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# Nell's New Year's Eve By Temple Bailey

Was there any place where she  
could be really quiet?



The Snow Began  
to Fall.

where she might be alone. On the  
crest of a hill, far up the road, stood  
the schoolhouse where she taught. It  
was closed now and dark.

"I will go the . . . Nell said to her-  
self, and just then a voice behind her  
called: "Supper is ready."

"I don't want any," Nell said,  
wearily. "I'm going out for a little  
while. Mrs. McGregor. I'll be back  
by ten."

The snow began to fall softly as  
she left the house, and by the time  
she reached the school it was begin-  
ning to drift against the fences.  
There was no fire within, but Nell  
lighted one, and when the warmth  
began to steal into the room, she  
drew the one big chair close to the  
hearth and in the peaceful loneliness  
gave herself up to her thoughts.

But she was not to remain in peace  
long. There was a sound of sleigh-  
bells without, heavy steps on the  
threshold, and she looked up to see  
the burly form of a young farmer in  
the doorway.

"Well, well," he said, "I saw the  
light and came in. Who would have  
dreamed that you would be here  
alone?"

Nell smiled wearily. "I came to be  
quiet."

"Then you don't want me."

"Oh, sit down," she said, somewhat  
ungraciously.

But he stood by the fireplace and  
looked down at her.

"What's the matter?" he asked ab-  
ruptly.

"Nothing," faintly.

"Don't tell me that; I know bet-  
ter."

"If I tell you," she asked, "you  
mustn't give me any advice. I have  
had so much advice I hate it."

He sat down beside her. "Tell  
ahead," he said, "and I'll promise to  
listen like the Sphinx."

"You see, it is this way," she said;  
"my uncle in town is rich. He is a

naughty old man,  
and he made me  
miserable when I  
lived with him.  
I'm not going to  
tell you about my  
childhood, how lit-  
tle love there  
was in it, and  
how I was starved  
spiritually and  
mentally, as well  
as physically.  
When I grew old  
enough to under-  
stand that he  
could give me  
things, and had  
not because he  
wanted to save and  
save, I left him and  
came here to  
teach, and now  
he has written to  
me to come back,  
and I don't want  
to go, yet he is sick and old and  
alone. I told Mrs. McGregor and  
she tells me to stay here. Then all  
the family talked about it and every-  
body advised. They meant well—but  
I couldn't stand it, I—I don't want  
to go, but I must."

He started to say something, then  
checked himself.  
"I'd like to break that promise,"  
he said.

"No, you mustn't," she said firmly.  
"You've all been so good to me here,  
and if you," she caught her breath,  
"join the others in asking me to stay,  
it will make it so hard for me  
to go."

"He doesn't deserve much at your  
hands," the man stated.

"I know," she said wearily; "but  
tomorrow I begin a new year, and I  
don't want to begin it wrong, yet I  
can't leave the light."

"I don't believe much in saying  
things," the young farmer remarked;  
"my policy is to do them. And now  
are you going to stay here in this  
lonely place much longer? It is  
snowing and it is late."

"I suppose I ought to go," she  
said doubtfully, "but it is so lovely  
here in the silence."

"Look here," he said suddenly.  
"Don't you keep your tea things in  
that little cupboard? I have got to  
go to town, and when I come back  
I'll bring something for a little sup-  
per, and we can watch the old year  
out. Then I'll take you home in the  
sleigh."

"How good of you," she held out  
her hand to him. "You haven't  
bothered me with advice, and you are  
doing something to make me com-  
fortable. That is just like you, Jack  
Norton."

He blushed a little, this big kindly  
man, who looked upon the little  
woman from the  
city as a being  
from another  
sphere; she was so  
dainty, so different  
from the girls in  
his own village.

Nell knew what  
she was doing  
when she told him  
not to ask her to  
stay; she had  
known for a long  
time of the ques-  
tion that trembled  
on his lips. She  
knew he wanted  
to marry her, as  
a woman knows  
who is wise in the  
ways of men.

She thought of  
the life she might  
lead if she married  
him, a life in the  
big farmhouse, sun-  
shiny in summer and secure in win-  
ter. Then she thought of her life  
with her uncle in a dark apartment  
in the streets of the city. She knew  
that, in a way, it was a false idea of  
duty that would take her back. Yet  
she had to go, some force that was  
in her seemed impelling her.

"Are you going  
back with me?"

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The wind blew in great blasts  
against the little house, the snow had  
drifted up to the window sills, and  
white lines of it pointed across the  
window pane like ghostly fingers.  
Dragging footsteps came up the path.  
Nell listened. It was not Jack Nor-  
ton, these were the steps of an old  
man. From the door a voice quivered.

"Are you there, Nell?"

"Uncle," she said, fearfully, "how  
did you come here?"

"I met a young man down the  
road," he said. "I wanted him to  
guide me to the McGregors. He told  
me you were here."

"You didn't answer my letter," the  
old man went on, when she had made  
him sit down.

"Are you going back with me?"  
Now that she was face to face with  
his meanness, it seemed to Nell that  
she could never go with him.

"I don't know," she faltered.  
"Here's a grateful girl," the old  
man stormed, and just then the  
sleighbells jingled and, in another  
moment Jack Norton was in the  
room, his arms full of bundles, his  
eyes beaming.

"So this is your uncle," he said.  
"I thought so when I directed him  
here. You'll stay and have supper  
with us, won't you, sir? We are go-  
ing to see the old year out and the  
new year in."

"Who are you?" the old man  
growled.

"It's Jack's eyes flashed from Nell's  
cowering figure to the grimness of  
the uncle. Then suddenly he took  
things in his own hands.

"I'm the man your niece is going  
to marry," he said.

"What?" the old man shouted.

"I'm the man your niece is going  
to marry," he said securely. He had  
seen the joy in Nell's face.

"But she is going home with me."

Jack shook his head. "No, she is  
going home with me. You can come  
whenever you wish, sir. The old  
house is big enough for twenty  
uncles, or if you  
like it better, there  
is a cottage on the  
edge of the farm  
where you could  
stay if you wish-  
ed."

The old man  
flushed a crafty  
glance at him.  
"Would it cost me  
anything?" he ask-  
ed.

"Nothing," said  
Jack.

"Then marry her,"  
said the old uncle,  
"and I'll come and  
live in the cottage  
alone."

Nell's face was  
in her hands, and,  
as Jack bent over  
her, she whispered,  
"Oh, I can't let you  
do it!"

"It is the only way that you can  
make my New Year happy," he told  
her, and as she looked up into his face  
she knew that what he said was true.

(Copyright.)

**The Chinese New Year.**

"Gar-ne-toy"—Happy good luck  
to you, may you be prosperous, may  
your honorable family be prosperous  
and may the spirits of your ancestors  
rest content—is the gist of the Chinese  
New Year's greeting. The New Year  
festival begins the last of January and  
continues two weeks.

**Use for Celery.**

Celery, or turnip-rooted celery, is  
one of the vegetables not commonly  
grown. It is used for soups, and is  
sometimes eaten raw. It is planted and  
grown much the same as ordinary cel-  
ery. Instead of forming edible leaf  
stalks, however, it forms a root very  
much like a turnip, which may be  
served the same as turnips.



"I'm the Man She  
Is Going to  
Marry."

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