

Moon View Mountain Road

by Foster Trecost

I once read a book of warnings. I don't remember the name, but it suggested cautions that should lead to a more leveled life, so I called it *The Book of Warnings*. Each warning was followed with a consequence; I should pay closer attention to the books I read.

On our last night together, we drove a road we'd driven many times before. "Beautiful as ever," I said, but I spoke of the view, not of her [*Do not lose sight of beauty, for to be surrounded by unnoticed beauty is to live in its absence*]. She didn't reply, and I would have been surprised if she had.

We found the road by accident. I had been invited to a party, a Mountain Gala it was called. I could have taken anyone, but chose someone I barely knew [*Do not take first-dates to parties, for they deserve your full attention*]. We didn't know what to say, so we drove up the mountain in thick and uncomfortable silence. The road was unmarked, and it was dark, which made following directions difficult [*Do not travel without a map, for it is best to lose yourself in those things you enjoy*]. One wrong turn lead to another, and we were lost long before we knew it. My embarrassment was worsened by her frustration, which seemed worsened by my embarrassment. When hope seemed just as lost as we were, the trees thinned to reveal a full moon rising from beyond the spruce. We broke silence with a gasp, then let it return, but no longer uncomfortable.

We never made it to the Gala, and I was never invited to another [*Do not break your commitments, for those expecting you may not be next time*], but to that road we returned many times. We named it Moon View Mountain Road. That was a long time ago.

I said again: "Beautiful as ever." Thin mountain air allowed for an even brighter luminance. As a child, I thought the mountain moon was brighter because we were closer. I miss the

innocence of those days [*Do not grow up, for a child inside will keep you young at heart*]. I looked at her, moonlight pulling the tips of her fragile face from darkness. She did not smile. Her eyes were closed.

In better times we often drove Moon View Mountain Road, but not lately. She had become bored with me, but found it easier to say she had become bored with the moon. We stopped talking [*Do not speak with your silence, for it will say things you never intended*]. We stopped everything. Earlier that day I begged for her return, and suggested we take a drive. "The moon can't save us now," she said.

"But it can," I pleaded. "It can show us who we used to be," but we both knew the moonlight would reveal nothing more than a man she used to love. "Would you rather *he* took you?" [*Do not ask questions unless you are prepared for the answers, for truth often hurts*].

"Yes," she said.

I had woken to a hopeful day. In the morning I planted rose vines along the back trellis, weaving them through the diamond-shaped pattern. I then repaired a loose shingle near the chimney, wanting it fixed before the spring rains.

"Yes," she had said.

So beautiful she was in the moonlight. "We're almost there," I said, but I was in no hurry. Neither was she [*Do not kill people, for to take another life is to take part of your own*]. I pulled to the side of the road and turned off the engine. I carried her body to the edge of a clearing with no trees to hide the moon. I looked at the moon that would forever rise above her. "You're right," I said. "It can't save us now."

I covered her, and waited for remorse [*Do not have regrets, for to live with lament is not to live*]. I'm still waiting.

