

Just a Song at Twilight

Marcia Savin





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by

Marcia Savin

CAST

HE

SHE

A park bench. Winter. A bare-branched tree. A man in his sixties sits on the bench. He wears overcoat, muffler, is bare-headed, most of his hair gone. A thermos bottle beside him, unopened. A woman enters, also in her sixties. She is unfamiliar with her surroundings. She carries a mover's inventory, which she reads.

He: Did you get all moved in?

She: Oh, you were watching! You wouldn't believe what they wanted to come a few miles.

He: On behalf of the Tenants Organization, let me welcome you to subsidized housing. It's the only good thing about growing old. That, and the bus passes.

She: You're telling me. I don't know how long I could have held out, if the vacancy hadn't come up. Either pay rent, or have heat! Of course, I couldn't help feeling bad, too. I mean, on the one hand, being so relieved to hear that a place had come up here, and on the other, knowing that the only reason one would —

He: I'm sure that Mr. Feldman, wherever he is, would be happy to know that such an attractive person has taken his place.

She: I'm only taking the gentleman's apartment — not his place.

He: Unless you know everything there is to know about the wildlife along the Hudson River Valley, and unless you impart this information at the drop of a "good morning," you couldn't possibly take Joe Feldman's place.
(*pause*) Have a seat.

She: (*hesitant*) Oh, I should —

He: Unless this air is too sharp for you. I like it myself.

She: Are you kidding? You are looking at someone who loves winter. Whenever there's fresh snow on the ground, I go out for a long walk. Then come back and make a fire. And later, maybe some hot buttered rum ... I'm going to miss that fireplace.

He: I happen to have a hot drink here.

She: Thank you. I'd love it — but I was just stopping for a minute. I've all those boxes to unpack.

He: Do you like hot toddies?

She: Oh, I do. I definitely do.

He: It's one of the things I make really well.

She: And I would love one. Another time. Thanks.

He: Look, I know you think I'm an old souse sitting out here in the park sneaking hot toddies —

She: (*uncertain*) Oh, not for a minute!

He: For the past five years, I've been meeting a friend here in the afternoons. And sometimes I'd bring a thermos of coffee. Today I felt like something stronger. Look. I made too much. How can I drink all that myself? And make it back upstairs?

She: Um ... smell that lemon.

He: After all, how often does an attractive woman move into our building? We have to toast your arrival.

She: Oh, listen to the man. Well ... a small one. (*Sits.*) Moving does take a lot out of you.

He: This will put something back in. (*Hands her a drink in thermos lid.*)

She: Isn't your friend coming back down?

He: He died last week.

She: Oh, I'm sorry —

He: Hey, look at that jay. How blue he is. Reminds me of cardinals you see down south. In the middle of winter. This bright red bird would be sitting in a bare bush, with snow all around him. Bright red, bright red against the snow.

She: A gentleman friend of mine died this year. Very sweet man. We used to go dancing. (*pause*) It's terrible. You no sooner die than they're taking your place — (*She's deliberately changing the original "my" to "your".*)

“Somebody else is taking your place/
Somebody else now shares your embrace . . . ”
(*can't remember rest*)

He: “Two hearts are crying/
Two lips are sighing/
'cause . . .”

Together: “Somebody's tak-ing your pla-a-ce . . .”

She: (*laughs*) Oh, aren't we terrible!

He: I thought the harmony was pretty good.

End of FreeView--Now buy the entire show — so nice!