The Brown Road

"I wish, dear," said Hugh, "that you would ask Aunt Clarissa to spend a few days with us."

Edith looked up from her magazine. "Aunt Clarissa!" she said. She knew very well whom Hugh meant. There was only one Aunt Clarissa. God had never made such another lean, brown, wrinkled woman, who wore such atrocious hats, such absurd homemade garments. She had been the one unpleasant incident of Edith's wedding. In all the ten years since then they had not seen her, but they had at Christmas time invariably been reminded of her existence by the arrival of a rug or bed quilt or tidy so hideous in Edith's eyes that she hid them as soon as she could. Two or three times Hugh had suggested that she be asked to visit them in the city but Edith had been able to put him off. And now that they were right in Aunt Clarissa's native haunt, having bought a house there and moved into it for the summer on account of Hugh's convalescing from a fever, he was asking again that she come to see them.

"I don't believe she knows we are here," Hugh went on, "and she's only a few miles away. I've been thinking you could motor over some afternoon and see her. But that wouldn't do me any good. If she wants to see me immediately she must come here. I'd like to have her stay two or three days, so that we could visit. There's a lot of things I'd like to talk over with her. I've told you how good she was to me when I was a boy. We were poor then—a great deal poorer than Aunt Clarissa, who was poor enough. Many a meal of mush and milk I've eaten off her pantry shelf, for I always was hungry. It tasted better than lots or banquets I've eaten since. Well, they're all gone now who were my folks save Aunt Clarissa, and she's an old woman. She's right where she started in on the same little side hill place, with an old horse or a cow or two. But I've gone on. I've gathered in some money and I've got you." He smiled tenderly. "But I want Aunt Clarissa too. Please, Edith!"

"I can't," Edith thought. "Maybe," she added, "she won't leave her cows and horses. And there's her son, who would cook for him?"

"He's only her stepson, dear. Oh, she'll come if you'll ask her. Try her and see."

When an hour later the rural delivery man went jogging up the lane he carried a letter from Edith to which Hugh had appended these words: "Please come, auntie. I'm just getting over a sickness and feel very babyish. I want you. Come tomorrow, come any time, only—come!"

"That will fetch her," he said with a smile. And it did.

The next day Aunt Clarissa arrived. She came in a dish wheeled buggy, drawn by a decrepit horse. Her stepson brought her. Edith glanced out of her window just in time to see the horse fall asleep before the porch while Aunt Clarissa climbed down from the buggy, laden with small luggage. She had on a black and white lawn dress, a cape and a hat with a feather than any fowl would have been ashamed to own. In ten years she had grown thinner and browner, but not less energetic. Her step was as light as a girl's as she mounted the steps.

Hugh met her. His boyisr whoop of joy brought Edith with a proper welcome. From the buggy Aunt Clarissa's middle-aged stepson grinned on the group on the porch.

"Land, no. Seth won't stay. He can't," said Aunt Clarissa. "He's got to slop the calves at 1 o'clock. Seth, you be sure to keep the pup tied up. We're trying to learn him not to meddle with the young turkeys," she explained. "There's a couple of chickens in that bundle for you, Edith. And here's a box of pot cheese for Hugh. 'Twon't hurt him to eat it. And here's a little pail of cream. I thought maybe they'd come in handy."

"Well, I should say!" Hugh put his arm tenderly about the narrow, drooping shoulders.

Seth woke up the old horse, which went nodding and whisking off the flies down the lane.

"You've got this place fixed up fine," Aunt Clarissa remarked as they sat on the porch after dinner. "I never see so much pretty fresh paint and paper in my life. And that windmill there a-flying in the air! It's wonderful." She gazed about her admiringly. "What's that little building off there for Do you keep a horse?"

Edith laughed. "We keep a car, Aunt Clarissa. That's the garage."

"You mean an ottermobul? I never rid in one in my life." There was awe in the crackling old voice. "And I never got close up to one but once. That nearly run me down on the highway. I wake up nights yet a-sweating and a-trembling with dreaming about it. It was a red one. I hope yours ain't red."

"It's buff and black, Aunt Clarissa. And it's guaranteed harmless."

"Maybe it is, but you can't tell." Aunt Clarissa found a pocket in her full skirt and produced a roll of lace and a crochet hook with which she set to work. "They're dreadful skittis actin' critters. You never can tell. I can't get over the feeling that they're live minsters. Every time I see one I want to climb a tree or get ebhind a stone wall. I'd be scared to death to ride in one."

"Nonsense!" said Hugh. "Yours is the fear of the inexperienced, auntie. One spin will convert you. Edith, you must take her out."

"This very afternoon," said Edith.

But Aunt Clarissa shook her head. "You just keep the barn door shet so it can't get out," she said. "I ain't convinced yet that a thing what's got two eyes front and back and a snout and can breathe and screech like a vixen ain't living if it ain't human."

"You're an absurd old woman," thought Edith, "and I don't see how you ever came to belong to my Hugh. I hope he's getting some pleasure out of yaur visit, for I'm not."

It was true. Aunt Clarissa had come to stay three days, and they seemed endless to Edith. The second afternoon she went off in the car alone and left the old woman with Hugh. She stayed until the shadows were falling and her gasoline was out.

"What did you and Aunt Clarissa find to talk about?" she inquired when at 8.30 the old woman went to her room and left them alone.

"Everything," Hugh said. "What do you and she find to talk about?"

"Calves and young turkeys and rag carpet weaving and how they cured old Mike of a spavin." Edith's tone mocked. "Really, Hugh, we've not one thing in common. Aunt Clarissa knows her world to perfection, and she hasn't an atom of interest outside of it. She's a contented woman. Her life just suits her. It satisfies her. She's actually cock about it. It isn't so much what she has missed as the fact that she doesn't know she's missed anything. She's so sure that she's had all she wants and she's so absolutely pleased with what she's got that she vexes me. To me she's terrible. I want to shake her placidity to pieces, to cry to her: 'Don't you see how cramped and poor and mean your life is? Can't you realize it?' But what's the use.

Hugh stared at her as she finished almost passionately. "I guess you don't know Aunt Clarissa," he said, calmly. "I guess you don't. She isn't what you think she is by a long shot. You simply haven't got into her heart tat's all. She's got a heart. And there isn't one single thing she's missed that she don't know about better than you do."

Near noon the next day, while Aunt Clarissa was waiting for Seth to come after her, the rural delivery man left a letter. It was in Seth's difficult writing that old Mike had cast himself in the stall, and in consequence was too lame to travel. If she'd wait a day or two longer he would be all right, Seth thought.

"Wait!" cried Aunt Clarissa. "When I've all but got my hat on!" She began to hum softly to herself.

Edith bit her lip. A day or two longer! "Oh, I never can," she thought.

"I'd take you out in the car if you'd let me," she suggested genily.

"You may," she said tersely.

Edith colored. She felt that she was read. She felt that the old woman had sacrificed much in consenting, and she took a kind of cruel pleasure i fancying the upset of Aunt Clarissa's old-fashioned notions once she was in the car.

Smartly togged Edith brought out her car and Aunt Clarissa got in beside her. Edith could feel her bracing herself mentally and physically as the machine started. They swept out of the lane isto the road. She glanced wickedly at the stiff old figure beside her. "Relax!" she cried. "Look at the fields and hills and that cloud yonder. Enjoy yourself auntie!" She let the ar out.

Aunt Clarissa sat looking straight before her. It ame to Edith that her courage must be tremendous, and she felt a creeping sense of shame at trying it so cruelly. "Real martyr stuff," flashed through her mind. And she slowed down.

"You can keep it right. Needn't stop on my account," Aunt Clarissa said.

And Edith saw she was smuiling. "Aren't you scared to death?" she gasped.

"Well, I guess not. I've been pleased to death watching the critter eat up this here grown road that I've driv over my hull life behind some old slowpoke of a horse or other. I tell you I've got a real respect for anything that can go without being licked and coaxed and pushed along. It's the first time in my life I'fe ever moved to my liking. If I had one of these critters I shouldn't like to die in a hurry and get to flying. It makes me feel kinda joyous."

Edith stopped the machine in the shade of a great willow. "Aunt Clarissa!" she managed to say.

"Yes," Aunt Clarissa went on, quietly. "It's a terrible thing to be a bird hitched to a turtle all your life. You ain't stout enough to carry the turtle along with you, and so you fold up your wings and crawl with it. And by and by you most forgit you've got wings." She sighed. "I've always been hitched to a turtle of some kind or other. Fust off there was my man, Seth's pa. I married him before I was old enough to know better. And now there's Seth. He's his pa right over again. Good, but terrible slow. Sometimes I feel like I'd leave folks'd be wicked as so awful moderate. Oh, I've had my ideas and they didn't have anything to do with carpet weaving and milking ad raising chicks, either. I've had day dreams that went higher than that cloud yonder and faster than this oeermobul. But seems like the Lord didn't mean me to be morn'n I am, else He'd given mé a chance. I've tried to be contented with what He's dolt out, and if doing your duty faithful's any sign that you're going to be happy in heaven I expect I'll have the fastest pair of wings a'going when I get there."

With a sob Edith flung an arm about her. "You dear old thing," she said. "I see how it is. I understand. No wonder Hugh loves you. But he doesn't love you half as much as I'm going to, Aunt Clarissa. I offer you a half interest in this car for the rest of the summer. Turn old Mike out to pasture. This is your natural conveyance. Take to motoring and put off flying as long as you can—for my sake."

Aunt Clarisssa looked into Edith's eyes. She smiled. "The shade of a willer tree is a good place for folks to kiss in," she said.

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One pill a dose, 25 cents a box, all dealers, or Edmarson, Bates & Co., Limited, Toronto.

BROCADED VELVETS BOLD OF DESIGN TAKE THE LEAD FOR DRESSY WRAPS

Brilliant and glowing as were the summer fashions those of the coming winter promise to be just as wonderful. Can you imagine anything richer than a dull green brocaded velvet coat in Russian design, with collar and cuffs of a soft, dark fur? The coat 7870 in its broad straight lines with the wide satin girdle conforms in every detail to fashion's demands. Aside from the fur a jade buckle and frogs of braid across the front are the only trimmings. One of the new duvetyns, a figured matelasse, or a broadcloth could also be used with this design effectively, as well as any of the new novelty suitings that are being used so much. The pattern is cut in five sizes, 34 to 42. Size 36 requires 3¼ yards of 36 inch material. A three-piece tunic is shown on 7911. The waist-line is raised slightly, and its general lines make it an excellent model to wear with a separate blouse. Five pattern sizes may be had, 22 to 30. Size 24 requires 3 yards of 36 inch material.

Simplicity still marks the fashionable afternoon gown. Few trimmings are used, effects being obtained by graceful draping of soft rich materials and perhaps a quaint, narrow plaiting edging tunic and fichu.

Any of the new, supple crepes or silks could be used with 7916. One of the new yellows would be especially pretty. The tunic is draped slightly, and the peasant blouse closes surplice fashion on the left side.

Five pattern sizes may be obtained, 34 to 42. Size 36 requires 7½ yards of 36 inch material. Each pattern 15 cents.

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Fort William, Sept. 26.—The Canadian Pacific railway, on Wednesday, broke this season's grain hauling record at the head of the lakes, 900 cars, or about 1,000,000 bushels, of grain having arrived between seven o'clock Tuesday evening and two o'clock Wednesday afternoon. The total amount received over all three roads during this period was 1,429 cars.

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Good baseball bats, 75c. for 40c.
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Best gloves and mitts, $4.00, for $2.75.
Regular gloves and mitts, $3.00 for $1.75.
Good gloves and mitts, $1.25, for 75c.
Boys gloves and mitts, 50c. for 25c.
Boys gloves and mitts, 25c. for 15c.
Best baseballs, $1.00 for 60c.; 75c. for 40c.; 50c. for 30c.
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