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The creature, more beast than man, terrified the girl.

Green Warning

By E. K. JARVIS

There was a girl and a monster and a subway train and a guy named Joe. Also, there was something going on in the old deserted car sheds that would have given the Secretary of Defense a lot of sleepless nights. But something had been overlooked. The yen of a guy for a gal. A thing called Love.

JOE KIELY was bringing the train into the Fulton Street stop when he saw the girl.

She was running wildly, a look of panic on her face, her purse held against her breast. A man was chasing her. He was short, thick-set, and Joe got only a glimpse of a savage animal-like face, before slamming on the brakes and throwing the emergency door open with two swift moves. He was out of the cab and streaking for the first open door before the train stopped. He was just in time to catch her in his arms.

"Help me!" she gasped.

Willard Moon, Kiely's conductor came running up. He was holding his left hand to his cheek. "What happened, Joe?"

"There was a guy chasing

the girl who just came in the car," Joe said. "You see him?"

"All I saw was stars," Moon grumbled. He winced as he rubbed his cheek. "Got slammed up against a post."

"Must have got away," Joe said. "Let's shove off."

The girl seemed all right, but Joe thought he could still see a small spark of panic far back in the dark brown eyes.

"Thank you so much," she said.

"What happened, miss?"

"I-I don't know. He seemed to come out of the dark. I ran. I think I screamed. I don't know."

Joe said, "You'll be okay now. Just relax."

She nibbled at her lower lip with small white even teeth. "I suppose I should. But..."

"Yeah. Guess it sounds easy. Look; why don't you come up front and I'll leave the cab door open and you can stand and talk to me. My relief comes on at the Fifty-ninth Street switchover and I'll have to leave you, that is if you're going that far?"

"I get off there," she said.

"Swell! Come on..."

There wasn't too much talking. It took Joe's full-time attention watching signal lights, getting the subway train into stations on time and trying not to run ahead. Nor did the girl seem to want to talk. Still, he felt pleased that she didn't leave when people began to fill the car. If only his luck held and no inspector saw the girl standing in the open cab door. "How about breakfast or coffee at Fifty-ninth? Unless there's someone meeting you...?"

She smiled with lips and eyes. "There's no one meeting me, and I usually have something at the place on the corner before I get the cross-town bus to Queens."

"Swell! It'll take me five minutes to check out. Meet you at the bank corner."

She nodded in agreement.

Her name was Eve, she was from some small town in

Michigan with an unpronounceable Indian name, she was all alone in New York and she lived in Queens. Joe learned all this in the fifteen minutes they were eating. It wasn't much. Joe could see her mind seemed only partly concerned with what she was saying.

"Still thinking about that crazy guy?" he asked suddenly.

Her eyes widened.

"Oh," he said, "it isn't I'm clever. But three times I ask you where in Queens you live and three times I get a blank stare. Y'know, even if you're fresh from the sticks someone should have told you Fulton's an Express stop. And you can change at Grand Central for a local. There's always people on the Express platform and you wouldn't be taking a chance anything happening like tonight. Course, don't think I'm complaining. I'd probably never have met you if you took the Express."

"Probably not," she agreed. "I'm not good at meeting people."

"Well," he looked at his empty cup. "I'm the same way, kinda. I don't usually crack—I mean speak to girls like I did to you. Not that I'm bashful. Just that some-

times it's hard to talk about things in common, y'know? Besides, a guy doesn't get to know girls on a run like I got." He turned his eyes up to meet hers.

"No?"

"Nah, it's not for meeting people. Don't get me wrong, I like the run. Turned down a couple of good ones to get it. Some guys say it's too lonely on the local, but it gives me time to think, and you get to see some funny things late at night. I think people at night are more like themselves, know what I mean?"

"I think I do."

"Sure. I don't mean the drunks. Heck, they're out all hours. But take somebody my own age—I'm twenty-eight—and he's down there at Spring or Bleeker, three or so in the morning, sittin' on a bench. Alone. You wonder where he's been and what he's been doing. You know where you've been." Joe laughed softly. "And now and then you get the fighters. Middle-aged couples, usually. They're always on a bench, and he's a foot or two from her, always lookin' like if she'd only shut up maybe he could get a minute's shut-eye; and she's full of what Mrs. So-and-so said and isn't

Mrs. So-and-so a such-and-such, and pretty soon he's telling her to shut up, that she's been at it all night. I look out the cab, watching them get on, and wouldn't you know, she's getting the last word in as they come through the door." He laughed his gentle without-malice laugh, an expression of delight with the things he saw.

She gave him a look of wide-eyed disbelief. "But Joe," she protested. "You couldn't possibly hear... Oh, you fool! And I listen and believe."

"No, I don't hear them, but sometimes you don't have to. It's all there in their faces. At least it seems that way to me." He looked beyond her to the clock on the wall. "Hey! Have I been beating your cars all this time? Why didn't you stop me? It's sixty-three!"

"No-o!" She turned to look out the wide window fronting Lexington Avenue. "It's broad daylight." She faced him again with a pensive stare. "You've been very kind, Joe." She shook her head as he made a gesture of denial. "And sweet, too. Imagine being warned about the men in New York being wolves. You're no more

of a wolf than any of the gang I know back home. Much, much nicer, in fact." She pushed away from the table and got to her feet. "Thanks for breakfast."

She waited for him to pay the check.

"You going to be okay now?" he asked.

She nodded. "Queens' Express bus gets me home in five minutes."

"Breakfast tomorrow?"

"If you'd like."

"Swell! I'll be watching for you."

Whatever else she was, Joe decided the next morning as they were eating, Eve was a good listener. "Aren't you getting a little tired of hearing me talk all the time?" he asked.

"I haven't complained, have I?"

"So why should I, is that it? Most guys would call me lucky, having a girl who's willing to listen. Mostly they want to talk about clothes or the latest Audiovision star, or what's going on in their office. And no matter how often they tell it, it's the same story. Now you, I haven't heard it once from you."

"And I'm going to make it a point not to begin," she said. "I'm just a working

girl, Joe, like the thousands of others you see..."

"Now don't say that! You're a whole lot different. Maybe it's your eyes: they look straight into you when you talk or listen. You ain't lookin' at anyone else. And the way you walk and dress, like an actress I once saw on the stage. Minute she came on your eyes followed her till she got off, and you couldn't wait till she got back on again. Funny, I remember her but not the play."

"You mean the way I wear my clothes?"

"Yeah! You got a nice figure and you don't try to fake it up bigger like most of them."

She said, "Well," and smiled as his face flushed.

"And that's another thing about you," he went on doggedly. "You got a nice smile, but you don't keep turning it on and off all the time just to show your pretty teeth. Like some girls."

"Well, maybe it's about time you met someone like me," she said.

Suddenly he was very serious. "Look, Eve, I'd like to see more of you. Take you to dinner, a movie, or whatever you'd like to do. How about it? There's a good movie at

the Fine Arts. We can see the show have dinner after and I can still get you home in time for you to change for work..."

"I'd like it very much. Meet you at two in front of the Fine Arts?"

"Right."

It became a steady thing with them. She would come into the first car and go up front and talk to him until Twenty-third Street. Then, at Fifty-ninth she would wait for him and they would breakfast together, and later in the afternoon they would see each other again. Invariably it was Joe who did the talking. Mostly, on the train, she would stare out the front window while Joe talked. Other times she seemed content to just listen. That she was content just to be with him was a feeling which grew stronger with Joe as time went by.

They were walking down Broadway one afternoon, going to a cafeteria Joe had recommended. She was holding tightly to his fingers, as if she were a little frightened.

"You don't like crowds, do you?" he asked. He squeezed her fingers.

"I'm a small-town girl, remember?" she said. "Small-

town boys come to the big city and don't want to let on they're from some place out in Iowa so they get in the swim right away. It's harder for girls. I still get a little panicky in crowds. This is going to sound crazy, Joe, but I like looking out the window in the front car and watching the lights come up, green, amber, red, and watching the tracks switch off into a kind of dark nowhere. Like some of those tunnels leading down to—to what and where, Joe?"

"Honey," Joe said, "I'm always surprised when I have to take a special run now and then, and I get down around where the maintenance shops are. I swear! An army could hide out down there and no one would be the wiser. Especially in that old area that's sealed. Nobody but *nobody* ever goes into the place anymore."

"Sealed...?"

He went on: "Yeah. When they built the new express track below back in 1958 they sealed off a whole area in lower Manhattan for construction materials and stuff. I'll bet there must be miles of open area down there. Of course that was seven years ago; they might have worked on it since." He stopped and

nudged her. "I'll get a paper."

He glanced briefly at the news during their dinner. "Listen to this," he said suddenly. "'A fire of undetermined origin claimed the life of Professor Gordon Thomas late last night...' You remember reading about him, don't you?"

"No-o..."

"Yeah. He was the guy who claimed he got radio signals from Mars. About a year or so ago. He got a big play in the papers about it. He said he was able to read the signals and that there was going to be an invasion of Earth by the Martians. Wait, let me see..." He screwed his face into thoughtful lines. "Yeah. You know, the flying saucer business..."

"Yes, I know."

"Well, he said they were Martian scout planes. Anyway, this character said the Martians were sending a whole fleet of spaceships out to lay in the shadow of the moon until the time came for the invasion."

"But wouldn't we see them?" she asked.

"He said they had some kind of paint made them invisible. Anyway the papers rode the poor guy pretty bad,

and the school he was at made him resign. Wait let me see what the paper says."

Presently he went on again: "' . . . This little gadget, no bigger than a pocket lighter, Professor Thomas claimed, was a receiver for the interspatial signals...' That was it. He said there could be agents here on Earth, who were receiving signals with this gadget. Used to be a gag. Flick your lighter and say, 'anyone for space signals'? Poor old guy. Went off alone to this place in Maine. He said someday he'd break the code completely and warn the Earth when the invasion would take place."

"I guess he won't be able to warn anyone now," she said.

"Guess not." He turned the pages to the sport section. "Aah! Looks like my Giants are in. Three more games and it'll be all over. Who're you for?"

"I'm for you," she said.

"And I'm for you. I guess I was for you the first time I saw you." Suddenly he was serious. "That's funny. A guy wonders about the time when he's going to propose to a girl. You know, dim lights, papa and mama hiding in the kitchen, the ring in his

pocket, and all the rest. Not like this, in a cafeteria in the middle of the day. I love you, Eve, and want..."

"Joe... please."

"Wrong track, eh, Eve?"

"It isn't a question of how I feel about you. Maybe that isn't the important thing. I have never been happier than these past few days."

"Eve...!"

She looked up. "No, I'm not saying yes. Not now, anyway."

His smile was radiant. "What a dope! Why you don't know anything about me, other than I work for the Transit System."

"I don't care."

"I know, but..."

"What is there more to know about you than I already know? That you're the kindest person I've ever met, that being with you is a special kind of happiness, that there is such a thrill to holding your hand or watching you smile or listening to that funny pleased laugh you have. Are we supposed to wear signs with our qualifications? You see someone, you're with him one minute, and that's it."

They looked at each other quietly for a long moment. There was no need for talk.

As if at a signal they rose and walked to the door and went out into the crowded street.

And it was as if they were alone.

They walked up Broadway to Fifty-ninth where the Express busses to Queens started their runs. They didn't talk much, but they didn't find a need for talk. What they had had to say to each other they had said, and now there was only the time to wait.

They were a little early. The bus had just made the turn to come around. Suddenly she brought her hands up to his face and kissed him. It was their first kiss. There was nothing of passion or hunger in their kiss. Just their lips meeting for the first time, in wonder, in love, in the sweet ecstasy of the realization of their oneness.

They separated. He leaned forward as if to kiss her again. She put both hands lightly against his chest.

"No," she whispered. "Please..."

He was startled at the look of pain in her eyes.

"Eve, what's wrong?"

She took his arm and pulled him over to the window of the haberdashery on

the corner a few feet from the bus stop. She held his arm tightly, saying nothing for the space of several seconds, only looking into his eyes with an odd look.

"What's wrong?" he asked again, more gently this time.

"I didn't think this would happen," she said. "I was prepared for everything, everything but this. And now..."

He thought he understood. "I know what you mean. The way I came out with it, bang! No wonder..."

"Joe, what if I wasn't, well, what you thought me?"

"I don't know what you're talking about. What should I think you are?"

"May I have a cigarette?"

She smiled at his look of bewilderment. He said, "Sure, honey, but I've never seen you smoke."

He drew two cigarettes from his pack, gave one to her, stuck the other in his lips and pulled out his lighter.

"Anyone for space signals?" she asked. "Funny old man, wasn't he, the professor? Space invaders hiding behind the moon. Did he say where they would land or how or where they would go when they did? Maybe in those huge areas below the

city streets that you said were large enough to hide an army. Maybe there are people walking around with these little pocket-lighter gadgets in their purses or pockets signalling like crazy. Oh, Joe, Joe! I love you so much..."

Suddenly she pulled away from him and without looking back ran into the bus.

She wasn't at the Fulton Street stop that morning.

Somehow he knew she wouldn't be.

But she was at the Fulton Street stop the next night. The fog that had been close about his mind lifted. He saw her, and formed her name with his lips. He saw her for that instant, and forever wished he hadn't. She was up close to the tiled wall almost at the end of the platform. She was facing him, smiling with head bent slightly. Then she moved, and Joe screamed and yanked the emergency brake. He knew, even as she disappeared in front of him what she had done.

It wasn't the poor torn body of the girl that Joe stared at. It was the ribbons of pale green blood now thick on the rail bed.

To tell him and the world what was in store for it...

THE END