

## The Girl with Green Eyes

### Part 1

Reader: Liel Plamondon

'Of course,' the man in the brown hat said, 'there are good policemen and there are bad policemen, you know.'

'You're right,' the young man said. Yes. That's very true. Isn't it, Julie?' He looked at the young woman next to him.

Julie didn't answer and looked bored. She closed her eyes.

'Julie's my wife,' the young man told the man in the brown hat. She doesn't like trains.

She always feels ill on trains.'

'Oh yes?' the man in the brown hat said. Now my wife, she doesn't like buses. She nearly had an accident on a bus once. It was last year . . . No, no, it wasn't. It was two years ago.

I remember now. It was in Manchester.' He told a long, boring story about his wife and a bus in Manchester.

It was a hot day and the train was slow. There were seven people in the carriage. There was the man in the brown hat; the young man and his wife, Julie; a mother and two children; and a tall dark man in an expensive suit.

The young man's name was Bill. He had short brown hair and a happy smile. His wife, Julie, had long red hair and very green eyes, the colour of sea water. They were very beautiful eyes.

The man in the brown hat talked and talked. He had a big red face and a loud voice. He talked to Bill because Bill liked to talk too. The man in the brown hat laughed a lot, and when he laughed, Bill laughed too. Bill liked talking and laughing with people.

The two children were hot and bored. They didn't want to sit down. They wanted to be noisy and run up and down the train.

'Now sit down and be quiet,' their mother said. She was a small woman with a tired face and a tired voice.

I don't want to sit down,' the little boy said. I'm thirsty.'

'Here. Have an orange,' his mother said. She took an orange out of her bag and

gave it to him.

'I want an orange too,' the little girl said loudly.

'All right. Here you are,' said her mother. Eat it nicely, now.'

The children ate their oranges and were quiet for a minute.

Then the little boy said, 'I want a drink. I'm thirsty.'

The tall dark man took out his newspaper and began to read. Julie opened her eyes and looked at the back page of his newspaper. She read about the weather in Budapest and about the football in Liverpool. She wasn't interested in Budapest and she didn't like football, but she didn't want to listen to Bill and the man in the brown hat. 'Talk, talk, talk,' she thought. Bill never stops talking.'

Then suddenly she saw the tall man's eyes over the top of his newspaper. She could not see his mouth, but there was a smile in his eyes. Quickly, she looked down at the newspaper and read about the weather in Budapest again.

The train stopped at Dawlish station and people got on and got off. There was a lot of noise.

Is this our station?' the little girl asked. She went to the window and looked out.

No, it isn't. Now sit down,' her mother said.

We're going to Penzance,' the little girl told Bill. For our holidays.'

Yes,' her mother said. My sister's got a little hotel by the sea. We're staying there. It's cheap, you see.'

Yes,' the man in the brown hat said. It's a nice town. I know a man there. He's got a restaurant in King Street. A lot of holiday people go there. He makes a lot of money in the summer.'

He laughed loudly. Yes,' he said again. You can have a nice holiday in Penzance.'

We're going to St Austell,' Bill said. Me and Julie. It's our first holiday. Julie wanted to go to Spain, but I like St Austell. I always go there for my holidays. It's nice in August. You can have a good time there too.'

Julie looked out of the window. Where is Budapest?' she thought. I want to go there. I want to go to Vienna, to Paris, to Rome, to Athens.' Her green eyes were bored and angry. Through the window she watched the little villages and

hills of England.

The man in the brown hat looked at Julie. 'You're right,' he said to Bill. 'You can have a good time on holiday in England. We always go to Brighton, me and the wife. But the weather! We went one year, and it rained every day. Morning, afternoon, and night. It's true. It never stopped raining.' He laughed loudly. 'We nearly went home after the first week.'

Bill laughed too. 'What did you do all day, then?' he asked.

Julie read about the weather in Budapest for the third time. Then she looked at the tall man's hands. They were long, brown hands, very clean. 'Nice hands,' she thought.

He wore a very expensive Japanese watch. 'Japan,' she thought. 'I'd like to go to Japan.' She looked up and saw the man's eyes again over the top of his newspaper. This time she did not look away. Green eyes looked into dark brown eyes for a long, slow minute.

## Part 2

Reader: Diane Grise

After Newton Abbot station the guard came into the carriage to look at their tickets. Now then,' he said, 'where are we all going?'

'This train's late,' the man in the brown hat said. 'Twenty minutes late, by my watch.'

'Ten minutes,' the guard said. 'That's all.' He smiled at Julie.

The tall dark man put his newspaper down, found his ticket, and gave it to the guard. The guard looked at it.

'You're all right, sir,' he said. 'The boat doesn't leave Plymouth before six o'clock. You've got lots of time.'

The tall man smiled, put his ticket back in his pocket and opened his newspaper again.

Julie didn't look at him. 'A boat,' she thought. 'He's taking a boat from Plymouth. 'Where's he going?' She looked at him again with her long green eyes.

He read his newspaper and didn't look at her. But his eyes smiled.

The train stopped at Totnes station and more people got on and off.

'Everybody's going on holiday,' Bill said. He laughed. It's going to be wonderful. No work for two weeks. It's a nice, quiet town, St Austell. We can stay in bed in the mornings, and sit and talk in the afternoons, and have a drink or two in the evenings. Eh, Julie?' He looked at his wife. 'Are you all right, Julie?'

'Yes, Bill,' she said quietly. I'm OK.' She looked out of the window again. The train went more quickly now, and it began to rain. Bill and the man in the brown hat talked and talked.

Bill told a long story about two men and a dog, and the man in the brown hat laughed very loudly.

'That's a good story,' he said. 'I like that. You tell it very well. Do you know the story about . . . ' And he told Bill a story about a Frenchman and a bicycle.

'Why do people laugh at these stories?' Julie thought. 'They're so boring!'

But Bill liked it. Then he told a story about an old woman and a cat, and the man in the brown hat laughed again. That's good, too. I don't know. How do you remember them all?'

'Because', Julie thought, 'he tells them every day.'

'I don't understand,' the little girl said suddenly. She looked at Bill. Why did the cat die?'

'Shhh. Be quiet,' her mother said. Come and eat your sandwiches now.'

'That's all right,' Bill said. I like children.'

The man in the brown hat looked at the children's sandwiches. 'Mmm, I'm hungry, too,' he said. You can get sandwiches in the restaurant on this train.' He looked at Bill. Let's go down to the restaurant, eh? I need a drink too.'

Bill laughed. You're right. It's thirsty work, telling stories.'

The two men stood up and left the carriage.

The little girl ate her sandwich and looked at Julie. But why did the cat die?' she asked.

'I don't know,' Julie said. 'Perhaps it wanted to die.'

'The little girl came and sat next to Julie. I like your hair,' she said. It's beautiful.' Julie looked down at her and smiled.

For some minutes it was quiet in the carriage. Then the tall dark man opened his bag and took out a book. He put it on the seat next to him, and looked at

Julie with a smile. Julie looked back at him, and then down at the book. Famous towns of Italy, she read. Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples.

She looked away again, out of the window at the rain. 'Two weeks in St Austell,' she thought. 'With Bill. In the rain.'

After half an hour the two men came back to the carriage. 'There are a lot of people on this train,' Bill said. 'Do you want a sandwich, Julie?'

'No,' she said. 'I'm not hungry. You eat them.'

The train was nearly at Plymouth. Doors opened and people began to move. 'A lot of people get on here,' the man in the brown hat said.

The tall dark man stood up and put his book and his newspaper in his bag. Then he picked up his bag and left the carriage. The train stopped at the station. A lot of people got on the train, and two women and an old man came into the carriage. They had a lot of bags with them. Bill and the man in the brown hat stood up and helped them. One of the women had a big bag of apples. The bag broke and the apples went all over the carriage.

'Oh damn!' she said.

Everybody laughed, and helped her to find the apples. The train moved away from Plymouth station. After a minute or two everybody sat down and the woman gave some apples to the children.

'Where's Julie?' Bill said suddenly. 'She's not here.'

'Perhaps she went to the restaurant,' the man in the brown hat said.

'But she wasn't hungry,' Bill said. 'She told me.'

The little girl looked at Bill. 'She got off the train at Plymouth,' she said. 'With the tall dark man. I saw them.'

'Of course she didn't!' Bill said. 'She's on this train. She didn't get off.'

'Yes, she did,' the children's mother said suddenly. 'I saw her too. The tall man waited for her on the platform.'

'He waited for her?' Bill's mouth was open. 'But . . . But he read his newspaper all the time. He didn't talk to Julie. And she never talked to him. They didn't say a word.'

'People don't always need words, young man,' the children's mother said.

'But she's my wife!' Bill's face was red and angry. 'She can't do that!' he said loudly. 'He stood up. I'm going to stop the train.' Everybody looked at him and

the two children laughed.

No,' the man in the brown hat said, no, you don't want to do that. Sit down and eat your sandwiches, my friend.'

'But I don't understand. Why did she go? What am I going to do?' Bill's face was very unhappy. After a second or two he sat down again. 'What am I going to do?' he said again.

'Nothing,' the man in the brown hat said. He ate his sandwich slowly. Go and have your holiday in St Austell. You can have a good time there. Forget about Julie. Those green eyes, now.'

He took out a second sandwich and began to eat it. 'I knew a woman once with green eyes. She gave me a very bad time. No, you want to forget about Julie.'