly drag himself home. But in spite of the loneliness, the haunting fear that he might fail, and so many other causes of suffering, Lee bore his lot patiently. He never lost courage. He must get that degree to strengthen his prestige. He must get that news agency training before he could hope to get that Peking correspondent job. Sometimes his spirits were low. Then came Edna's always colorful and sweet letters, and days would again look brighter.

Sweetheart:

Tommy boy of mine, you just have to cheer up and look at the bright side of things, or I don't know what your Edna is going to do. No matter how black things may look, Honey, try and smile, because you know gloomy looks won't help and won't make things look rosier. We are up against it, dearest. We have a very hard battle to fight, but we will win somehow. Don't ever give up, Tommy, and say you are a failure. Come what will, your Edna is and always will be

yours, and she will stick to her Tommy under all circumstances. Always remember that, dear, and when you feel blue and discouraged, maybe it will help you a little. Edna belongs to Tommy, will always love him, and is always waiting for him.

The main thing is for you to keep your health. If the studies are too hard, let them go. Let anything go, but keep your health. As long as we both keep well, we have a lot to be thankful for. Dearest Tommy, don't worry so much. Something will turn up to help us out. We have always had good luck. God favors us because we love each other so much and so truly. Remember Honey, no matter what happens, your Edna will always stick to her Tommy. Nothing can change that. That goes on forever.

Your Edna.

She was brave. She knew he needed her courage. Lee always consulted Edna about his work and his troubles. She gave him advice and fortified him with her strength, though indeed she had not really enough for herself. With Lee far away in New York she seemed to be stifled in the house where she was interested in nobody, and people also felt out of her element. It gave her such joy to write to him. It seemed to her that she could see him, hear his voice. She would tell him everything: never had she spoken to him so intimately, so passionately. The tenderness of his letters was sweet and comforting to her. They were all the air she had to breathe. If they did not come in the morning at the usual time she would feel miserable. At last she was glad that she was working. It occupied her mind part of the day and kept her from brooding too much. Still sometimes she could not adjust herself to a life all winter without him. She had a queer feeling of waiting for something that would not happen.



When she sat in the room, her eyes instinctively looked for a sight of him walking toward her. When she woke up in the morning she could not believe that she was alone. It just could not be. When she passed by his room, she almost could not resist the temptation to peep at his little bed, where, she knew, big fat Mrs. Davis was yawning and stretching her clumsy limbs. Many times she felt the suffering was unbearable, and that she had to take the next train for New York. Almost instantly she was ashamed of herself. It was for their future sake that Lee was in New York. How could she live there? The damp climate would ruin her lungs. She had to be brave. Lying awake and staring through the night they called to each other in whispering voices . . . another year! . . . another year! . . .

#### RAINBOWS

Lee dragged through the winter—a wet, misty, muddy winter. Weeks on end without sun. He had no desire to go out, and never went out in search of amusement. The hours and hours spent in his stuffy office weighed on him heavily with their terrible monotony. A cramped airless life with no prospect. Lee fairly went into ecstasies when one day he was transferred to the foreign department to be an assistant to the cable editor. Here was his chance to learn how to write cables, to study the machinery of world wide news gathering. Lee, who had no experience in cable work, found it hard to understand in the beginning. "Fatty," the cable editor, was very patient with him.

"You will know the whole damn business in two days," he told Lee. "Here, I'll show you"—

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News Service NY

Berlin-22195 Archduke albrecht his mother archduchess isabella their followers planned put hungarian

throne franc forgeries banished ex-hungary premier bethlen report achtuhr abendblatt stop banishment pro-indefinite period.

650 pm

"You think this is a crossword puzzle, don't you?" he laughed and continued, "but there is really nothing to it." He removed his cigar, spit on the floor, and went to a typewriter—

#### Special Wireless Despatch

Berlin, Jan. 18.—Archduke Albrecht of Hungary whose followers planned to put him on the Hungarian throne through the now exposed franc forgery scandal has been banished from Hungary with his mother, the Archduchess Isabella. The banishment was ordered by Premier Bethlen according to a report in the *Achtuhr Abendblatt*. The banishment is for an indefinite period.

It was also about this time when Edna lost her job at the hotel—

Darling Tommy:

Honey, I have so many troubles to tell you. Your Edna is so blue and disgusted tonight that she doesn't know what to do. I have lost my job. They said they were cutting down expenses. They are keeping only one operator, and that of course, is Peggy. She is the kind that gets by in this world. A good girl like me does not have a chance. Peggy has something on, or some hold over the clerks, so they told the manager to keep her. I never paid any attention to them, and that's why I lost my job. Well, I'd sooner starve than hold a job that way.

My, I'll be a happy girl when I don't have to worry about these things, when I can just stay home in our little house and be with my Tommy!

I went to the Denham yesterday.



"Meet The Wife," was the play, a comedy, and it sure was funny. After a good laugh, people say, you have a good cry. Well, I had my good laugh at the show, and tonight when I came home from work, I had my good cry. I am going to cheer up, for worrying never helps matters, does it? As long as I have my Tommy, I am happy. But oh, if only my Tommy were right here instead of way off in New York!

Your Edna.

Edna was restless since she lost her job. She urged him to immediately make connections at the important news agencies, and see if any of them would send him to Peking as its correspondent. He knew only two in New York which maintained news bureaus in China. He went first to the Standard News Association.

Harry Rogers, head of its foreign department, after Lee had briefly stated the purpose of his visit, said politely:

"Young man, I am very sorry, we have no opening just at present."

"I thought you might need a Chinese on your bureau in Peking who has some training with American newspapers."

"Yes, I think a man like you will be very valuable to our bureau in Peking, but we have already too large a staff there. I can't fire anybody to put you on."

"Then you don't think there is any chance . . ."

"No, not at present. In the future, we may . . ." Rogers stopped for a minute (he was always on his guard), then continued cautiously, "That is, we may. But nothing just now."

He was blind with bitterness as he strode along down the street. So they thought American newspaper men in China who knew nothing about the Chinese language and her conditions, could report news events more intelligently than himself! Where was he going? To Peerless News Association? What was

the use? Who would give him a chance? Nobody. Not when he was a Chinaman. But what was the good? He must get that job, or—his blood froze at the thought. Poor little Edna would be so disappointed! He had no right to be so pessimistic. He must try everything before he would give in.

And an inward voice added:

"And I shall not give in!"

He made sure of the address of the Peerless News Association. The office building was in the neighborhood of New York's most exclusive residential district. Lee went up to a room on the third floor and asked for Arthur Johnson. His secretary showed him in.

Arthur Johnson was short, clean shaven, had a heavy, massive build, large serene eyes, a kind, pleasing smile. Still suffering from the treatment given him by Rogers, Lee was inclined to think that Johnson would give him a no more favorable hearing. He talked almost in an indifferent tone. The man, who was at the head of one of the largest news agencies in the world, listened to Lee attentively. There was a minute of absolute silence. Johnson walked away from his desk and looked out of the window. Then he turned to Lee:

"When do you want to go back to China?"

"This June."

"Had any newspaper experience?"

"Yes, in Denver."

"Did any cable work?"

"Yes."

"Our man Lawrence will be transferred to Buenos Aires in August. Let me see . . . come back and see me about the first of May."

"Yes."

"We will give you special training for a week or so. Just to give you a chance to get acquainted with the routine of the organization."

"Yes."

"Then—well, then you will go to Peking as our new correspondent there."

As Lee left the office, he thought he



was dreaming. Their new correspondent in Peking! He could marry Edna in June! And to represent the Peerless News Association in China! What an honor! Yes, Edna was right. There was a God. There must be one. At last such a load was taken from his heart! He felt for the first time that he could breathe freely. He was saved. She was saved. Their love triumphed. But could it be true? He bit his lips till they bled. The salty taste of his blood convinced him that he was not dreaming. It was true! It was true! He ordered a big dinner. But he could not eat. He was not hungry.

Edna did not sleep a wink when she received the news. All night long she dreamed of the past and the future, which seemed to her to be the most unreal and intoxicating of dreams. How good it was to hear the news after those days of terrible anxiety! There was now nothing to fear, nothing to prevent the final fulfilment of their desire.

Their plans were discussed in details. He would leave New York about the middle of May. After spending their honeymoon at Colorado Springs, they would sail for China from Seattle. They might stay a week with his parents in Nanking before they would go to Peking. Peking, where they would build their own little home! Of course, they would have servants. Edna was not strong, and they could afford to have help.

About this time Edna went to see a doctor to find out if she was strong enough to get married, if her health could stand a trip across the ocean. After a physical examination, the doctor told her that she was fit for anything, so long as she took good care of herself. There was nothing the matter with her lungs, and she could now live in any climate.

It seemed as if everything had come their way. First the job with the Peerless News Association. Then they learned that her health was no longer a handicap. They waited impatiently and yearningly for the time to come when

they would fly into each other's arms, and would part no more. What happiness! What joy! Their life would be perfect. It must be so.

#### TOLD IN LETTERS

March 7.

Our little touch of winter has left us, and we are having spring again. It is just a beautiful day out and there is a big crowd around the tennis courts. That reminds me of those afternoons in Monument Park where I used to sit near the courts and watch you play.

I had a funny dream last night. I dreamed your sister was here, and a bunch of girls including myself were giving a party in her honor. Somehow you never introduced me to her, or told her which one of the girls was your Edna. Wasn't that funny?

I don't think you should delay much longer in getting in touch with my parents, because things are getting such that something has to be done and done quickly. Sometime ago I wrote to my mother telling her what the doctor said about my health. I got a letter from her this morning. Here is what she said:

"To say your letter gave us a jolt is putting it mild, coming as it did out of a clear sky. After I read it, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I did neither. I just shook. I was so excited. When I read your letter to father, tears ran down his cheeks. We talked over an hour, first making one plan and then another. Today I won't say anything definite, for we want to have more time to decide just what will be the best thing for us to do."

Don't you see that you can't wait much longer. Something has to be done before they make any more plans. I am trying my best to have them let me stay here for the summer and have them come out West.



I have not received any answer to my letters yet, so all I can do is to hope that their answer will be favorable. I am so nervous and upset these days that I hardly know what I am doing. I am just living from day to day hoping that something nice will happen to clear up this terrible atmosphere. I don't know how you are going to approach my people. I am worried that you have to do this. But it has to be done, and done soon. I hope your brain isn't in the same state as mine is; mine won't work any more.

Your Edna.

March 8.

Enclosed is my mother's letter telling me about all the plans they have made. We have to admit, Honey, that they are good plans, if it wasn't that you and I have some different ones. They want me to go home right now, and if I am not satisfied, I can come back to Colorado.

Don't you think it's best to get busy and let them know that we have some plans of our own? I don't like to have them go ahead making all kinds of plans only to have them dashed to the ground. What do you think about this? I have to answer this letter this evening and I hardly know what to tell her. I shall try to be kind o' vague in my answers, telling them that I must have a little time to think this over. Of course I have to give them some kind of an answer soon. I shall wait until I hear what you have to say. If I can get a job, I can tell them that I am more contented out here where I can work. But I can't get a job. I am so upset that I can't eat. My stomach troubles me all the time. I wake up five or six times during the night, because I am so worried. Tommy dear, read that letter over carefully and let me know what I should do and what you are going to do.

The summer my mother was out here, she was ready to fall either way. She told me many times how fine she thought you were. When she got home, they talked her out of this mood, and now my little Tommy has to talk her into it again. We have an awful ordeal to face, haven't we, sweetheart? I hope we will come out on top. "Love will find a way," they say. Now is our chance to see if there is any truth in it.

Your Edna.

March 9.

Your Edna is feeling very downhearted and unhappy today. The letter I got from my mother this afternoon was not a nice one by any means. She said:

"Be frank and we must both be, so that there will be no misunderstanding. You say if you come home you will continue to be an expense. Well, you have gotten along wonderfully for the past three years being an expense, so I am sure it won't do you any harm to be one for sometime longer."

What can I say, Tommy? I can't write a letter home every day without saying something definite. Mother didn't even like the pictures I sent her. She said they would look good if it wasn't for the bangs, and that I looked as hard as a nail. They think I am a baby. I can't even wear my hair the way I want to. God help me, Tommy, I really don't know how to answer my mother's letters these days.

This is a rainy, nasty day, but it just suits me, because it makes me feel that the weather is in sympathy with me. Oh, Tommy, if you only knew how upset and unhappy I am! "Smile a little bit, smile a little bit. Though you are down, you are not out . . ." I played this song over and over on the piano. I can man-



age to get the smile on my face but not in my heart!

Your Edna.

March 10.

I had a hard time getting some kind of a letter written to my mother last night. It worried me so that I didn't sleep all night, and today I have a splitting headache. I told her I didn't blame her for saying the things she did, because I knew the fact that I didn't seem anxious to go home hurt them. I told her I was sorry, but it was true I didn't want to leave Colorado. The letter I received from her today is of course on the same subject:

"I'd be ashamed to let people know how unenthusiastic you are about coming home. Any other girl would be wild with joy at the thought of being with her people. You have been alone so long and had so much time to think about yourself that you have become morbid, I think."

So, you see, this is what I get every day now. You can see how hard it is for me to answer these letters. I can't go on this way much longer without breaking down. Your Edna is having an awful time, but I think my Tommy is in for a worse time when he goes to see my parents. How in the world are you going to do it, my Tommy? I dread the letters I shall get from my mother then, but I don't suppose they can be much worse than these that I receive now.

Tommy, pray that God stays with us and helps us over our difficulties. I am sure He will. I love my little Tommy because he is my little Tommy.

Your Edna.

March 11.

Tommy, I can't understand why you still talk about not telling our plans to my parents. I guess you have not received my letters telling you to see them quickly. Honestly,

I don't know what to do. I am just nervous. That poem you sent me, "Two and a Garden," was very beautiful indeed. I wish we were married and had a bungalow and a garden of our own. My Tommy does the digging while his Edna watches him. You see your Edna wants the easy job. Isn't she a naughty girl?

My mother didn't say much in her letter today except that father is telling everybody that I am going home. She said one thing, however, that I didn't like. I sent her a few bundles of that green tea you gave me, and told her to try them. She asked me what was the name of that tea. I told her it was Lungtsing. In today's letter, she said: "Say, I never could drink any tea with a name like that!"

Your Edna.

March 12.

I received two telegrams from you this morning. Your Edna is nervous, shaking, excited and sick, but underneath it all is a little feeling of relief, that at last the ice has been broken. My parents have known the truth. I can't imagine what the outcome of all this is going to be.

That first telegram you sent me was very discouraging. It didn't tell me all what you and mother said over the telephone. She can sure be nasty when she wants to be. No matter what she says, Tommy, she knew it all the time. That certainly wasn't nice for her to tell us "to go to hell!" It seems as if we will never be able to get her consent.

That second telegram made me feel a little more hopeful, because father is of a different disposition than my mother. I had always hoped that you could get to see him somehow, because he would never understand until he met you. Now you



are going to see him tomorrow. What will be the result, I wonder. I am anxious to know and still I dread it. I am sorry that my poor Tommy has to go through all this by himself. If my father looks at things differently and gives his consent, or, how wonderful everything will be! He will be able to change the attitude of mother. But if he doesn't, my Tommy, we are up against it then. I won't have any money to live on, and you only have enough for yourself. Maybe you will be able to borrow some, I hope so, even though I do hate for you to have to do it. We will have to be married immediately, for I won't have anybody but you.

Most likely they will cast me off. If they don't, why everything will be rosy. Just now, though, my plans are all for the other side of the story. This much I am sure, we will have a hard time. You will have to take care of your Edna right away. How you can do it, I don't know. Maybe I can get a job. I hope so, but it's so hard to get one. I know you don't like me to work, but this may be a case of have to.

But there is no use of making any plans until I know definitely just what will my father say tomorrow. My father is liable to come out here after me. You never can tell. I am kind o' mad at my mother because she failed me when I needed her most. I only hope father will look at things differently, and that all these troubles won't interfere with your studies and keep you from getting your degree. My poor little sweetheart, remember your Edna loves you and she will stick to you until the last.

Your Edna.

#### BROKEN WINGS

Lee had only been in the Pennsylvania Station a short while when Edna's father

presented himself. They withdrew to a bench in the dark. Mr. Griffith's manner was stiff, insolent, and even threatening.

"I have to stop this. Goddamn it, I have to!"

"Don't you know that it will ruin your daughter's happiness?"

"I don't give a damn. I'd rather see her dead than to see her marry you."

"What if your daughter will marry me no matter whether you will give your consent or not?"

"Then God help you!" His face, flushed in anger, paled. "I am not threatening you, but if she marries you, my home will be broken, and I don't care what will happen to me."

"Edna loves me and I shall try to make her happy."

"You will never marry her! We have nothing against you as a man. But can't you see? . . . you are a Chinaman. She is American."

"I am afraid it is only prejudice that makes you feel this way."

"What if it is? I don't want no argument. I only want to tell you this. Stop it. And stop it right now!"

After his meeting with Mr. Griffith, Lee knew it might be necessary for him to marry Edna and to take her out of the country at once. He went instantly to Arthur Johnson to see if they could send him to Peking before June.

"We might be able to arrange it," said Johnson, "but what made you change your mind?"

Lee told Johnson the story of his clash with the girl's parents. Johnson's forehead wrinkled and he said slowly with long pauses between phrases:

"In that case . . . I am afraid . . . we can't help you in any way . . . and . . . in fact, I doubt . . . if we will send you out to Peking . . ."

"Why?" Lee was dumbfounded.

"Well, you see . . . The Peerless News Association is a large organization and we have many enemies. We have to be very careful. Years ago we had a cor-



respondent down in Georgia. His wife went into politics and agitated for women suffrage. This is nothing unusual now, but she was a little ahead of her time. People made a scandal out of it, and every time they mentioned her name, they made reference to her husband being a correspondent of our association. You understand how it is, don't you? I am not opposed to mixed marriages, but we must admit there is a strong feeling against it in this country.

"You two may get married without any interference from her parents, but who can tell? There may be trouble. Under the circumstances, I am afraid we will have to forget about our little agreement made some time ago . . ."

\* \* \* \* \*

March 14.

Edna is sick in bed. Her nerves seem to have gone to pieces. She can't eat. He must be kept very quiet for a few days. After she received your telegram yesterday she received one from her father, telling her that if she loved you and cared for your life, she must go home at once, and that her railway ticket was waiting for her at the Rock Island office. It was all too much for her. She collapsed. She will write when she is able. She asked me to write this for her.

Mrs. Davis.

March 16.

Tommy boy, Tommy boy, how is this all going to end, I wonder. I am just about able to sit up, and that's all. Sunday and Monday I was sick in bed. I was so weak, upset and nervous that I could hardly hold a thing in my hand. I haven't eaten enough to keep a fly alive for the past three days. The sight of food made me vomit.

Even though I suspected things would turn out this way, I didn't think I would take it so hard or that it would upset me so completely.

Sunday I couldn't write and I asked Mrs. Davis to write you. She has been very good to me, waiting on me hand and foot. I haven't written home these two days either. As you know, Honey, after I received your telegram, I got one from my father. I wired him that I was sick in bed and unable to travel. I had to do something and that was all I could think of.

I have to write some kind of a letter home today. I haven't yet received any from home since this happened. I'll tell them that I must have time to think and that I am too upset and sick to do much thinking at present. This will put them off for a while. Any day now I am expecting my father to walk in here. It will surprise me if he doesn't. I know if he comes, it will be without warning.

You say maybe I shall choose the easiest way and go home to my parents. This way is not very easy. My heart belongs to you and I shall never be happy with them, no matter what they will do for me. Tommy, we are sure up against it. What are we going to do? You say you can get enough money to keep me until June, but what then? Are you coming out to Denver, or are you going to work and make some money in New York? I gather you are planning to do the latter. I don't know how I am ever going to stand it here by myself much longer. Then if you can't get money to support me, what am I going to do? Maybe I can get a job, but that seems so hopeless. I have been trying since November without any success.

I thought of going home for about one year to give you a chance to make a start in life without being burdened by me. Sometimes it doesn't seem fair to you. I guess you won't



believe me when I tell you this. You will say I am trying to get out of it. That's what you are always saying. I am willing to do anything for your happiness and for the good of your future. That is all that counts with me.

Well, my Tommy, we are up against it. That's sure, but our love for each other is as strong as ever, and it will remain strong and get stronger as long as there is breath in our bodies. Remember your Edna loves you with her whole heart and maybe a way will open up soon. Don't forget to pray, dearest. Don't lose faith in God.

Your Edna.

March 17.

Tom, forgive me, but I can't stand the strain. I can't stand the pressure of the awful letters I am receiving from home. My health has gone to pieces. I am going home. It is the only thing for me to do. I am not looking into the future, but will just bide my time and await development. You do the same. Try and carry on. Go on with your school work as your parents want you to do. Maybe in giving happiness to others, we will find it ourselves. Don't think I don't love you with all my heart, for, God knows, I do! Don't do anything desperate, for it will surely kill me. Who knows what the future has in store for us? You are a big, strong man, so carry on. I am weak, ah, so weak both in mind and in spirit. I thought I was strong, but my spirit is crushed, broken.

Time will tell just what we should do. You are in no position to be burdened with a wife, and a sick one as that. It is not fair to you, of this I am firmly convinced. Living on borrowed money is not right. Be a man, my Tommy. Pull yourself together and try to go on with your

work. I shall try to go on too, if my health will stand it, but I fear all this brooding and all the brooding in the future will prove too much for me. Au revoir, Tommy. God have mercy on us both.

Your heartbroken Edna.

Lee could not restrain his tears with her letter in his hand. Good God, what a thing happened to him! His body shook with the hammer blows of his heart. Edna, his edna! Where was she? A year ago . . . moonlight . . . Emerson Street . . . beautiful days! A wonderful dream! Edna! where was she? He flung himself on his knees by his bed and pray. To whom did he pray? To whom could he pray. He did not believe in God. He believed that there was no God. But at the moment of supreme sorrow he had to pray—he had to pray within his soul. Suddenly on the pavement below a voice rose—a raucous, drunken voice—that sang—

Give me a little kiss,  
Will you huh?

Lee rose to his feet, his face thin and twisted, his eyes fixed, staring, always staring like those of a mad man.

What are you gonna miss?  
Will you huh?  
Gosh! oh gee!  
Why do you refuse?

"Life!" he laughed, "what a joke! God, justice, what the devil! You fooled me, eh? Money, Power, Bigotry—there you have your Holy Trinity! You can't fool me no more. I am drunk with your stupidity and hypocrisy. Yes, drunk—like that man on the street—"

I can't see what you've got to lose,  
Aw, gimme a little squeeze.

His eyes burned. That fever in his head was growing worse. He fell sprawling on the floor. Shadows, dark and ominous, danced over the convulsive form.

THE END