

"She's only Laura's governess."

"But who is she?"

"You can best tell yourself, when you know what she is. Her mother was nothing, and her father died in a mad house!"

It was several weeks before I recovered from this severe shock. As usual, I went to see Aunt Langsley soon after, and as a matter of course, opened my grief to her. I think the good woman never experienced so much pain before. I heard her groaning through the whole of the night, and I fancied she looked older and more care-worn in the morning. It was a lesson to me, however, and from that day I never told her any more of my troubles. My eyes were then opened for the first time, to the astonishing fact, that no one in the world is able to bear one's grievances so well as herself. I have since, however, known from sweet experience that there is one other, on earth, who if he cannot bear my troubles for me, lightens the burden of more than half its bitterness, and I always feel myself relieved when I have told him of any of my petty vexations, at seeing him bear his share of it, be it never so ponderous or trivial. Aunt Langsley was taken ill soon after this, and I obtained leave of absence to spend a few weeks with her. One night she told me she was disturbed by a strange dream, which had recurred to her every night for a week. She fancied her little cottage was thatched with sovereigns, which gave forth so brilliant a light, that no lamps were burned in any house for miles around. "It is my sober conclusion," she repeated, I think for the hundredth time, "that some distant relative of mine has died and left me a fortune, and if I do not live, you will still remain to enjoy it, for I shall leave it for you in my will."

If there were such a benefactor as this imagined relative, I knew he must be distant, in fact so very distant, that no one ever heard of him, still my sick aunty was pleased to talk continually of it, and I was forced to feign belief. I have ever since been very thankful that I humoured her every whim, for she only lived the week out, and we buried her beside my mother, beneath the shade of the old church tower.

Two months after Aunt Langsley's death, I was sitting alone in my room at Elmyr Hall, at midnight.

Of what I was thinking I never knew: but a peculiar feeling which I had never experienced before, had so completely taken possession of my mental faculties, that I could only look down from my window upon the dark water below, spell-bound, and as though there was nothing of earth clinging about me, but that so soon as the chain that bound me was broken, I should glide away, oh, so smoothly, over its glassy surface. Every sound was hushed, and that indescribable sensation one always feels when a new era in his life is approaching, mingled itself with the strange mood into which I had fallen, and which I could never explain.

I looked in my mirror: a death-like face was before me with wild eyes, and long black hair, which streamed back over the shoulders, giving the figure the tragic wildness of the maniac, as I have since seen it at the Academy. My ima-

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