

light. But Caroline did not see it. Her own look was fixed on the vague shape of the trees in the garden, just dimly discernible through the overhanging mist. When her companion looked at her, it was to note with surprise the serenity of sadness that her countenance wore. Surprise, and something else, that in a less matter-of-fact person than the straight-forward governess might have been called anguish.

But not a suspicion of either feeling lurked in the quick, dry tone with which she put her next question—"Have you seen Vaughan Hesketh lately?"

"Not since morning. He went out for a long walk. He is very miserable!" said she, falteringly.

"Yes, my dear; very miserable, without doubt."

"But—we shall both try to bear our grief," she went on—"We will—we will help one another——"

But there she broke down. Her head drooped on to the hand of her friend that she held clasped in her own, and she gave way to the tears that had been so hard to restrain through the long day.

"Don't cry; why do you cry, child?" said Miss Kendal, impetuously. But as she spoke, she strained the young girl to her heart in an uncontrollable passion of tenderness.

"I can't help it," Caroline presently murmured; "when I think of Vaughan. He finds it so hard to bear, I know."

"My dear, Vaughan has miseries of his own. One of them I am about to tell you." There was a brief silence.

"Troubles that he never told me? I think you must mistake," she then said, gently but proudly.

The other paused for a minute, as gathering her forces together. When she next spoke, it was in a firm, full tone, that never wavered, but went on to the end steadily, distinctly, and inexorably.

"I make no mistake. It is you who are, and have been, deceived. I am going to tell you in few words. Vaughan Hesketh betrothed himself to you without love. Moreover, since the betrothal, he has fallen in love with another woman, with Blanche, with Madame de Vigny. He loves her desperately and madly. Bear to believe it, Caroline, for it is true."

Again she drew her close. But Caroline broke from her with fierce strength, and stood apart, facing her; her young breast heaving, her head erect, her eyes flashing with a lurid light they had never before known.

"How dare you—how dare you tell me this?"

She paused, drew a long breath. She had no words to utter what swelled her indignant heart.

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