

His hand quivered as he touched it, gently running his fingers over the soft silk fabric. He inhaled deeply and in ever increasing succession, as the memory burst the floodgates of his mind. She was wearing it when he first met her that day on the dock. She had taken leave of her parents after dinner, when the conversation turned to local politics and fine cigars. Walking close to the edge, she was looking out over the water to the lights of the city on the other side. Watching from the deck he saw her gracefully turning around, the city lights reflecting off of the water making her the center of a shimmering sea of stars. Their eyes met, and they both looked quickly away. He pretended to be mopping the deck, and she feigned interest in the wooden poles of her walkway. Slowly, his eyes took her in again, mesmerized by her beauty. There was something about the way the lights flickered with the waves, a peaceful undulation that made her seem like she was herself floating. Her pale white skin contrasted heavily with the black night, golden hair flowing out from underneath the bright yellow shawl which now lay delicately in his wrinkled hands. He walked slowly over to her dresser. Covered with lace dainties and a silver plate with various perfumes, he opened her jewelry bureau. Wedged between the painted glass was a picture of their honeymoon. They were standing on the edge of a cliff overlooking Niagara Falls. The sun was breaking over horizon, enveloped in the sparkling mist they smiled youthfully back at him.

It was the beginning of their life together, seventy happy years. An amazing woman, she managed to raise four children, work part time as a piano teacher, and always know just how to make his troubles drift away at the end of a hard day. A skilled musician, she filled the home with beautiful music. Her favorite instrument was the violin, with which she could take you to the bottom of your heart to the highest heaven. She had the unique ability to share her true feeling and emotions, just one of the things he loved about her.

He softly spun the golden necklace holder, each one bringing back fond memories of weddings and dinners, nights spent dancing away, or quiet evenings sitting by the river. There was a weathered oak bench right near the railroad tracks that they would sit at. Hand in hand, they would look out over the water and talk about the old days, reminisce about that first night. It still felt like yesterday.

He walked across the draw bridge and onto the dock, making sure his foot falls feel silently. She continued her best attempts not to notice, in fact, she walked almost to the very end of the path. No plan, no idea of what he was going to actually do when he got there, his feet kept walking toward her, eyes fixed on her sweet countenance. "Good evening, Miss", he said, rather embarrassed at the crack in his voice. "Beautiful night, isn't it?" She shot a quick glance in his direction. "Shouldn't you be working?" she asked coyly. "Yes, but I was taking a break and couldn't help but notice you standing here all alone, I thought maybe you could use some company." "I'm fine, thank you", she said, cheeks reddening. "I didn't mean it like that", back pedal, back pedal. "I just thought that you might....I dunno....ah". "What is that over there", she said, pointing to a dark billow of smoke rising from a much-lit factory. "That's the Carnegie Steel Plant, that is where my old man works; every day from dawn 'til dusk. It's hard work and it don't pay much, but a man's gotta work, I guess". "Doesn't pay much", she corrected. "My father works with Henry Clay Frick; he owns a smelting plant in Homestead. We live in the North Side on Willow Ave...." Splash, a fish jumped up and startled her. "Let's go sit on that bench over there", he said, pointing to on under the railway station

roof. She nodded in agreement and they went over and sat together. He was worried about what she thought about the way he talked and the clothes he wore. At first she seemed hesitant, but after a few minutes he had gotten her to laugh, and soon they were talking like good friends. She wrote down her address on a piece of napkin that he had put in his pocket after cleaning a table. “ 682 Willow Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15211”. The lights in the boat dimmed, and it was time for her to leave.