

The fishing boat slowly made its way into port. All on board were especially glad to see their home port. The last voyage had been a difficult one. The catch was good, no doubt about that, but the weather had been extremely rough, so, it was a relief to be back safe and sound. John was feeling happier than most, as he left the port. He had arranged to have a two week holiday, in a small cottage on Dartmoor. He just felt he would like to get away from it all, and have a well deserved rest. The rest of the crew waved to him as he went ashore, picked up his car and drove to the cottage. He was safe in the thought that he was not letting his mates down, as they had hired another man to cover his absence. Time passed and an hour or so later, he pulled up outside the cottage, and proceeded to remove his bag from the car. It was such a feeling of contentment as he relaxed into a comfortable settee, and put his feet up.

John's plans were to do as much walking on the moor as possible during his stay. The bleak beauty of Dartmoor had always attracted him for many years. So it was the next morning, after a healthy breakfast, that he headed off to the moor. It was a beautiful day; the sun lightened the moorland, creating that special feeling of "its good to be here". John headed along a path leading to a plantation, which was a particular favourite of his. As he reached the gate, that separated the moor from the plantation, he noticed the figure of a woman standing just the other side of the gate. As he approached, he could make out that the woman was staring out onto part of the moor to his left. John took the opportunity to be friendly and said "Good morning, beautiful day isn't it?" The woman turned towards him, her long dark hair gently covering a little of her face, due to the slight breeze. "Good morning" she replied "It really is a nice day". John looked at his watch. The time was just before 11.00am, as he passed through the gate. "It's a little muddy today in the plantation" the woman stated. John looked around. "Thank you, I will be careful". He replied. The woman gave a sweet smile, which caught John's eye. "You know this area well?" John asked. "Yes, I have spent my life around here" she answered. John noticed her brilliant blue eyes, and detected quite a clear Devon accent. "I walk here every day at this time, it is good to get some fresh air" John acknowledged her comment and continued his walk through the plantation.

On returning to the cottage, John could not forget the woman. Her beauty and friendliness had been much appreciated, especially for a fisherman who had spent so much of his life at sea. That night, while he lay awake in bed, his mind distracted by the events of the day, he kept thinking and hoping that he may meet her again the next day.

The following morning saw John up early. He had breakfast; made doubly sure he looked good in the mirror, and once again set off across the moor. As he neared the gate to the plantation, yes he noticed, with excitement, she was there again. John's heart started to race. What should he do? Should he stop for another chat? Why not he thought, "Morning" said John. "Morning" replied the woman. "Another nice day"

John continued. "Yes it is" came her reply. "The plantation was not too bad yesterday, it must have dried out a bit" "That's good" she said. "Could you stop a while?" asked John, "I would like to learn more about this area" "No problem, at all" came her reply. "Lets go and sit on that grass verge over there; it's caught the sun". John asked "May I ask your name?" "Joanne" came the reply. "Mine is John." "Hi". Joanne and John exchanged smiles and sat down next to each other on the grass verge. It only seemed like ten minutes sitting and chatting, but the two had sat for over an hour. John listened intently to Joanne's account of life on the moor. "Well, I must go now" she said, "OK" said John. "I have enjoyed talking to you so much; can we meet again, maybe tomorrow?" "I don't see why not" she replied.

The next day was Tuesday and John was up early. The excitement of seeing Joanne again was intense, and all that he could think about. Just before 10.30am he headed off once more on his walk to the moor gate. He got there just on 11.00am, but there was no sign of Joanne. John looked up and down the moor, through the plantation, but there was just no sign of Joanne anywhere. He waited for half an hour, after which, disappointed, he made his way back to the cottage. The remainder of the day seemed so long after his disappointment, he decided to visit the village pub, "The Oak", after which he made his way back to the cottage for an early night.

The following morning John was once again up early. Would she turn up today? He really hoped so. To his delight on reaching the moor gate, Joanne was standing waiting. "Hi John", she smiled, as she greeted him. "Sorry about yesterday, I had a lot to do". "No problem", replied John, "It's good to see you today". Once again they chatted for an hour, maybe a little longer and once again parting to make their own way for the rest of the day. They met each day for the remaining time of John's stay at the cottage. On the final day of his holiday, John met Joanne, as usual at 11 o'clock. He explained that his stay in the cottage was now over, and that tomorrow, he would have to return to Plymouth to pick up the Alana Dora. John gave Joanne an amethyst crystal that he carried with him always as a good luck charm. Joanne, with a tear in her eye, wished him well and hoped to see him again one day. With that they kissed for the first time and parted, not knowing when they would meet again.

The morning of his departure from the cottage was difficult for John. He had obviously fallen in love with Joanne, and the thought of not seeing her again for possibly many months was so difficult. John's mobile rang. "Hi John, its Gary form the Alana Dora, the weather is not looking good, so we are leaving early". "OK Gary" John replied. "I'm on my way". John put his bag in his car and sat in. Joanne flashed into his mind. He had to see her, just once more before he left. It was tight, but if he saw Joanne at 11 o'clock as usual, he could still make the Alana Dora, before it sailed. He ran across the moor, once again to the moor gate. Joanne was nowhere to be seen. John waited as long as he could, and returned to the car. John's mobile rang again "John, it's Gary, we can't wait any longer, we are leaving now". John

explained that he had been delayed and offered his apologies. He had let his friends down, and had missed the sailing. The only thing to do now was to wait until they returned in another week's time.

John rang the owner of the cottage and asked if he could rent it for another week. Luckily it was available; at least he could see Joanne again. He settled down in front of the television. The evening news came on. To his alarm, the grim faced news reader announced that a fishing vessel, the Alana Dora, had been reported missing in a storm in the channel. More news would follow the following day after a search of the coast. John felt terrible. It was going to be a long night, but he felt sure that the Alana Dora would be safe. He once again ventured down to "The Oak", maybe a drink would help him sleep. As he stood at the bar, John mentioned to the landlord about Joanne, and if he knew her. The landlord looked at him with surprise. "That's not possible sir, the girl you speak off, Joanne, 'er drowned in the reservoir, it must be 11 years ago now. I remember it well, it was on a Tuesday, just before lunch opening at 11 o'clock.'Er used to live in the cottage by the moor" .John, said that the landlord must have been mistaken. "No sir, Joanne was a lovely girl, long dark hair and striking blue eyes".

John did not know what to do or say and decided to return to the cottage. The next morning the worst of news, the Alana Dora, had been lost with all hands. John just looked at the television. By the side of the set was an amethyst crystal, and the clock on the wall chimed 11 o'clock.