

"Do you know where she is now?"
 "She is dead."
 My heart sinks. The child's face looks blank, impassive, stupid almost.
 "You are quite sure she is dead?"
 "Oh, quite sure! Everybody knows she is dead."
 "But I happen to know that she is alive."
 It is a bold stroke. The girl looks hard at me, without a change of countenance.
 "Nobody knows that," she says deliberately. "How could they know it?"
 "Because when a person is not known to be dead it is generally taken for granted that he or she is alive."
 "But doesn't everybody know that Mrs. Baxter is dead?"
 "Do you know it?"
 The sudden sharp question seems to stagger her.
 "I know nothing about it," she says, after a moment.
 "You were fond of her—were you not?" The black eyes glisten a little—whether with tears or not I cannot say. "You would be glad to do her a service?"
 "You won't bribe me," the girl says stoutly. "I wouldn't tell you anything, even if I knew."
 "Has anybody ever asked you anything about her?"
 "No—never! Why should they ask me?"
 "Because you and she were friends; you might know more than other people."
 "I wasn't there when it happened," the girl says, her eyes travelling to the window, and resting there.
 "I am aware of that. But if she wanted you, she knew where to find you."
 The black eyes come back to me for an instant, then go to the window again.
 "What would she want with me?"
 "You might be able to help her. What is your name—your Christian name?"
 "Lottie."
 "Lottie, if you cared for any one, wouldn't you like to do something that would benefit them very much?"
 She glances round the poor room, leaning heavily on her crutches. But she makes no answer—does not attempt to make any answer.
 "I am Lily Baxter's friend. I want you to believe that."
 The child turns her black bright eyes upon me, scrutinizing me from head to foot. Leaning on one crutch, she stretches out her hand, and softly strokes the fur on my jacket, as if it were a living thing, and could feel pleasure at the touch. Then she takes hold of my dress.
 "Lottie," I exclaim impatiently, "you are keeping me waiting all this time! Is there nothing you want—nothing I could do for you? I am very rich—I have a great deal of money. If you will tell me where to find Lily Baxter, I will give you money—more than you ever had in your life!"
 It is an ungrateful task to me to offer bribes to the little creature whose loyalty I cannot help admiring, though it puts my own patience to so severe a test. But I have a powerful incentive, a desperate object in view—the saving of a life which is more dear to me a thousand times than my own.
 "Well, Lottie?"
 Suddenly, without any preamble, she bursts into a passion of tears.
 "Go away," she sobs vehemently—"go away out of this! I don't want your money—I don't want you here—I hate the sight of you!"
 "I will not go away till you tell me where Lily Baxter is hiding," I say, with determination. "I came here to find out, and I will not go away till you tell me, if you know."
 "I don't know."
 "I think you do."
 "I tell you she is dead."
 "She is not dead. You are telling a falsehood, Lottie. I don't want to hurt her—if she knew how much I wanted her, she would not thank you for not telling me—you are doing her harm and mischief, and telling a very wicked falsehood besides."
 The child eyes me her small pale face very troubled, the tears hanging thickly on her long eyelashes. I am sorry to be obliged to drag her secret from her; but there is no other way to come at the truth—that is my only excuse.
 "You may trust me, Lottie. I am Lily Baxter's friend."
 I have taken one of the small hard hands in mine; the upward glance of the black eyes has both cunning and hardness in it, doubtless born of the ill-usage of the world.
 "You won't hurt her if I tell you?" she says, at last.
 "No; but I will do her a great deal of good."
 Still she hesitates, while I hold my breath in an agony of suspense.
 "You have a nice face," she observes deliberately. "I don't think you would do her any harm. I don't know where she is now; she wouldn't tell me, because I might be asked, you know—but she isn't dead."
 "Have you no idea where she is?" I ask, my heart sinking a little.
 "I know where you could find her if you went there to-night."
 "Where?"
 The child names a theatre unknown to me.
 "She dances—in the ballet. She has another name you know—I don't know it—she didn't tell me—and she looks different—her hair isn't red now, nor bright. She comes to see me sometimes. Oh, I hope she won't be angry with me for telling—if she never forgave me for telling on her, what should I do?"

(To be Continued)

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