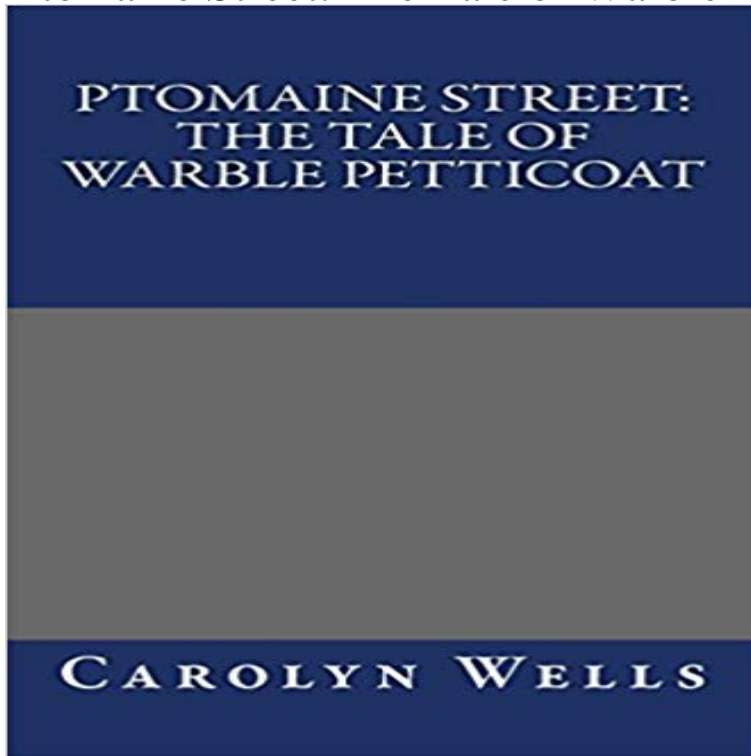


Ptomaine Street: The Tale of Warble Petticoat



On a Pittsburgh block, where three generations ago might have been heard Indian war-whoopsyes, and the next generation wore hoops, tooa girl child stood, in evident relief, far below the murky gray of the Pittsburgh sky. She couldnt see an Indian, not even a cigar store one, and she wouldnt have noticed him anyway, for she was shaking with laughter. A breeze, which had hurried across from New York for the purpose, blew her hat off, but she recked not, and only tautened her hair ribbon with an involuntary jerk just in time to prevent that going too. A girl on a Pittsburgh block; bibulous, plastic, young; drinking the air in great gulps, as she would later drink life. It is Warble Mildew, expelled from Public School, and carolling with laughter. She had only attended for four weeks and they had been altogether wasted. In her class there were several better girls, many brighter, one prettier, but none fatter. The schoolgirls marveled at the fatness of her legs when, skirts well tucked up, they all waded in the brook. Every cell of her body was plump and she had dimples in her wrists. And cheeks, like: A satin pincushion pink, Before rude pins have touched it. Her eyes were of the lagoon blue found in picture postcards of Venice and her hair was a curly yellow brush-heap. Sunning over with curlsyou know, sort of ringolets. In fact, Warble was not unlike one of those Kewpie things, only she was more dressed.

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