

12 years of matrimonial unhappiness

Always buying furniture on credit

A 'former life' dissolutely spent

Killed her in self-defense

Drinks white wine and gets beastly drunk

Acted in an aggravating manner

Very destructive in her drunken spells would tear up the furniture and break doors

Frequently threatened Lizzie

While I was stabbing her, she was cursing me.

Pretended to be a widow

Attacked me with a poker and toasting-fork

Passionate, a drunkard, unfaithful to my marital vows

Scars from venereal disease

Became so riotous, I was forced to lock her out of my workroom

A perfect fury when intoxicated

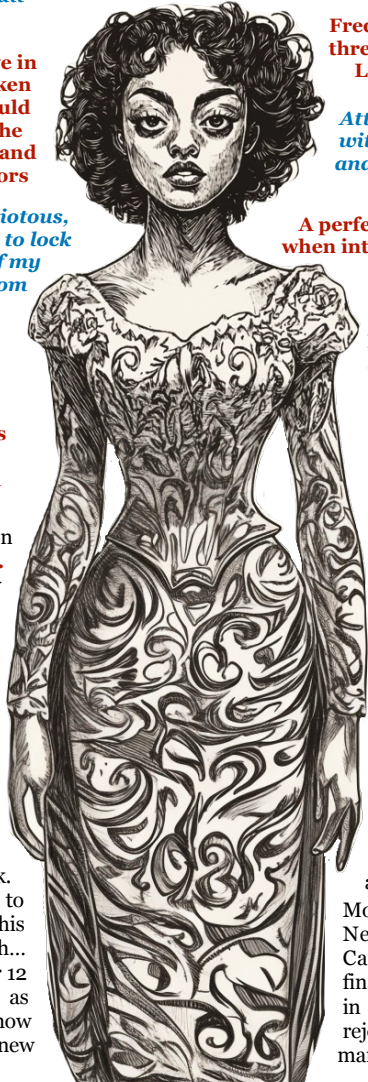
So much trouble caused me to have suicidal thoughts

Called me a murderer...

Jealous of Lizzie, the adopted daughter

The Deceased Woman's Story through the My Lips of the Living-Witnesses Neighbors Say She was a Very Nice Woman

No doubt you have been reading the headlines. Maybe you believe my husband, Nicholas Carr's so-called confession... or should I say, his accusations and excuses in the same newspapers. No one listened to me while I was alive. It's easy to ignore or dismiss a woman, especially if you can convince others she's crazy... jealous... or a drunk. Give me the final grace, to listen now, to my side of his 'true' story. I knew too much... his secrets and his lies. After 12 years of marriage I knew as much as anyone could know about such a man, and I knew



Not under the influence of liquor she was a pretty good and industrious woman.

there was a good chance he could... would kill me.

Nonetheless, I loved him, with all my heart, even God can't help such a fool.

His dark good looks, that British accent that made him sound dignified and proper, an undeniable animal magnetism, even his decisive impulses attracted me at first.

Moving from England to New York, then out to California for the gold, finally settling for the silver in the 1849 rush. When I rejoined him out here he married me, fresh off the

train. So romantic, I let myself believe it was 'meant to be'... my destiny. Looking back, his desires were not solely for me, it was a need to control every situation, including me.

I was young, he was overly possessive. No man wants to share his good fortune with others, whether it be shiny ore or a woman's charming company. Flattered, I was willing to bask in his dedicated attentions.

When he took ill, I gave him nursemaid care for the better part of many days... but as his illness lingered, I felt my own life wasting in his service. To recuperate after being at his beck and call all day long, I often joined new friends to replenish my good nature and forget the troubles of his care.

When I was 27X years of age, I answered an advertisement in the newspaper, for an assistant to a tailor. It was my first tailoring job, and where I met Nicholas. I worked shoulder to shoulder with my new boss who gave me the security of employment while I learned the craft. My seamstress skills lagged behind the speed of Nicholas's deft hands, but he took great pride in offering me advice to show off his expertise. We got along well, which made the days speed by, until the time had turned into 5 years.

Prone as I was to falling in love, my head had been turned by a man with means and appetites that I overlooked in my limerance. I married him and he swept me off to New Orleans, and away from Nicholas. It lasted a year, until he disappeared, either on the lam from debtors, business partners, or me. I reconnected with Nicholas through letters back and forth to share my life changes and found my mentor thriving, now in California seeking a quick fortune.

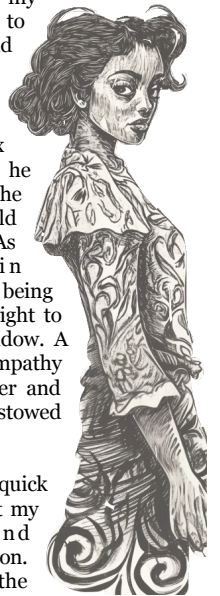
It was good between us up north. He needed the comforts of a woman, and I was well-versed in those female arts. Like any love-struck accomodating woman, I became the answer to a lot of his questions and the empty places in his hardened heart. We had

both survived traumas, some of our own making and some that life had thrown in our path. That was one of the many things we had in common. It was as intricate an ineffable bond... as any soulmates would share. Perhaps we would heal each other's wounds and sins. Both of us were ambitious... looking for the shortcuts that would pay off to satisfy those goals.

It was not an easy life in the mining country of Oroville, for the men that toiled long hours underground... and the women who waited for them above. Opportunities abounded for those who worked hard and for those who could spot them on their horizon. I loved him; his spirit, his drive, his luck. His British accent was exotic, compared to the man I had married. It had been a mistake to marry a man out of desperation to be taken care of. He was not faithful to our vows and brought the spoils of his wanderings back to our marital bed. That misstep had informed my second choice... I had to take care of myself, and in my eyes, Nicholas was the self-care I deserved.

Even though my first ex didn't deserve mention, he was as dead to me as if he had abandoned my world for a shallow grave. As was the custom in America at the time, being divorced gave me the right to refer to myself as a widow. A small distinguishing empathy for the loss of a partner and the elevated status it bestowed upon a woman.

Nicholas was cut to the quick by the realization about my grossly infected and conflicted marital situation. Though I explained the



circumstances thoroughly and he assured me I was a victim to be forgiven for my naïveté ... I believe it tainted his appraisal of me as the wife he deserved. He may have never forgiven me for another man's transgressions.

His work life became a priority and a defining incident with his partners seemed to balance the scales of our less-than-perfect life. Whether it was his temper or greed, I'll never know, and dared not ask. It was my role to stand by him. He killed his partner in their silver stake during a midnight shift change. No witnesses. Just a single shot from Nicholas's gun through Hanke's chest as he exited the mine. His nearby wife rushed to spend his last breaths within her helpless embrace. With his life on trial, I too, had every chance of losing the love of my life, so all my money went to pay for his defense. I want to believe my sacrifices and many prayers softened him, reviving our closeness. No one was more surprised than I



was, when a miracle verdict came back in his favor. He knew it was a cold-blooded killing, but he was a free man and swore he wouldn't waste this second chance. We made plans to start fresh away from those that had long memories in Yuba County.

He was turning further away from me again, I could feel it everyday. He was looking at her the same way he used to gaze at me when we first met and worked together... before Lizzie... That look

always filled my heart to brimming and sent an effervescence of possibilities to my mind. He hadn't shown that twinkle in his eye for me in too long. Now, in our very own house, he was teaching a younger version of me to be a better seamstress for his purposes. When the insecurity welled up, I would sit as witness in their workroom to convince myself that I was imagining it all. But it was undeniable and heartbreaking. The evidence was piling up no matter how sneaky they were. Nicholas would leave for a delivery across town, an hour later Lizzie would depart from work early, leave the latch key with the neighbor and meet Nicholas at Woodward's Gardens. Tracking them from the shop and seeing the brazen betrayals, were crushing to my soul. I fear they spoke ill of me. Was he confiding his feelings to her, sharing his hopes and dreams... like he used to do with me? What of his secrets... were they as close as we once were? How could he? No wonder I drank.

When a truth and a secret share a space, what do they become but a toxin to be released from its own festering.

I had known his 'truth' for years. Harbored his secret from the outsiders who would take him away from me. If he ever was... he was no longer mine... and whatever gratitude he held, was slipping away to make room for Lizzie's unsullied, fresh allegiance... and youthful exuberance.

Holding such a dark truth may have taken its toll on me after so many years... as had time... and his growing indifference to my sacrifices. The excuses I made for his misdeed were also fading. He took the life of a man... just as he had drained me of my own.

Everyday felt like he was whittling away at my reasons for defending him / and living with his lies.

"Murderer!" I knew the words stung... they were meant to. I could no longer be the

keeper of his secrets. I can ruin him with his deepest darkest truth. I will slice through that smug veneer with the sharpest blade available to me.

Few people here knew of his small-town troubles in Oroville. We both wanted it that way, it was the impetus to move to San Francisco, a fresh start, a second chance at a simple married life in a beautiful City. A changed man running his own shop, with me as his assistant, like his interrupted plans back in New York.

He had murdered a man, but his luck, his charm, his good looks, and a couple of expensive lawyers had convinced 12 men it was self-defense. Everyone carried a gun to protect their stake, I guess it seemed feasible, even though the dead man had no chance to draw on him, much less return fire.

Even as my last breath left my body, I screamed the curse again, "Murderer!" Did his deep denial finally unravel, when his latest victim was dying in his arms, with the truth on her lips? The fact that suicide was his immediate impulse, is made that much more redeeming as he carried the plan through to morning. No more dodging the deeds of his selfish heart. He knew his fate was sealed. No one is lucky enough to survive two homicides carrying their fingerprints. You can defend yourself in the court of public opinion with a crafted statement to try and convince yourself the blame lies elsewhere. Truth is, there will be no one to pay your legal bills or stand by your version of the story. You have definitively silenced the very woman who loved you so deeply... you had to pierce her broken heart to break the spell.

There is some solace his remorse and regret became a decision to end his life of lies and excuses. Did he believe in the end, we would be together again?

Forgive my foolish heart for hoping so.

As for Lizzie, blaming her for any of this is unfair. Calling her wicked is my miscalculation of a teenager's power. I saw my younger self in her; being an apprentice to an older man, enamored with his kindnesses and tutelage, defending his side of the story to the bitter end, even in her testimony. She had been spoonfed Nicholas's version of the truth. She was not yet worldly enough to discern his motives in making her an ally and accomplice to his plans or the depths of his dark past. I'm not sure she was even aware of his feelings for her or how capable he was of mayhem to possess her heart, mind and spirit. The earthly goods he handed over to her, are no longer my concern. I hope it makes her life easier not to be entangled with this man of questionable character. I wish her a long and healthy life.

His shears were to be his comeuppance. I admit I stole them from the workroom, disconnected them into single daggers to defend myself against his attack. I overheard his plans talking to Mrs. Eager in the shop. I could not take the chance I would be unarmed if... when he came after me.

