

with intoxicating sweetness. Her headache was gone now, and she felt blissfully comfortable and at peace. She still held the chrysanthemum in her hands. There was a glamorous unreality about it all, and a delirious sense of lightness.

"I'm a goner!" whispered Mary Coulter to herself, awed and thrilled by the thought. "I did die, then, sure enough . . . well, well. . . . Here to-day and away to-morrow . . . ain't it the truth? As a flower of the field so we perish! And this is the funeral, and a pretty grand one, I should say, by the smell of the flowers. I hope Miss Proxy is here to see it all, the old trollop. . . She always high-hatted me good and plenty. . . Her and her paper-flowers . . . well, she'll see I died respected, even if I did work by the day. . . And if the ladies are here, in their big cars, like they came for Martha Minnis, won't that burn her up! . . ."

Just at that moment, shivering the stillness of the night, came the swelling siren of a fire-engine, discordant and terrifying. It roared past the Kent Building, shaking the window of her room with its deafening thunder. Mary Coulter sat up in a fright.

"Mother o' God!" she cried, "where have I got to?"

She switched on the light above her bed and looked about her.

The dresser, the gas-stove, the black-armed rocking-chair, with its log-cabin cushion stood before her in unmistakable corporeality.

"I am here," she said, "in my own room . . . alive . . . and glad of it . . . alive . . . and well. I am not dead. No corp ever wanted a bit of pork sausage as I do this minute. I am not even sick.

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