

not drawn from life. It may be argued that it is an imaginative trimming or that the coach-catching is transferred from elsewhere, but to what extent may one accept detail lifted from the story if it fits a theory but reject it if it does not? Of course Beauchamp may have caught the coach outside The Glen though he had never spent a night there. He may also have caught it anywhere between southern Muritai and Day's Bay after spending the night in some other cottage, though the nearer he was to the Day's Bay wharf (built in 1897) the likelier it is that he would have walked. He was a good walker but, according to the story anyway, he sometimes cut things a little fine and even from close at hand might at times have had to rely on the coach to catch the ferry steamer to Wellington. From Karori he used to walk to town in the morning and was fetched home in the buggy in the evening. Were there regular stopping places for the Muritai 'bus', and if so, was there one by the store? In the story Beryl was sent to the gate to stop the coach.

In his 1937 letter to Mr Morris, Beauchamp said that Katherine, when the furnished cottage had been taken, made the acquaintance of a Mrs Jones, wife of another bank officer. Later he said that Mrs Jones kept the store but 'on being pressed' said he was not sure. In the story Mrs Stubbs kept the store. She was a widow and does not sound very much like a bank official's widow. Besides, is there not a faint suspicion that Mr Stubbs drank? The maid Alice visited Mrs Stubbs, but she has no encounter with the Burnells and if any characters were introduced from another time or place she is one of the likeliest. Incidentally, the Katherine who 'made the acquaintance of ...' seems an older Katherine.

Discussing the first section of the story, the bay under sea-mist, Mrs Morris says: 'We are told that the house was in front of the hills; that the paddocks and bungalows were on the other side of the road'. I do not think we are told that the paddocks and bungalows were on the other side of the road from the house. We are merely told that they were on the other side of the road from the hills. The first lines of the story are as follows:

'Very early morning. The sun was not yet risen, and the whole of Crescent Bay was hidden under a white sea-mist. The big bush-covered hills at the back were smothered. You could not see where they ended and the paddocks and bungalows began. The sandy road was gone and the paddocks and bungalows the other side of it.'

The narrator is not manacled to the house. She is an aerial all-seeing sylph fitting about, able to see the bowed pinks and marigolds in the bungalow gardens, to see the tiny drops on the shepherd's coat, to see the sandy road as he saw it and to smell the eucalyptus. 'Hills at the back' means the hills at the back of the bay, not house; and the little streams were flowing in the heart of the bush.