

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

11 *Dinah in Heaven*

(“The Woman in his Life”)

She did not know that she was dead,
But, when the pang was o’er,
Sat down to wait her Master’s tread
Upon the Golden Floor,

With ears full-cock and anxious eyes, 5
Impatiently resigned;
But ignorant that Paradise
Did not admit her kind.

Persons with Haloes, Harps, and Wings 10
Assembled and reproved;
Or talked to her of Heavenly things,
But Dinah never moved.

There was one step along the Stair
That led to Heaven’s Gate;
And, till she heard it, her affair 15
Was — she explained — to wait.

And she explained with flattened ear,
Bared lip and milky tooth —
Storming against Ithuriel’s Spear
That only proved her truth! 20

Sudden — far down the Bridge of Ghosts
That anxious spirits clomb —
She caught that step in all the hosts,
And knew that he had come.

She left them wondering what to do, 25
But not a doubt had she.
Swifter than her own squeal she flew
Across the Glassy Sea;

Flushing the Cherubs everywhere,
And skidding as she ran, 30
She refuged under Peter's Chair
And waited for her man.

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There spoke a Spirit out of the press,
'Said: — "Have you any here 35
That saved a fool from drunkenness,
And a coward from his fear?"

"That turned a soul from dark to day
When other help was vain;
That snatched it from Wanhope and made
A cur a man again?" 40

"Enter and look," said Peter then,
And set The Gate ajar.
"If I know aught of women and men
I trow she is not far."

"Neither by virtue, speech nor art 45
Nor hope of grace to win;
But godless innocence of heart
That never heard of sin:

"Neither by beauty nor belief
Nor white example shown. 50
Something a wanton — more a thief —
But — most of all — mine own."

“Enter and look,” said Peter then,
“And send you well to speed;
But, for all that I know of women and men 55
Your riddle is hard to read.”

Then flew Dinah from under the Chair,
Into his arms she flew —
And licked his face from chin to hair
And Peter passed them through! 60

1932

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