

The rotunda of the C.P.R. Station in Winnipeg was nearly deserted. Occasional travellers came in to check on train arrivals or departures, some carried baggage, some without. To John Warwick sitting waiting for a train reported two hours late it was the most dismal place in the world. Cold gusts of wind swept in every time people entered the doors. Soon the street lights would come on. Evening traffic on Higgins Avenue was increasing, people hurrying to their homes. A man asleep, on the far end of the bench on which John was seated, stirred and the newspaper over his face slipped off revealing a somewhat blotched countenance ~~and~~ badly in need of a shave. With a loud belch and a half groan the figure rolled on it's side and proceeded to sleep some more.

'Probably no home to go to,' thought Warwick. 'At least I have the farm to return to, I'd hate to have nothing to do in this burg, especially in winter. Even cleaning barns is better than that,' with a glance at the now snoring individual sharing the bench.

It was the early twenties. The depression after the First World War had taken it's toll and a man was lucky to have a job at all. John Warwick, in his early twenties was not worrying about a job. He had a farm to return to. True it was not his own. ~~xxx~~. It belonged to his mother; he did most of the managing now and it usually provided enough for their needs. Until recently John had not been much concerned about much more than that. Now things looked different, decidedly different.

'Things have happened to me that should'nt have happened to a dog,' thought John. He had come to Winnipeg on the spur of a moment to see Angela. Angela was a girl friend of his girl friend and to keep the record straight, Warwick wanted to find out from Angela what she knew of Bernice Tolway, where she was and why she was not writing to any of her friends, especially one John Warwick.

The outcome ^{had} held little satisfaction. Angela evidently had her own ideas about boy girl friendships and girl-girl friendships. She latter evidently did not include John. She had told him among other things to grow up. That Bernice had other friends beside him and that she didn't suppose she wanted to write

or would have done so. Anyway she had returned to her home in Saskatchewan after working in Winnipeg all summer. Warwick had found that much out anyway but he was still puzzled over his correspondence. Bernice Tolway was different from her friend, Angela Murswick. Angela had grown up in Winnipeg while Bernice had grown up on a Saskatchewan farm.

As his thoughts led him on John, shrugged his shoulders. The city had been his home for several years while he attended a boys school so he was not entirely a green horn about city life. When it came to girls, that was a different matter. A strictly boys school held little room for girls although boy to boy talk about girls was plentiful at times. Return to farm life during the first world war also left little room for girls. Then there was his mother. She didn't seem to have much room for girls either and John being an only son complicated matters.

Hammond Warwick Senior, had homesteaded
the ^{Manitoba} farm on which they now lived. ~~John~~
Ten years younger than his wife, a woman
whose mind was her own and brooked of
little change he had seemingly found it
impossible to carry on and had more
or less quietly disappeared, not without
making sure his son would receive the
education he had been offered but had of
his own will cast aside in preference
for a homestead in North Western Manitoba
^{eighties} in the 80's. His son but dimly remembered
^{with} him but those memories held an affection
and a longing that sometimes made him
feel very lonely. This was one of those times
and again John Warwick thought, "This
shouldn't happen to a day." Anyway let ^{he'd}
write Bernice when I get home or perhaps
go and see her". What was it Angela had
said?

"Perhaps she's got herself a man"

Well if this slick city wench thought he,
John Warwick, wasn't a man, she had another
thought coming. But the suggestion had

sown the seed of doubt in his mind and it would not be put down. He had met the girls during a term at Agricultural College and found that Bernice Solway shared ideas with him and they seemed to have a lot in common.

"It's funny she doesn't write straight warwick, and somehow I don't think Angela knows any more than I do - I wonder -"

At that point the revolving doors turned letting in a blast of cold winter air and also a young woman carrying a baby on her arm. Setting her suitcase on the seat opposite John she put the baby down ~~also~~ prepared to change its diapers.

Now John, an only child, had had little to do with babies. In fact he hated the little brats at times. He recalled his one experience of baby sitting, for a few minutes only, on a rather exclusive Winnipeg home. It was not a happy memory exactly. To entertain his small charge, seated on its floor and gazing steadily

at him, Warwick had deliberately winked at the child. The steady gaze continued and then the child slowly and deliberately winked back.

John tried it again & this time the answering wink was almost instantaneous. This little game lasted till both got tired of it. Wondering what to do next in the form of infant entertainment John's thought was interrupted by the entrance of the mother.

"And how's my little ^{girl} man getting on with her friend?" Little ~~girl~~ ^{girl} answered mother with a slow deliberate wink! Warwick wasn't at all prepared for what happened next. With a ^{shriek} scream that echoed through the room and brought a sister running the discerning mother whirled on John. "You've been deliberately teaching my child to wink! How dare you! My precious little girl how awful!" John grinned to himself at the memory. He hadn't ^{had} the slightest idea whether the little bundle of ~~you~~ arms, legs, eyes, and curly hair was a he or a she. His only idea had been to forestall the usual howl that babies gave whenever he looked at them. Oh well, one learned and some experiences took on a bit of humor with the passing of time.

For lack of something better to do John watched the little scene in front of him. The young woman looked to be about his own age and her baby not much more than a month. With deft motions she motherly straightened the infants clothes. Then seating herself on the bench she picked up the little one, pushed aside her blouse exposing a round bare breast pulled the babys head up to it and started the age old process of motherhood. A ~~small~~ tiny hand crept up on the smooth young breast the small fingers closing and opening in enjoyment.

Warwick was so engrossed with the picture they made that for a moment he did not realize he was staring. Suddenly deep brown eyes met blue and John found his face growing hot and he turned his head away. He had never actually seen a baby getting nursed before and it did queer things to him. He shifted uncomfortably in his seat and then got up and wandered about the almost empty waiting room. When he returned his seatmate slowly snored, still

issued from underneath the recumbent form beside him and the family tabernacle had resolved itself into sleeping table & watching mother.

Presently blue eyes met brown ones once again and John Warwick smiled across the space dividing them. He could never explain why he smiled but somehow he felt a kinship. Perhaps it was a premonition of events to come. The girl across the way didn't answer his smile. Her brown eyes widened a little and she looked straight at the young man sitting across from her. Then just a fleeting suggestion of a smile lighted up her face, then vanished as if memory had given warning.

Warwick got up courage to speak. "Going far?" he questioned. The answer came with hesitancy "Quite a way. My train is late."

"So is mine," said John. "Three hours, and by the look of the weather outside it may be worse in the country and the trains still later."