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The Secret Out.

Her story as volunteered to him and doubtless to the corner before him, was as follows:

Mildred Farley was an orphan, her mother having died about a month before the very house and in the very room which she herself was occupying at the time of her own untimely end. This mother was a very attractive woman, the gentle, retiring type, whose melancholy eyes told of a life of mingled love and sorrow. Her daughter, who had appeared to idolize her, sacrificed everything to account of this mother's ill-health that Mildred worked so hard at a trade manifestly beneath her capacity and breeding. For Mrs. Farley had been brought up in luxury, and had many wants which could only be satisfied by means greater than those usually acquired by a young girl in Mildred's position. But work and self-denial will do much, and Mrs. Farley never had any reason to complain. Nor with her death had Mildred's exertions ceased. Though the necessity for such severe labor seemed to be past, she had shown no disposition to indulge herself. From early morning till late at night she had sat at her work, finishing one beautiful dress after another, till Mrs. Olney was fain to believe that she had some new object in view, and would ere long unite her fortunes with those of her fellow-boarder, the doctor.

But though the young people were to all appearance very good friends, meeting constantly at table and frequently in the parlors as well, the anxious landlady was soon assured by the physician's abstracted and reticent air, and as she thought by Mildred's uniform look of indifference, that her friend Desre was not to be realized. Where, therefore, she was going away for a little visit, the good woman never thought of the doctor in connection with her departure, nor did she suspect that her bright young boarder was contemplating marriage with anyone, least of all with him. For if this busy girl had broken in upon her usual habits, he had not, nor was there anything in his bearing or conversation to lead her to suppose that he meditated any change in his mode of life.

The news of their proposed marriage with all the tragic developments which had immediately ensued, had, therefore, awakened in the whole household the greatest feeling of surprise; nor could Mrs. Olney, for one, realize that the young and blooming girl upon whom the labor and sorrows of the last few months had left scarcely a trace, had succumbed in a moment to the temptation of seduction, no matter by what sickness she had been seized. "I know that folks are taken dreadful sudden sometimes," the old lady remarked at this juncture, "but I can't recollect any such an end with what I knew of Mildred. It isn't in keeping with her character. If she had loved the doctor more or hated him more, I could perhaps have understood it. But she was healthy, body and soul, a frank, young, hopeful girl, and I don't see—"

She said no more, but her lips took a grim line, and Mr. Gryce perceived that his suspicion, vague as it was, were not altogether unshared by this warm-hearted woman and true friend of Mildred Farley.

He therefore started with good hope upon a line of questions by which he expected to reach some clue that would help him to the end he felt rather than saw before him. But though his skill was great, the result was meagre, and after a lengthy conversation the only facts he thought worth recording in his mind were these:

That there had certainly been something peculiar in the young girl's work, for instance, such as she had never before displayed. Though she had made several handsome dresses during the last month (as the scraps lying about her room sufficiently testified), she had never shown them to her landlady, as she had previously been accustomed to do, but kept herself and them locked up in her room till the time came for taking them home. And yet these dresses were certainly for other people and not for herself, she having been seen carrying them out in a great box many times during the four weeks she had kept herself such a prisoner.

That the person for whom they were destined was rich, for she came several times to be fitted, and always in a carriage.

That the place to which Mildred had gone on a visit was not known to her landlady, nor, as far as could be learned, to anyone else in the house.

That Mildred was invariably well, and had never to all appearances stood in need of a doctor's prescription.

That Dr. Molesworth had been Mrs. Farley's physician, and in this way had seen much of the daughter. But that he had never appeared to take advantage of this fact, nor could Mrs. Olney recall the least token of an existing affection between them. If lovers, they had been very circumspect, too circumspect, as it now appeared; such seeming indifference could cover nothing good.

That contrary to their usual open relations they had been seen just once whispering together on the stairs. But even then it was not as lovers whisper—rather like persons who have some business to settle.

That no one in the house ever linked their names together in speaking of them; nor were they ever the subject of jokes among the boarders.

A poor array of seemingly unproductive facts, it is true; but Mr. Gryce was not discouraged. It was from some chance word or petty revelation he expected his clue, not from the open details which everyone knew.

His next interview was with the woman who had come with the coroner, and whom he as well as Harrison, recognized as the expert female detective. She had taken Mrs. Olney's place beside the dead girl, and from her he hoped to gather a fact about which he was very anxious.

"Well, Mrs. Roberts," he said, upon seeing her, "did you get the line I sent you?"

"I did, sir."

"And what have you to say?"

"That you are all right. There is a mark of fresh paint on the back of her gown between the shoulder blades."

Mr. Gryce drew a breath expressive of great satisfaction. "I thought so," he cried. "And what was it, Mrs. Roberts; to a shade, mind?"

"As near as I could judge in the light I had, it was brown, but of a very bright and peculiar tint."

"Right again. I am very much obliged to you, very much obliged to you. Does anyone else know about this spot?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Very good; it is immaterial. 'Twill take more than one of us to discover where that paint came from, I imagine."

"Any more questions, sir?"

"One. What do you think of Dr. Molesworth?"

"A brooding, dark-browed man, with something on his mind beside grief."

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