

Put your feet in the chair, or take this pillow. There, turn a little more to the light. I like to see people when they talk to me.'

Rosamond complied with each request, and then, never dreaming of the close examination to which her face was subjected, she began to speak of her beautiful home—describing it minutely, and dwelling somewhat at length upon the virtues of its owner.

'You like him very much,' the lady said, nodding a little affirmative nod to her own question.

'Yes, very—very much,' was Rosamond's answer; and the lady continued. 'And Mrs. Browning? Do you like her too?'

'There is no Mrs. Browning,' returned Rosamond, adding quickly, as she saw in her auditor's face an expression she did not understand, 'but it is perfectly proper I should live there, for Mrs. Peters, the housekeeper, has charge of me.'

'Perhaps, then, he will marry you,' and the jewelled hands worked nervously under the crimson shawl.

'Oh, no, he won't,' said Rosamond, decidedly, 'he's too old for me. Why his hair is turning gray!'

'That's nothing,' answered the lady, a little sharply. 'Everybody's hair turns gray early now-a-days. Sarah found three or four silver threads in mine, this morning. Miss Leyton, don't you love Mr. Browning?'

'Why, yes,' Rosamond began, and the face upon the pillow assumed a dark and almost fiendish expression. 'Why, yes, I love him as a brother, but nothing else. I respect him for his goodness, but it would be impossible to love him with a marrying love.'

The fierce expression passed away, and Miss Porter was about to speak when Anna Lawrie sent for Rosamond, who excused herself and left the room, thinking that, after all, she should like her old enemy of At-water Seminary very much.

Meantime 'the enemy' had buried her face in the pillows, and clenching her blue veined fists, struck at the empty air, just as she would have struck at the owner of Riverside had he been standing there.

'Fine time he has of it,' she muttered, 'living there with her, and she so young and beautiful. I could have strangled her—the jade!—when she sat here talking so enthusiastically to me, of him! And she loves him, too. I know she does, though she don't know it herself. But I must be wary. I must seem to like this girl—must win her confidence—so I can probe her heart to its core, and if I find they love each other!'—she paused a moment, then grinding her

teeth together, added slowly, as if the sound of her voice were musical and sweet, 'Marie Porter will be avenged!'

That strange woman could be a demon or an angel, and as the latter character suited her just now, Rosamond, on her return to her room, found her all gentleness and love.

That night, when all around the house was still, the full moon shone down upon a scene which would have chilled the blood of Ralph Browning and made his heart stand still. Upon a single bedstead near the window Rosamond Leyton lay calmly sleeping—her brown curls floating o'er the pillow—her cheeks flushed with health and beauty—her lips slightly apart and her slender hands folded gracefully upon her bosom. Over her a fierce woman bent—her long, black hair streaming down her back—her eyes blazing with passion—her face the impersonation of malignity and hate; and there she stood, a vulture watching a harmless dove. Rosamond was dreaming of her home, and the ogre, standing near, heard her murmur, 'dear Mr. Browning.'

For a moment Marie Porter stood immovable—then gliding back to her own couch, she whispered, 'It is as I believed, and now if he loves her, the time I've waited for so long has come.'

All that night she lay awake, burning with excitement and thirsting for revenge, and when the morning came, the illness was not feigned which kept her in her bed and wrung from her cries of pain. She was really suffering now, and during the next few days, Rosamond staid almost constantly at her side, administering to her wants, and caring for her so tenderly that hatred died out of the woman's heart, and she pitied the fair young girl, for in those few days she had learned that Rosamond did not know herself, though she was gradually waking up to it now. It was a long time since she had been separated from Mr. Browning, and she missed him so much, following him in fancy through the day, and at night wondering if he were thinking of her, and wishing he could hear the sound of her voice singing to him as she was wont to do when the twilight was over the earth. Anon there crept into her heart a feeling she could not define—a feverish longing to be where he was—a sense of desolation and terrible pain when she thought of his insanity, and the long, dreary years which might ensue when he would lose all knowledge of her. She did not care to talk so much of him now, but Mrs. Porter cared to have her, and caressingly winning the girl's confidence, learned almost everything—learned that there was an impediment to his