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AN INTIMATION

After the renewal that came to Martia in Taos and the gradual decline into the old depression and discouragement, help had after all come to her back in her native air, in New York with its burden of unsuccessful ideas, and its stale air surcharged with gasoline fumes.

She had had a new life shaping in her until the familiar, melancholy lapse and leak had started again; then Jose had told her to go back to the old life for a little - and there in the forsaken environment she had received a genuine impetus.

Coming to Taos at first had meant a recovery from Renard, to live with whom was a curious illness. Renard was one of those who poisoned himself with his thoughts - and to become identified with him, as women do when they flow out to men, was to merge with a tainted pool.

Renard had been the last material Martia had seized upon - material to work over and dominate and shape into a different form. It had given her a feeling of being more alive to wrestle with people like an artist does with his clay; she had assimilated a great deal in this way from those she had brooded over and wrenched from their moorings. Through those intimacies of understanding and attraction, she had taken into her self and learned many of the aspects of life: so she had grasped in turn the essential significances of art and of philosophy, of anarchy, of political
concoctions, of psychology... ed altro. Sometimes, adding to herself, she deprived the other of his portion. He could only be reckoned the loser, and turned adrift, metaphorically marked "empty!"

Life appeared to be like that, it wasn't her arrangement of it. She had been born strong, and predatory, or perhaps conditioned by environment to take what she needed. Martia knew people called her, euphemistically, "a go-getter," but she did not consider it her fault that she was a "go-getter" or a pirate. She was that. Secretly she was a little proud of being that, rather than one of those whose destiny was to be sponged upon by her kind and then marked "empty." She knew she would never be marked empty, and certainly that was worth being a pirate!

She had learned some very strange psychological secrets from Renard. Things that were hidden from himself but that he revealed in his dreams, in his unconsidered actions, and in his face. He appeared to function through his eyes more than in any other part of him. He went out and came in through his eyes. He could fasten his gaze on a person and fascinate them like a snake hypnotising a rabbit, and at such times Martia thought she could see the fine stream of power that he projected. This habit exhausted him and he would be quite done-up after he had exercised it; a curious faculty of attraction that somehow resembled intercourse. He poured himself away in this manner in a displacement of vital force.

Martia's first encounter with him had been with his
work. Also her last. She had seen his exhibition of paintings and drawings of Balinese natives and she had exclaimed to herself, "The man is a sculptor, not a painter!"

Almost at once after meeting him she started in to change him from the one to the other.

It was interesting how love served the purpose of an undertaking like this. Renard must be made over into a sculptor. Well, love, then, became the anvil as well as the hammer - the fire and the bellows and the wind! We will not call it the love that is made up of compassion and of mercy exactly, but still it had a life of its own. It had comprehension that was instinctive and alert, it had a compelling magnetism, and it had an excitement that seemed quite real at the time.

It was delightful to lose oneself in power. These were the determined, wilful phases that seemed so positive, in alternation with the dark and flaccid depressions when Martia was out of a job! Life had become so for her: swinging up into power by her own bootstraps, or resting, abandoned by ecstasy, in the trough of the wave.

"I will make a sculptor of him!" or "I will domesticate him!" or "I will get him him away from her..." "I will!"

When she became wholly "I will", she lived. Not otherwise.

Martia took Renard to Taos, then, to model the Indians. He stood in his studio with a bowl of hot black wax and made a bust of Pedro. The bust looked like a lump
of uninspired humanity, and gradually took on the characteristics of Renard rather than those of Pedro. The muscles in the neck and shoulders were tight, and there was a certain sick look at the corners of the mouth. Pedro slept while he posed, but even as he slept there was a glow in him like a banked fire. Renard did not get this glow. In the waxen Pedro the fire was out.

While Renard was modelling Pedro, Martia went to the Indian village to see the Indians. Especially she went to the house where Jose lived. She felt she could dip herself in this stream of life and be renewed, for Renard had somehow made her old and ill. She was tired of the talk, the endless talk of the artist. "Significant form!" What was it and what, after all, did it matter? Renard was a sculptor now and what of it? It had lost its importance. It seemed good to Martia now to sit with the Indians and try to feel her way into their mystery. For there was mystery, and she could not easily enter into it. She could share a certain well-being they had, but the source of it was hidden from her. They seemed to block the way and refuse to let her pass to their deep centre. She was always coming up against the secretive Indian silence.

They would not answer her questions. "Why?" "Why?" "Why?" Soon it became evident that they hated the probing, white man's habit of interrogating and that they themselves never asked her any questions. They had none to ask.

"Why did Guilio go to the mountain?"

"Why does he change his hair today from braids to a knot?"

"Why?"
And the utmost response came, taciturn, from Jose: "Secret."

Not many weeks passed before Martia told Renard he must return to New York and leave her in Taos. Renard was working on a head of Cleopha now. It was much better than the bust of Pedro. There was less Renard in it. He was certainly becoming more of a sculptor than a painter, working with the Indians. Martia didn't care, however. She wanted him gone from her, so she could go into the Indian world with Jose. More than anything she had ever wished for, she wanted to enter the Indian world with Jose. She wanted to share his simple, strong, direct life. She wanted to have, through him, judgment without thought, living without productivity, living without the need to make things.

"God told the Indians they must not have things," Jose explained to her. "The white man can have things. All things. The Indian can only have what he finds in the mountain."

She found she was tired of pictures, sculpture, books, furniture. Things. She could not wait to be done with them. To discard and abandon them, to be free of them. To be free of Renard and his world, and his need to produce things to add to all the other things already cluttering up the world. To be free!

To exchange the endless futile activity over objects, that preoccupied the whole white world, for the mysterious activity of the Indian for the occult and deeply religious Indian life - that was what she wanted now.
In a deep reaction against white ways, she wrote some verses that began:

"The mountain, the arrow, and the star
Your symbols are;
The flag, the cross and the dollar sign,
These are mine!"

She was ready to give up everything, nationality, religious beliefs, and even her income if she offended her family too far, in exchange for the secret of the Sacred Mountain, the secret of the Indians' sufficiency and their native scorn of the white man's customs. What did Jesus Christ know that the Indians did not? He came to give more abundant life, but the Indians had that - not us for whom, apparently, he died!

What knowledge and what dream lay back of the strange lined brows of the Indians gazing into the sunrise in the east? No puerile creed or weak philosophy had carved those stern features, nor caused the deep eyes to glow with that persistent, undying flame.

Renard was petulantly jealous of the Indians. He did not want to go back to New York now he had become a sculptor! Never mind. He must go. He must be gone by August first. Martia told him she would divorce him later.

As in the case with so many marriages, the wrench for Renard, in parting, was not in the relationship between him and Martia. Though they had lived as closely together as two people may, for years, sleeping and waking, yet their essences had never blended nor their tissues locked. Separate
beings, that had never truly crossed over to each other, they had no pain or difficulty in leaving each other. The problem was a practical one of convenience. It was "inconvenient" for Renard to leave Martia. It "interfered with his work!" Familiar words in the white world.

He was retarded in leaving his studio and getting away as he was so often in starting work of any kind. He did not flow easily. At last, however, he got off on the train, with his two wax Indian heads. The last vision of Renard is sad. For lack of Martia's efficient control of things, or something in himself that was not efficient, he omitted to put the busts in the refrigerator car - and they melted. Heigho! Of course he always blamed Martia. Perhaps with reason.

Now Martia was left all alone with Jose to conduct her into the Indian life. He left his house and his wife and came to live with her in three adobe rooms beside a stream. There was one great tree for shade and a field below for horses. They began to build a larger room and a porch on to the rooms already there. Jose and his relations did the work while Martia sat in the sun and felt herself into the Indian mode of life.

There was plenty to fill the days. Just sitting was very repaying. When it grew colder, they went rabbit hunting or duck shooting, either on horseback or driving an old horse and buggy. Jose taught her to see farther than before and to distinguish the winds and their portents. Also
when the moon held water or why the owl hooted. He taught
her to distinguish the difference in the sound of the stream
flowing after midnight, and he taught her to taste her food
with more relish. But he never explained why he walked
straight up a hillside with no more effort than when he went
down it, nor why he had no large, hard muscles like other
strong men she had known, nor how an Indian woman could pick
up a large child or a hundred pound sack of wheat and sling
it onto her back with no physical strain. He never taught
her anything about the Indians' kind of strength. Sometimes
he talked to her about Taos in a way she could hardly under-
stand. He would stand gazing at the Sacred Mountain for a
long time and then he would say:

"Can you feel the power coming out of the mountain?"

And once he said:

"Taos is the beating heart of the world. Do you
know that this world lives?"

When he spoke so, Martia felt a curious thrill of
life pass from him to her. Almost she understood something
hidden from her.

But he never taught her anything about the Indian
religion, she realised gradually. Sometimes he would leave
her side at two o'clock in the morning and telling her he
had "Indian work" to do in the mountain, he would stride out
of the house and not return until nine o'clock, with his hair
untidy and his eyes shining, long after her breakfast.

She was jealous. She thought he had gone to see
his wife. That was the way her mind worked. He told her,
yes, he had gone to see his wife to have her tie his hair behind in the knot before he went to the mountain. Martia couldn't bear it. She cried and protested bitterly. He let her. The next time he went just the same, as a matter of course. He did not seem even to realise she had a personal feeling about this return to his wife to have her tie up his hair in some kind of way; that hurt her terribly.

"Why can't I tie up your hair?" she cried.

He laughed.

The Indians were always going on mysterious errands to the mountain. Sometimes they would bring back an herb or a branch and take it to the War Chief. Martia did not seem to gain the slightest understanding of what it was all about. She saw the Indians were keen, ready, and full of enjoyment. Besides this they were grave, serious and centred in an unfailing equilibrium that no outside circumstance could upset. And always there was the perpetual glow in them.

One evening she had some Indian boys come and dance while Jose and his friends sang to the drum. Martia had a few of her friends to hear them. The Indians sat cross-legged by the fire and the white people sat in chairs across the room, and Martia saw that night once for all how the Americans were like ashes and the Indians like hot coals. Why? Why? Was she never going to find out?

Jose and his friends moved quietly. Their movements were measured and unconscious. There was always a balanced rhythm to their motion as though their articulations were gently oiled. Only machinery, in Martia's experience, had this
quiet, unfaltering ease. Had her race, then, exhausted some precious natural lubrication that left them jerky, dry, and unable to function like these others? An Indian walked, danced, and even breathed as smoothly and effortlessly as the wolves and the serpents. They streamed like water—or lifted their bodies like eagles. White men grew great muscles on their limbs—and every effort cost them a little life, but movement gained life for Indians. Why?

And how did they come by the knowledge of direction or of the whereabouts of game or anything they sought after? They did not seek what other men sought but what they did go out to find, they found. They seemed to have direct knowledge. "Indians know things," Jose told her.

It would take too long to relate all that Martia saw, without ever understanding any of it. She was living at the heart of mystery but without any ability to penetrate it. And she found no name for the gradual appreciation and respect that grew up in her for the relationship between her and Jose. What she had called love before, she knew now to have been a mean business compounded of appetites and abuses. Abuses of powers and potentialities, a greediness, a lust for importance, for self-impression. She burned with shame remembering old names for love in the world she had left! Self-expression! Sex-expression! The trivial outlets sought by analysts to assuage the persistent demand of the spirit and that really defeated it! The world of science, of art, of compromise and failure—that world well lost indeed!

She learned, by loving, to stop thinking or talking.
of love - of sex - or even of life. But, alas, she could not stop looking for a Reason.

The Reason.

The reason why. That habit from the past still clung to her, and finally it began to poison her in her Garden. She just could not stop wondering about the Indian nature and the secret at its core.

Finally the gentle elation of her life began to leak away and she grew depressed as so often in the past. She tried to hide it from Jose as best she could, but it was impossible to hide anything from one who knew things through the pores of his skin! They had small need to talk or to tell, between them. She had grown sensitive, too. She knew his feelings as he knew hers. Though she grew depressed, she did not grow less loving now. She only lapsed away from the first arder of the living she had learned with him.

He who was so wise, told her to go away for a little while. To go back to New York and see her friends for a short visit. She did not want to go. In her depression she did not want anything much. But she went.

Now it seemed as though, during her visit, she had only one contact in New York and that with a stranger. Nothing stimulated her, nor awakened a response. Then one day an old friend, Mrs. Bainbridge, a follower of the occult and hermetic teachings of all races, a crank, a dear, little old crank, summoned her to her house in a mysterious fashion, over the telephone.

Martia was almost too disspirited to go, but she went.
"I have something important to tell you, Martia. Someone you do not know, but who knows you, wants a talk with you. She is a wonderful woman. Her ostensible life is being the principle of a girls' school, but her essential life is deeply bound up in furthering of the life on this planet."

Martia demurred feebly. All that old clap-trap held nothing for her any more. She had been so near to other realities, she had come to look on doctrines as evasions. Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, New Thought, all those dusty formulas had given way in turn to Psychoanalysis, which had demolished them before she had ever gone to the Southwest, where an Indian had, in his turn, demolished Psychoanalysis and left her with only a nameless wonder that baffled her.

Mrs. Bainbridge pursued her intention. "You must see her, Martia. It's important. You have no right not to see her and hear what she has to tell you."

Finally Martia acquiesced. She agreed to return in two days and meet the unknown at Mrs. Bainbridge's. As she returned to the street, she was assailed by the decaying odors of civilization, by exploded gases, by the artificial perfumes with which people combat them, by the putridity of streets, and the dismal sounds of American life, - that rumble and murmur of activity that is more tragic than any other concatenation except perhaps the bleating of a flock of sheep which seems to consciously express doom.

Martia remembered, as one in exile, the pristine
clarity of the desert air, the faint exhalation of sagebrush crushed by a pony hoof, the pale blue scented pinon smoke and the deep, clear eyes of Jose laughing at puzzles in her own.

When she returned in two days, Mrs. Bainbridge was portentous with importance. She scarcely spoke to Martia, but drew her to the back drawing room and told her to wait there. Martia waited with a faint heart. Presently the door opened, and a woman came in. She was not astonishing in any way: a tall, well-dressed woman, with blue eyes, rather intense blue eyes. Martia was seated leaning on a narrow table and the woman seated herself across from her. She smiled a little as though in recognition of the unnaturalness of the situation and its difficulty.

"My name is Mrs. Dudley, Lotus Dudley," she began. "And I have been instructed to talk to you. To tell you something clearly. You must take it as simply as you can." She stopped as though trying to think how to go on. Suddenly she bared her forearm and held it out for Martia to see, and she smiled. The blue veins on her wrist formed a small, pulsating heart. Her smile grew a little mysterious as she held it to Martia.

"Do you know," she began again, hesitantly, "that Taos is the beating heart of the world?" Martia started, remembering Jose's words, and at once something in her was drawn back from nowhere and she became present and aware.

Mrs. Dudley seemed to recognize something in Martia
now and she nodded, and gave her an intimate look of agreement.

"Yes," she said, as if answering. She went on: "There are several groups in the world that know this. One is in Washington, one in Europe...."

Martia was concentrated now, her attention hotly receptive. There was something authoritative in the woman who sat with her eyes bent on her hands - talking - telling her message. She had become an emissary; she was there to tell a certain thing to a certain person. The moment was warm and full, there was a dim, lively humming in the room.

"There is a certain truth that has been kept alive on earth for centuries and centuries - for longer than can be told. The Indians have kept it alive. . . .

"They have kept it alive until the time comes when they can hand it over to the white man. . . . until the time when he can take it.

"But it will not be by word of mouth. . . .

"When the time comes for the Indians to pass on this truth, the white man will be able to take it. . . . but not by word of mouth."

Lotus Dudley stopped and gave Martia a deep look. It seemed to Martia that some part of her understood what another part could not.

"When the time comes - and it is coming - a bridge will be needed between the Indians and the white people, and you have been chosen to be the bridge."

Now Martia began to know. To know - to understand -
to accept — and then it faded. Mrs. Dudley continued:

"Taos is the highest point. Taos is the centre. There are three magnetic centres on earth and the Taos Indians have preserved one. There are about to be changes and displacements on earth.... and from Taos there will radiate a new influence. It is almost time. Then you will see it become a true and overt centre. The great souls will be drawn there. The Mojave Desert will be used as a clearing house for souls — the Taos desert will hold the higher ones."

She paused for quite a long time, and the air in the room seemed full and more full of a clear, high humming as though a vibration passed between the two women like a flame that Martia could hear, and presently Lotus Dudley took Martia's hand and held it a few inches distant from her heart, and Martia felt a burning, subtle warmth coming from it, unlike any heat she had known before.

"Do you feel it?" asked the other, in a low voice, bending a mysterious, smiling look upon her.

"Yes," murmured Martia.

"The sun..." began Lotus, and stopped for a moment. Then she went on as before — in her way of giving a message:

"You have been specially prepared for what you are to do. You have been watched and guided. You were sent to Taos. There are people in the Groups I have told you of, who have been watching over you for years — and you are not to fail, for there is a cosmic purpose you are to fulfill...."

She paused.
"But what...?"

"Wait. Be ready. Be clear. You will do what you must do. I cannot say any more..."

She seemed to withdraw and to be going deeply inward.

"But I feel so weak - so lacking. There is so much I cannot understand..."

"Wait. Be clear. Be very careful of your body - of your diet. Drink much of the mountain water. The Indians are guarding that. Stay in the sun. They are guarding that, too. Eat a great deal of green food... lettuce and white grapes... You will be gradually tuned to the right pitch..."

Martiia remembered many things, now. As in an unfolding picture, she saw the Indians watching the sun - following the mountain stream - going for their yearly ceremony of three days to the high Blue Lake which was its source, to celebrate the birth of the sun which some said they believed was born out of its depth. She remembered the Indians gathering the wild green vegetables on the mountainside, and carrying their herbs to the War Chief.

"You may be delayed. You may delay yourself. You may even defeat your destiny. Nothing is certain so long as the will in man rises up to frustrate his spirit. If you can learn passivity, life will have its way through you. Otherwise your indefatigable human will must continue its active destructive function. I cannot tell you any more, now - but remember always: we are watching... and tell my Indian brother all I have said."

The little fire seemed to die down between them.
and Lotus Dudley rose and smiled — and left Martia there, half-stunned, but with a new hope.

* * * * * * * *

When Martia returned to Taos, she told Jose everything Lotus Dudley had said. He took it with no surprise — merely nodding his head from time to time. When she was finished, he said:

"That woman knows much. I have already told you Taos is the heart of the world..." He gave Martia an Indian perfume, some small green leaves that smelt like attar of roses when crushed in the fingers, and he told her to send it to his new friend and to say the Indians were taking care of the sun and the water and the earth and that they prayed daily for the white people.

Mrs. Dudley replied with a brief note: "Tell my Indian brother the perfume makes the heart feel glad..." Martia never saw or heard from her again.

Now she felt a new significance in her life with Jose. Was she not specially prepared for some great cosmic purpose? She wondered how the new old truth would pass over to her without word of mouth from the Indians. How would she recognize it?

She looked deeply into the eyes of old Indians when she met them in the lanes. Would they know her and recognize her and pass something to her across the invisible airy path? But they continued to look as before, deep and observant, but
blocking something away from her. And they went forever on their way to and fro into the mountain, up its steep flanks, lightly and easily and continuously - but never giving a sign that she could take for a sign.

And the years went by... Little by little the years went by - and little by little Martia drew the white world about her again, almost unconsciously. Where her walls had been bare, she hung the Chinese paintings that had been stored in New York. Instead of water drawn from the well, she had it piped - hot and cold, now. More pipes for the furnace - more colds in the head! Books - books - books again! And people. More and more people, less and less Indian. Jesus was always there - coming and going. There were many motors now. The old buggy had worn out and fallen to pieces. There was less and less wonder, now, about the Indian life, and perhaps that was as well.

After a while, she ceased thinking about the cosmic purpose of her life. Perhaps she let it ride. Life was not so ecstatic any more, it was more difficult to maintain, but it seemed right. There grew into their house, then, a strange balance between the white and the Indian modes of life, not quite one or the other, but a mixture of both. And in herself, when it grew strong enough, there was a sense of waiting. An unachieved waiting. And sometimes, after sleep, she had a flash of knowing about life. All life.

There seemed to be growing in her very slowly a perception of Being. Not of the old Bergsonian Becoming, but of pure Being that implied past, present and to come. At
moments, then, she realised something essentially significant in the countless errands of the Indians upon the mountain. They merged into one meaning which became The Errand... and that was life itself. It explained something about this race that has been called static, by the white race; for anyone who lives from point to point calls himself dynamic, and those who live wholly at all times appear to such a one as static. It was difficult to put into words - no, it becomes the Truth that must be communicated without words - as the Indians tell it day by day, always, to anyone who can take it from their life... Was there not the example and precept forever before one's eyes in the Indian country? For anyone to read and understand, anyone - the Indian life was a book to read beside a stream.

So long as they lived as they had always lived before the white people came to deflect their true direction, the Indians maintained their Magical Being. Could it be told? Never. Could it be even known? Did they themselves know it? Save perhaps in the denials of the Bhagavadgita: "I am not That - I am not That. Not That!" There were no words to describe this Truth the Indians had preserved in their blood - in their living.


"Secret," answered the Indian.

Secret, hidden at the centre - pure - uprising - ineffable... "I am That.

Handwritten Notes:

"I am That.
Taos - Dec. 1927"