
A Carolinian Short Story

HEARTBEAT. I shall call her that. She is real, she exists. But I shall call her Heartbeat. Beautiful, distinct Heartbeat.

I saw her one afternoon with a group of laughing students huddled in one corner of the plush restaurant they were in. Beside their table was a jukebox. It was not out of order.

She left her table and fumbled for a coin on her way to the music box. She found one and bit her little finger while her eyes looked for her favorite crooner. He was there.

I heard the coin clink its way into the box and the half-turn she made enabled her to get a good look at me. I must have bothered her a lot.

I couldn't figure out her eyes. It could have been sky-blue, grass-green or dark brown or just plain eyes. At least there was color. In either case, those eyes could be coextensive and equally fatal to one's emotions... I think.

(He was singing.)

She completed the turn and went back to her friends. She was welcomed. Of course. And the laughing started again. But I could tell that her eyes were cheating. It did not join the laughter. It joined something else. My eyes.

How do you do?

Fine, thank you.

Why did you look?

Why did you?

I like you.

Oh?

Uh -- huh.

But I shall call her Heartbeat. She might be nameless, but I shall always call her....

I can even feel her now: beautiful, distinct Heartbeat.

I saw her walk her way home one evening. She had that helpless look all about her... and though she must have been brisk and steady, I couldn't help making her

"Yes..." I answered, feeling completely silly.

"I didn't expect to see you again..."

"Why not?"

She gave me a quizzical look and sighed, "Oh, I don't know."

"Oh, but you should!" I persisted.

"I should?"

"Sure."

"Why?"

"Well...oh, you can't go on feeling about things and not knowing about them at all..."

HEART- BEAT

look weak and tired. Somehow, I can never define the tremendous power and influence her helplessness exerted on me... and I was drawn to her even before I had made up my mind.

She stared at me for a while, then a spark of recognition flashed across her eyes, "Oh... you're..."

She smiled and said, "I think you're right."

"That's better."

"From now on, I'm going to know exactly the name of the thing I feel..."

From somewhere, a jukebox wailed, "tenderly gaze evermore into mine..."

A T-V Creation
