

A Short story:

From UNFORGOTTEN Memories

RELUCTANTLY, he glanced once more at the handsome pair. They were now speaking in low amorous tones in the far end of the room. With futile effort he stared at the book before him. But the printed page didn't make sense to his wandering mind. More and more he became conscious of a disturbing ache in his heart, of a sentimental feeling pervading the air around him. He knew he didn't envy the pair but the picture the two made brought back to him memories deep and unforgotten. He turned towards the window and gazed at the city lights. From the lower story came the sad strains of a song. Memories sweet and long remembered now came lingering into his thoughts. "Yes Lyd," a sigh escaped his lips. "I will always remember."

There was that cold December evening when I sauntered by your dormitory. You were there at the porch waiting for my approach. How often I came to visit you on those Saturday nights. That evening I came because I missed you again. There had been a moon and we watched it journey across the sky. Silently we stood there at the porch thinking and understanding. Thinking had always been a part of our love. We felt as we always did the feeling of belongingness between us. And we just stood there wondering at the silvery world around us, at the quiet beauty of the moon, at the stillness of the cold chilly air.

I wanted to tell you about school;



about the stars that shimmered above our heads. But you were so silent and lovely in the moonlight and something within me went soft and sentimental. I guessed you were feeling cold then and I felt a sudden impulse—urging and almost begging me to cuddle you close into my arms. But you stopped me and you said, "It's improper yet Tony. We are so young and people will surely misunderstand." It gave me pain not to do the thing I wanted most.

Since then I hated this whole suspicious world. It is a world with a thwarted concept of love—a world of unkind suspicions and cruel gossips. Man is prone to look upon love only in terms of animal passion and its physical aspects. How tragic it is that others have such a cheap and unpleasant regard for love! Could we but have a world attuned to that divine essence of love! Could others but understand love in the way we cherish and comprehend it! Could they but think of it in its most beautiful aspects and manifestations! Then perhaps we'll never be misunderstood in our love as long as we kept it clean and unsoiled.

For us our love was the most beautiful thing we had ever known.

There was that last evening we spent together—remember? Even now that you're miles and miles away, I live in the obsession of those bygone moments. My life seems to re-enter into those unforgettable memories, Lyd. Without them life would be so empty and devoid of the hope and inner happiness that springs from their remembrance. They seem to be the reason of my being.

It is so incomprehensible—the way love triumphs over the soul, Lyd. It seems to be a part of everything, a part of one's living memories. It has become a part of me, a part of the boy I am and of the man I want to be. And it comes, haunting and obsessing, whenever I think of the gleam in your dreamy eyes, the smile in your rosebud lips. Even in the image of the flower you put on your hair—love seems to be also there.

"You're leaving tomorrow," you reminded me that evening. "Yes, I know," I simply replied. We hated to go further because the pain was already there. The months, the years we'll never be able to see each other again came parading through our thoughts. That was one thing we had always been afraid of and that evening it came to pass. That painful goodbye came to pass. And everything seemed to have been left with you. Only the pain came with me—deep and unconquerable.

Yes, our love was great, greater than anything else in this world. Nothing ever mattered except the burning of that love in us. Yet why, Lyd? Why all these years of painful waiting and suspense? We asked these questions often to ourselves and we found the answer in our hearts. And if only I haven't loved you too much; if only the under-

standingness of your heart haven't been so perfectly complete, then maybe I would be with you now. But you see my dearest—you made me dream and crave for bigger things in this world. Your love made me so brave and lent courage to my being. Now I want to conquer the world and I thirst for success more than I ever did before. All because I want you to find happiness and security in my success—in the future success of this man you love. Your words keep burning within me, urging me to go on and on. "Study hard," you had urged that evening. "Try your best and be good always, darling." That was the first time you ever called me darling, I will never forget that.

It must have been painful for you to realize that I was leaving you. For after a while I could see tears gathering in your eyes. I wanted to say something to console you. "Please don't," I simply stammered. And I tried to say something more, something that will relieve the pain of the moment. But the words wouldn't come out, it was too deep inside my chest. In-between tears you kept on repeating those words you often wrote in your letters. "You'll always remember that I'll be waiting for you through all the long years. You'll come back to me some sunny day—won't you?"

He was still standing before the window gazing pensively into the city now aflame with lights. "I'll always remember, Lyd," he sighed once more. He looked far into the darkening horizon as if to seek her face. But only a star began to twinkle there—above the darkness of the neighboring hills. Just then the bell rang and he picked up his books. He started for home not caring anymore to glance back at the pair in the corner.

