

Women

Transformation

Females who lived in Northern California during the early years of the Gold Rush could name their ticket. The census of 1850 places the female population, by that time increasing, at less than eight percent of the total inhabitants of the country, while in mining counties the proportion fell below two percent. Calaveras County showed only 267 women in a total of 16,884; Yuba, 2221 in a total of 9,673; Mariposa, 108 in 4,379, yet here only 80 were white women; Sacramento 615 in 9,087. Likely, in those days, women who were not Caucasian were only spottily counted. Not until 1855, when a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama was completed—thus making travel through this disease-infested region somewhat safer—did more women venture west.

Women in those days were either “good” or “bad.” The “good” ones were virtually enshrined. The arrival of the first “good” woman in the mining town of Columbia was marked by a parade complete with brass band. Here, class distinction was typical of the gold camps, as exemplified when Big Annie, a well-known madame, pushed the town schoolmarm into the street. The town’s firemen, incensed by this rudeness, dragged their watercart to Annie’s place and washed her out of the building.

One young man in Nevada city wrote, “Got nearer to a woman this evening than I have been in six months. Came near fainting.”

Widows didn’t remain that way for long. Sonora store-keeper told of a widow who buried her husband one day, then married the chief mourner the next.

Women were in much demand in those early days. Steamboat agents would cry out, “Ladies on board” to draw customers. Men conspired with relatives at home to bring out women who had not found husbands. A mercenary groom in Shasta advertised admission to his wedding, charging \$5.00 a ticket, enough to set up a fine household.

In a camp near Coloma a miner happened to own a woman’s fashionable boot. Occasionally he exhibited his treasure, charging a dollar a person. He had plenty of takers. “The chunk ain’t found that can buy this boot! ‘Taint for sale, no-how!”

One forty-niner discovered the print of a woman's slipper in the mud. He followed the print for miles and came finally upon a camp, which he did not dare approach very closely. But peeking through the brush, he saw protruding from beneath the edge of the tent that very pair of slippers, with feet in them. However, great crude boots in the vicinity also contained feet, and the miner quietly left the camp without trying to acquaint himself with the slippers' owner.

Mark Twain on Gold Rush Women

In this essay from *Roughing It*, Mark Twain parodies the scarcity of women:

It was a driving, vigorous, restless population in those days. It was a curious population. It was the only population of the kind that the world has ever seen gathered together, and it is not likely that the world will ever see its like again. For, observe, it was an assemblage of two hundred thousand young men—not simpering, dainty, kid-gloved weaklings, but stalwart, muscular, dauntless young braves, brim full of push and energy, and royally endowed with every attribute that goes to make up a peerless and magnificent manhood—the very pick and choice of the world’s glorious ones. No women, no children, no gray and stooping veterans,—none but erect, bright-eyed, quick-moving, strong-handed young giants—the strangest population, the finest population, the most gallant host that ever trooped down the startled solitudes of an unpeopled land. And where are they now? Scattered to the ends of the earth—or prematurely aged and decrepit—or shot or stabbed in street affrays—or dead of disappointed hopes and broken hearts—all gone, or nearly all—victims devoted upon the altar of the golden calf—the noblest holocaust that ever wafted its sacrificial incense heavenward. It is pitiful to think upon.

It was a splendid population—for all the slow, sleepy, sluggish-brained sloths stayed at home—you never find that sort of people among pioneers—you cannot build pioneers out of that sort of material. It was that population that gave to California a name for getting up astounding enterprises and rushing them through with a magnificent dash and daring and a recklessness of cost or consequences, which she bears unto this day—and when she projects a new surprise, the grave world as usual, and says “Well, that is California all over.”

But they were rough in those times! They fairly reveled in gold, whisky, fights and fandangoes, and were unspeakably happy. The honest miner raked from a hundred to a thousand dollars out of his claim a day, and what with the gambling dens and the other entertainments, he hadn’t a cent the next morning, if he had any sort of luck. They cooked their own bacon and beans, sewed on their own buttons, washed their own shirts—blue woolen ones; and if a man wanted a fight on

his hands without any annoying delay, all he had to do was to appear in public in a white shirt or a stove-pipe hat, and he would be accommodated. For those people hated aristocrats. They had a particular and malignant animosity toward what they called a "biled shirt."

It was a wild, free, disorderly, grotesque society! Men—only swarming hosts of stalwart men—nothing juvenile, nothing feminine, visible anywhere!

In those days miners would flock in crowds to catch a glimpse of that rare and blessed spectacle, a woman! Old inhabitants tell how, in a certain camp, the news went abroad early in the morning that a woman was come. They had seen a calico dress hanging out of a wagon down at the camping-ground—sign of emigrants from over the great Plains. Everybody went down there, and a shout went up when an actual, bonafide dress was discovered fluttering in the wind! The male emigrant was visible. The miners said:

"Fetch her out!"

He said: "It is my wife, gentlemen—she is sick—we have been robbed of money, provisions, everything, by the Indians—we want to rest."

"Fetch her out! We've got to see her!"

"But, gentlemen, the poor thing, she—"

"FETCH HER OUT!"

He "fetched her out," and they swung their hats and sent up three rousing cheers and a tiger; and they crowded around and gazed at her, and touched her dress, and listened to her voice with the look of men who listened to a memory rather than a present reality—and then they collected twenty-five hundred dollars in gold and gave it to the man, and swung their hats again and gave three more cheers, and went home satisfied.



And Alonzo Delano on the Same Subject...

Early one morning, our mess was awakened by the discharge of a musket at our heads. Jumping up, we exclaimed:

"What's the matter, what has happened?"

"What the matter!" shouted the stentorian voice of one of our neighbors, "turn out, turn out; new diggins, by Heaven! A live woman came in last night."

"A woman? oh, git out, you're joking."

"No, it's true as preaching. I was prospecting around the camp, and I'll be ____ if I didn't see a petticoat hanging on a limb by a new tent on ____ Bar. I want to raise a company to go and take a look at the animal, for hang me if I've pluck enough to go alone."

"Cook, get breakfast just as quick as ____."

"D____n the breakfast," replied our friend, "she may be toted off to other diggins before you can fry a piece of pork, and you won't get a sight of her."

We knew that delays were dangerous, so shouldering our picks and shovels, pistols and rifles, and taking a bottle or two of aguardiente, we marched to the new tent, in file, our leader whistling "Come haste to the wedding," and gave three cheers and a discharge of firearms. The alarmed occupants rushed to the door to see what was up. Our captain mounted a rock, and addressed the amazed husband in something like this strain:

"Stranger, we have been shut up here so long that we don't know what is going on in the world, and we have already forgotten what it is made of. We have understood that our mothers were women, but it is so long since we have seen them, that we have forgotten how a woman looks, and being told that you have caught one, we are prospecting to get a glimpse."

The man, a sensible fellow, by the way, entering into the humor of the joke, produced the *animal*, when with nine cheers, a drink all around, and a few good natured jokes, we quietly dispersed.

Vive L'Amour

Word of the shortage of women made its way to France, and several companies of girls of good character landed in San Francisco. Here they were hired by gamblers and saloonkeepers at the then-outrageous wages of \$250 a month to sit beside the croupier and rake in the winnings, or to dispense drinks at the bar. Their employers guarded them vigilantly, for their presence assured an establishment increased custom; nevertheless, within a week or two they all had husbands. News of their success sped back to France, and women of a less-savory sort set sail for the gold fields.

“Nine hundred of the French demimonde are expected,” the *Pacific News*, a San Francisco newspaper, reported in October 1850. That shipment dwindled to only fifty. Then they began to flock in from all parts of the world—the Marquesas, Peru, Australia—and they were the first women to go to the river camps in any number, and they prospered wherever they settled; one noted prostitute claimed to have earned \$50,000 in a few months. Native American women were victimized, freely passed around at the camps.

Enos Christman, an early-day newspaperman wrote on August 9, 1851: I feel that I am a rover, a wanderer on the face of the earth. In a land flowing, not with milk and honey, but with flapjacks and gold dust, far from home an kindred, and surrounded by the offscourings and scum of society, from all parts of the habitable globe. All selfish, each for himself, and his Satanic Majesty for all. I have scarcely met with half a dozen respectable women, or men with their families, since I left the Atlantic States. The women of other nations, what few there are, are nearly all lewd harlots, who are drunk half the time, or sitting behind the gambling table dealing monte. To see a woman who can read and write is a curiosity. Indeed, the majority of our females are a disgrace to woman. All, all ruined!

Dedicated to the Ones They Loved

On Valentine's Day, 1968, the town council of Jackson gathered to honor the members of the world's oldest profession, a profession—legalized in the town in 1854—that had thrived there until 1952, when the houses of prostitution were closed.

Town leaders set a heart-shaped plaque in a cement slab near several deteriorating buildings that had once housed the prostitutes. Many tourists stopped by; one visitor, however, smeared the monument with red paint. Town residents argued the merits of the plaque, and one was heard to say, "Next, we need a plaque to commemorate bootlegging in the city."

Finally, the plaque disappeared.

And Let's Hear It for the Cooks & Laundresses

Even women of good reputation made big money. One woman was said to have made \$18,000 by baking pies.

Sarah Royce, one of the first women in the gold fields, described the change in a country woman who was there with her miner husband: "She was probably between thirty and thirty-five years of age, and the idea of 'shining in society' had evidently never dawned upon her mind, when I first used to see her cooking by her outdoor camp fire, not far from our tent. Ordinary neighborly intercourse had passed between us, but I had not seen her for some time, when she called one day and in quite an exultant mood told me the man who kept the boarding house had offered her a hundred dollars a month to cook three meals a day for his boarders, that she was to do no dishwashing and was to have someone help her all the time she was cooking. She had been filling the place some days, and evidently felt that her prospect of making money was very enviable. Her husband, also, was highly pleased that his wife could earn so much. Again I saw nothing of her for some time, when again she called; this time much changed in style. Her hair was dressed in very youthful fashion; she wore a new

gown with full trimmings, and seemed to feel in every way elevated.”

And then there was the inveterate bachelor who married a spinster because she refused to wash his clothes for him. He was determined she should do it at any price, as he was a great lover of cleanliness; in this dilemma he resolved to pay her all he was worth, rather than forego his habit of cleanliness.

Solving the Big Shortage

Amid much fanfare, a Mrs. Elizabeth W. Farnham, a former matron at Sing Sing prison and widow of a pioneer on the Oregon Trail, published an open letter in New York newspapers soliciting 100 to 130 “intelligent, virtuous and efficient” women to accompany her to California, “believing that the presence of women would be one of the surest checks upon many of the evils that are apprehended there.” Applicants had to provide testimonials from their clergymen as to their characters, and also bring \$250 to cover the cost of the sea voyage and of getting settled in California.

Although many women inquired, only three women ultimately made the voyage around the Horn with Mrs. Farnham.

**1849 Want Ad in Marysville
newspaper:**

A Husband Wanted

By a lady who can wash, cook, scour, sew, milk, spin, weave, hoe, (can't plow), cut wood, make fires, feed the pigs, raise chickens, rock the cradle (gold-rocker, I thank you, Sir!), saw a plank, drive nails, etc. These are a few of the solid branches; now for the ornamental. "Long time ago" she went as far as syntax, read Murray's Geography and through two rules in Pike's Grammar. Could find 6 states on the Atlas. Could read, and you can see she can write. Can—no, could—paint roses, butterflies, ships, etc. Could once dance; can ride a horse, donkey or oxen, besides a great many things too numerous to be named here. Oh, I hear you ask, could she scold? No, she can't you, you _____ good-for-nothing_____!

Now for her terms. Her age is none of your business. She is neither handsome nor a fright, yet an old man need not apply, nor any who have not a little more education than she has, and a great deal more gold, for there must be \$20,000 settled on her before she will bind herself to perform all the above. Address to Dorothy Scraggs, with real name. P. O. Marysville.

—From *They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush*, by Joann Levy

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Revolving Spouses

An actress known as Mrs. Kirby could have set a precedent for Elizabeth Taylor. Her first husband, whose name she retained at this time for professional purposes, was an English actor so noted for his dramatic death throes that a phrase coined by bored theatre-goers, "Wake me up when Kirby dies," became popular. Kirby was so good at his death throes that he did the act for real when he was only twenty-nine, offstage and for keeps.

When she arrived in San Francisco in January, 1850, she brought husband number two, a Mr. Wingate. Fortunately she did not take his name, for in the autumn of that same year Mr. Wingate met his end on a murderous horse. Poor Mrs. Kirby took a leave of absence from the stage for a whole week and stayed out of the marriage business for six months. Then she married James Stark, a leading actor and manager in San Francisco. Stark survived, but divorced Mrs. Kirby, now Mrs. Stark, some years later; placing third in a husband series of five. She outlived the other two.

While crossing the plains in 1846, a young woman named Lucinda entered the sacred state of matrimony with a fellow emigrant for exactly ten hours. During that time the young man found he'd made the worst bargain of his life and promptly ended the marriage. Before the overland journey's end, Lucinda tried and failed to interest a second member of the party in marriage. When she finally arrived in California, however, she was overwhelmed with marriage offers. She finally accepted the most promising offer, only to have her husband die soon after. The next husband, a sailor, also soon died.

Humorist Alonzo Delano made wicked fun of long-distance relationships:

Last year a young man came to California on a golden voyage across the plains, leaving a disconsolate and almost

heart broken wife at home, who hardly yielded an unwilling consent to their painful separation. After an arduous journey of five months, during which he experienced many hardships, he arrived safely in the land of Ophir, and went to the mines. We all know how difficult it was last year to send or receive letters. Our hero went sturdily to work, and in a few months dug by hard knocks, a thousand dollars. Although he had not heard a word from home, he availed himself of an opportunity, and purchasing a draft, he sent it all to his beloved wife, anticipating the rapture with which she would receive it as an earnest of his luck, and his love. Eels are slippery things to hold—at least they were in my boyhood, and so are wives, sometimes now; pardon me ladies, I don't mean you.

The heart broken wife at length began to recover her spirits, and wonder why Joe didn't write to her as he promised, and then to pout at his neglect, and then to vow and declare she didn't care anything about it. If Joe had forgot her, she would forget him. He had left her, and he might go, and finally she looked upon herself as an injured woman, and on another man, as one who could fill—Joe's place. Spunk there, dear girls! So she applied for a bill of divorce, and obtained it (of course the western States do queer things sometimes,) and solaced herself for all her sufferings, in the arms of a new husband. But the cream of the catastrophe is yet to come. The very day after her second marriage, the draft for a thousand dollars arrived from her first love, but she could not touch a dollar. It had been sent to Polly Smith's order; but alas! she was not now his wife, but Polly Brown, and Polly Brown could not endorse the draft.

Fickle Females

Storekeeper William Perkins of Sonora must have wondered at feminine logic as he listened to this conversation:

During a moonlight picnic a clever little woman, the handsome Mrs. _____ confessed to the soft impeachment of having had four offers of marriage before she contented herself with her present lord and master. The first wooer was a "very

nice young man," and the match was in every way desirable, the old folks willing and all parties satisfied; when one day, the young girl discovered a pock mark on her lover's nose. She chose to consider the circumstance in a ludicrous light, and her mirth was excited to such an extent that she laughed all her love away, and at last refused to have the unfortunate man. There is nothing like ridicule to banish the little god, and when a girl finds any thing to laugh at in her lover, he had better at once raise the siege and decamp.

The second suitor was a young French painter, and an artist of some merit. On this occasion the course of true love appeared to unobstructed. There was a tacit understanding that the parties pleased each other, and that Don Hymen was soon to bless the lovers. But of Shakespeare, they "saw of might" was still to hold true! One unlucky day...the bridegroom got up a boating party on the Seine, and Annette's Mother and sisters were of the party with herself. During the excursion the boat goat aground, and the Artist gallantly jumped overboard to shove it off. Alas! Upon what gossamer chains are hung our destinies! Before committing himself to the waters, the young man prudently took off his shoes and stockings.

"Well, what of that? Surely there was nothing in this simple and commendable action to offend a lady-love, and she a Frenchwoman."

No; but ye gods of female capriciousness; his toes were malformed! Could anyone, could a barbarian expect a young and beautiful girl to unite herself in the strict bonds of matrimony with a man whose toes overlapped one another!

A third applicant, after getting swimmingly over the first preliminary difficulties of courtship, which of course kept him at a respectable distance from the object of his desires, was discarded forever on his attempting to claim the first kiss of reciprocal love.

"Come, come!" I hear a lady reader say. "That is a little too much! Frenchwomen, par excellence, are not quite so squeamish as all that."

Not so fast, my fair and outraged Miss, or Madame. The kiss was all very well, toute en réglé; but the gentleman was not blest with a sweet breath.

"Oh, that makes a vast difference; Annette was quite right!"

So I suppose.

The fourth suitor, Annette says, was just the very kind of a man for a husband. He was neither handsome nor ugly; clever nor stupid; good nor bad. What qualities he possessed were all negative. Listen ye handsome dandies and witty fops to the opinion of a Frenchwoman as to the beau ideal of a man for a husband!

Unfortunately the poor fellow had an awkward way of staring with one eye, and Annette took it into her little pate that the eye was of glass, and although the supposition was erroneous, imagination got the better of reality and the fourth lover was dismissed.

A Lotta Lola and a Little Lotta

One of the Gold Rush's more colorful personalities was actress-dancer Lola Montez, who in her prime was the toast of Europe. Born Eliza Gilbert in Limerick, Ireland, she came to California in 1853 at the age of 35. At one time she was the mistress of the elderly King Ludwig I of Bavaria, and he gave her the title, Countess of Landsfeldt. After several years on the stage performing her famous spider dance (in which she seductively shook "spiders" made of cork, rubber and whalebone from her skirts) in San Francisco and making up to \$16,000 a week for her performances, she retired to Grass Valley in the northern mines. Accompanying her was her fourth husband, San Francisco newspaperman Patrick Hull, some monkeys, a pet bear and a trunk full of low-cut velvet gowns.

Grass Valley residents were not particularly impressed. "She still retained a slender, graceful figure, reported one of Lola's neighbors. "She had heavy black hair and the most brilliant, flashing eyes I have ever beheld. But ordinarily she was such a slattern that to me she was frankly disgusting. When attired in a low-necked gown as was her usual custom, even her liberal use of powder failed to conceal the fact that she stood much in need of a good application of soap."

Lola lived in Grass Valley for two years, strolling the streets smoking a cigar. One day, upon finding her pet bear dead, she suspected her husband of the deed, and after a huge fight sent him packing.

Perhaps Lola's longest-lasting accomplishment was the training of her protégé, Lotta Crabtree, who went on to a distinguished stage career after Lola taught her some dance steps beginning at the age of six in Grass Valley.

Lola left Grass Valley in 1855, looking for new worlds to conquer.

A Titanic Shipboard Romance

Electricity arced like a bolt of lightning from stern to stem of the 1,600-ton sidewheel steamer Northerner. Lola was lolling at the aft end of the ship, which explained all the wattage. Patrick Hull could feel the electricity even from his spread-eagled perch at the very tip of the bow. Lured by a magnetism he couldn't resist, he sauntered toward the aft end of the ship and unable to stop himself, gave Lola a raking gaze. Lola, lounging in a deck chair, knew all about raking gazes, having given a few herself to such European innocents as composer Franz Ligt and King Ludwig I. The Northerner, bound for San Francisco, was only two days out from Panama. Already things were hot and a major storm of the heart was about to commence.

Sparks flew as Patrick approached Lola. His raking gaze fell to the creamy expanse of her neck. An unwelcome blush crept into Lola's cheeks, as she realized she hadn't bathed in over a month, given all that nonsense with shipboard water rations and the really icky water in Panama. But no matter. She was a star, and among this motley group of fortune seekers, probably the cleanest of the lot even if her hair was oily and ears a bit grimy.

Patrick made a sweeping bow. "Señora Montez, I presume. I am Patrick Hull of San Francisco." He involuntarily sniffed a bit as body odor wafted into his sculpted nostrils.

Lola's eyes flashed as blue as the boundless Pacific that surrounded the ship. She raised her hand as if to strike in anger—a lifelong habit of hers—and corrected him. "I am the Countess of Landsfeldt, por favor, en route to California. I am no mere señora. Indeed, I am not even married."

"So why is such a famous lady as yourself on this...this...tub?" Patrick waved his hand at their humble surroundings.

She sighed mightily, trying to cool her curvaceous bosom with a flutter of her hand. Buying a bit of time while she evaluated this handsome stranger, she coughed delicately, her chest rising and falling beguilingly. "My friend Johann Sutter wrote to me and told me to keep it a secret, but I just know I can trust you with some momentous news." All of her loneliness and confusion welded together in one upsurge of devouring yearning

as she gazed deeply into Patrick's gray-green eyes. "His carpenter foreman discovered some gold a few months ago while building a sawmill, and Sutter wants to share his wealth with me. Can you believe that? There's gold in California!"

"Countess," sneered Patrick, glad for the sea breeze that wafted away some of Lola's body odor. "Gold was discovered back in January, 1848, and it is now May of 1853. The gold rush is mostly over. Perhaps you should go back to Bavaria, or Spain or Ireland, or wherever you're from." His expression bordered on mockery as he spat over the railing of the ship. "And besides that, that poor sucker Sutter is broke. He never did have much in the way of brains, anyway." His booming laugh startled a nearby old-timer snoozing on a nearby deck chair. Patrick spat again, a great gob of saliva just clearing the railing before it melted into the ocean below.

Lola's breath burned in her throat with humiliation, and she reddened with wrath. Life was so unfair to women. She was better at spitting contests than any man, but knew this wasn't the right moment. "No one tells the famous Lola what to do!" An electric silence hung between them, and then Lola's huge blue eyes took in the sensuality of his physique. She noticed, too, the manly wisps of reddish hair that curled against the V of his open shirt. Now she saw him with abrupt clarity.

Lola's heightened color subsided. She curled the corners of her faintly rosy lips upward with the virtuosity of an experienced temptress. "Alas," she sighed, arranging her form to accentuate the suggestion of nubile curves beneath her dress. "The letter was postmarked February 15, 1848, but then my profession does force me to move around a bit, so my fan mail is slow to catch up with me." Fans were one thing, real men another. She tried to remember when she had last enjoyed herself with a man. Had it been with her first husband? Her second? That poet in Paris? The sailor in New Orleans? She couldn't remember if she was still married or not. Life became so confusing sometimes. She vowed to show this stranger how nonchalant she was.

Then Patrick gave her another raking gaze. "And now, my lovely countess, since Mr. Sutter has no wealth and opportunity to share with you, whatever will you do with yourself?" His silky voice held a challenge.

Wind gently fluffed Lola's soft dark hair. Her wild sapphire eyes mellowed subtly. She adjusted her skirts, permitting a slow

and deliberate glimpse of her tiny ankles. "Of course, you know I have performed my Spider Dance all over the world." The even whiteness of her smile was dazzling, her sultry voice pregnant with meaning.

Patrick's gray eyes bored into hers. "Do you know you have the most beautiful blue eyes I have ever seen?" His smile was as intimate as a kiss. "With those eyes alone I can help you find a position in San Francisco. I edit a prominent newspaper there and know everyone who is anyone."

"Oh?" Lola—upon discovering that Patrick was a man of some position and wealth—suddenly decided Patrick was the one for her. She found his nearness disturbing and exciting. Although she hadn't bathed, neither had he, so they were on an equal hygienic footing. His manly smell was so intoxicating. She was swimming through a haze of feelings and desires and body odors. "Tell me about San Francisco," she sighed, turning just so to accentuate her pert bosom and the tiny waist that was the talk of Europe.

And so Patrick told her. He told her of the hundreds of abandoned ships in the harbor, of the monte games, of the grand American Theater that seated 3,000 spectators. With relish, he added, "And the finest restaurants serve grizzly bear steaks."

Lola was not amused. Her sensual curves abruptly became more angular. "How dare you suggest that I eat grizzly bear! I love all animals and embarked on my grand lifelong path of animal rights activism after that horrid Litz trapped my favorite parrot in the lid of his grand piano." Suddenly, her trademark anger exploded. "I will never eat grizzly bear! Never! But I swear to you by all the water in this Atlantic Ocean that someday I shall have one as a pet." She waved her hand over the horizon.

"My dear," replied Patrick. "We are on the Pacific Ocean."

"Do not contradict me!" she screamed.

"Ah," sighed Patrick, finding himself more and more attracted to this headstrong woman, so like his mother, "You are so cute when you are angry."

Just then her manager, Henning, a young former telegrapher she had hired in St. Louis during her last gig, sauntered up. "A pet grizzly! Now that's one for the history books!" He laughed, an ear-splitting, high-pitched cackle.

Lola jumped up from her lounge chair and whacked him on

the side of his head. "No one, I mean no one insults Lola!" Henning, rubbing the goose-egg that had begun swelling above his left ear, stared at her, baffled. Lola shrieked, "What am I paying you for? Tell me what you have arranged for my opening date at the American Theater!"

"What American Theater?" asked Henning. Lola whacked him on the other side of his head. Henning scuttled away.

"Oh, the hired help these days...", sighed Lola. Her heart was hammering, her breath ragged as she coily glanced at Patrick to see the effect of her tantrum.

Patrick was impressed by her sadistic tour de force. He could hold himself back no longer. "I'll take care of you," adding, "Such a fragile, innocent little lady. You need someone to guard and protect you."

Lola gulped hard, hot tears slipping down her cheeks. Her life had for so long been a bitter battle. No one understood the real Lola. Finally, here was someone who really cared. She dreamed of being crushed by his embrace.

Containing himself no longer, he swept her, weightless, into his arms. She cleared her throat, pretending to be unaffected. Then their eyes locked as their breathing came in unison.

"I want it all, Patrick," murmured Lola. "I want my Spider Dance. I want gold and grizzly bears, a cottage in the mountains. And...I want you."

He whispered, his breath hot against her ear, "Yes, my darling." A brief shiver rippled through her, and her body tingled from the contact. Then, the touch of his lips on hers sent a shock wave through her entire body. It was a kiss for her entire soul to melt into.

Suddenly, a round of applause rippled around the couple. "Your best performance to date," croaked one old miner. "I saw you in New York, but this one beats the cake. Great acting!"

Patrick and Lola separated slightly; Patrick was unused to this kind of attention. Lola, however, ignored the onlookers and smiled, caressing the length of Patrick's back. "Darling, you are the one for me," she purred. "Where is your cabin?"

"Yes," he cooed. "I'm something of artist. Let me show you my etchings and perhaps I can make a very special portrait of you..."

And as they sauntered away from their appreciative audience, storm clouds parted and the sun slowly sank into the

*warm waters of the Pacific like a giant grapefruit. Violins swelled, porpoises jumped, and choirs of angels celebrated the great moment. Credits rolled, and that's the end of this tale, unless you count *Installment Two* of the romance that's already been optioned by that famous producer in Beverly Hills. It's something about a large ship that hits an iceberg. It'll never sell, but you know how crazy all those guys are in movieland.*

True-to-Life Epilogue: Patrick and Lola married in San Francisco a few weeks later, and lived happily ever after (more or less, excepting Lola's temper tantrums) for a whole two whole months, until Lola threw him out of her cottage in the mining town of Grass Valley; rumor had it that she accused him of only being interested in her money. Lola indeed adopted a grizzly bear cub, who proved a much steadier companion than Patrick, even though the cub tried to bite her and was summarily dispensed with after that incident.