

**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**

**Mangled
corpse...
Held her in his
arms all night**

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

**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 desperate accusations and lame excuses* in the same newspapers.

There are two sides to every story and no one listened to mine 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 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.

When I was 27 years of age and living in New York, 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 re-connected with Nicholas through letters back and forth to share my life changes and found my mentor thriving, now in California seeking a quick fortune.

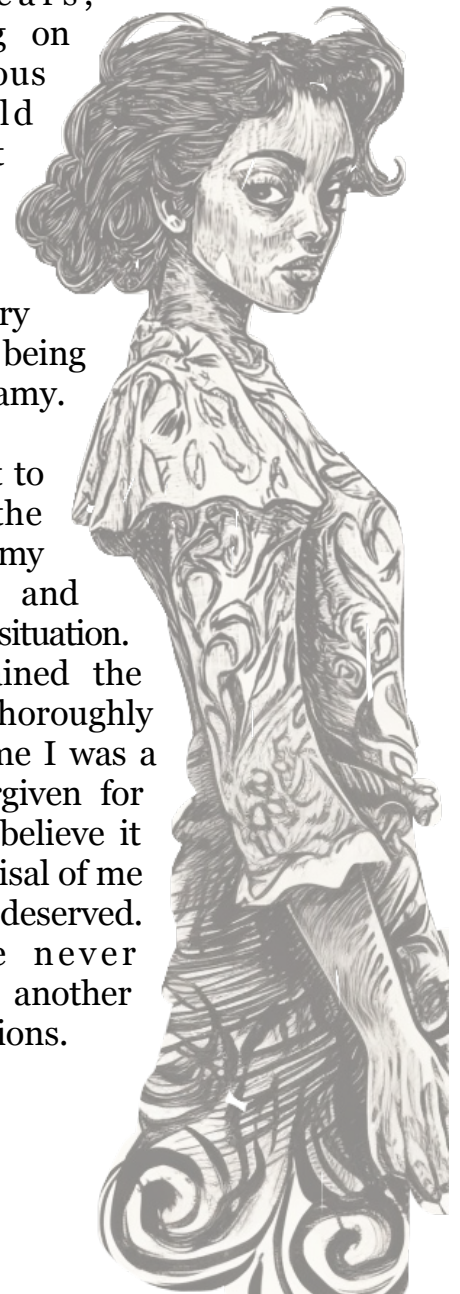
It was good between us up north. He needed the comforts of a female, and like any love-struck accommodating woman, I became the person to fill the empty places in his hardened heart. We had both survived traumas, It was as intricate an ineffable bond... as any soulmates could share. Perhaps we would heal each other's wounds and sins.

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 doesn't deserve mention, he was as dead to me as if he had left my world for a shallow grave. As was the custom in America at the time, being abandoned gave me the right to refer to myself as a widow. I surpassed the 7-Year rule by 3 years, perhaps holding on to the ridiculous hope he would return. After that length of time, now legally presumed dead, I could re-marry without fear of being charged with bigamy.

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.



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 worked together... before Lizzie... 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. Was he confiding his feelings to her, sharing his hopes and dreams... like he used to do with me?

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

He had murdered a man, but his luck, his charm, his good looks, and a couple of expensive lawyers I paid for, 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. I wanted to believe my financial sacrifices and many prayers softened him, reviving our closeness.

I had known his 'truth' for years, and 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. Every day felt like he was whittling away at my reasons for defending him and living with his lies. 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.

"Murderer!" I knew the words stung... they were meant to. Only his deepest darkest truth could slice through that smug veneer with the sharpest blade available to me.

Even as my last breath left my body, I screamed the curse again, *"Murderer!"* Did his deep denial finally unravel, when I, his latest victim, was dying in his arms, with the truth on my 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. No one is lucky enough to survive two homicides carrying their fingerprints. You can defend yourself with a crafted statement to convince others 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 my broken heart to break the spell.

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

Forgive my foolish heart for hoping so.

