

she had the accident. Ah, she was handsome in those days, and used to be run after by all the gentlemen like mad. But she never was a bad lot, never—wild and self-willed, but never a wicked woman, as I'll stake my life. I've been her friend through thick and thin, when she needed a friend, and I've understood her better than others.

She was only twelve years old when first she came to us with her father, a noted lion-tamer. He was a man that drank hard now and then, and was very severe with her at such times; but she always had a brave spirit, and I never knew her to quail before him or before the beasts. She used to take her share in all the old man's performances, and when he died, and the lions were sold off, our proprietor kept a tiger for her to perform with. He was the cleverest of all the animals, but a queer temper, and it needed a spirit like Caroline Delavanti's to face him. She rode in the circus, as well as performing with the tiger, and she was altogether the most valuable member of the company, and was very well paid for her work. She was eighteen when her father died, and within a year of his death, she married Joseph Waylie, our scene-painter.

I was rather surprised at this marriage, for I fancied Caroline might have done better. Joe was thirty-five, if he was a day—a pale, sandy-haired fellow, not much to look at, and by no means a genius. But he was awfully fond of Caroline. He had followed her about like a dog ever since she came among us, and I thought she married him more out of pity than love. I told her so one day; but she only laughed, and said,

“He's too good for me, Mr. Waters, that's the truth. I don't deserve to be loved as he loves me.”

The newly-married couple did indeed seem to be very happy together. It was a treat to see Joe stand at the wing and watch his wife through her performances, ready to put a shawl over her pretty white shoulders when she was done, or to throw himself between her, and the tiger in case of mischief. He treated him in a pretty patronizing sort of way, as if he had been ever so much younger than her instead of twelve years her senior. She used to stand up on tiptoe and kiss him before all the company sometimes at rehearsal, much to his delight. He worked like a slave in the hope of improving his position as a scene-painter, and he thought nothing too good for his beautiful young wife. They had very comfortable lodgings about half a mile from the manufacturing town where we were stationed for the winter months, and lived as simple folks need live.

Our manager was proprietor of a second theatre, at a seaport town about ten miles away from the place where we were stationed; and when pantomime was coming on, poor Joseph Waylie was ordered off to paint the scenery for the other theatre, much to his grief, as his work was likely to keep him a month or six weeks away from his wife. It was their first parting, and the husband parted with it deeply. He left Caroline to the care of an old woman who took the most of her time and who professed a very warm attachment for Mrs. Waylie, or Madame Delavanti, as she was called in the bills.

Joseph had not been gone much more than a week, when I began to take notice of a young officer, who was in front every evening, and who watched Caroline's performance with evident admiration. I saw him one night in very close conversation with Mrs. Muggleton, the money-taker, and was not overlong before I heard Madame Delavanti's name mentioned, in the course of their conversation. On the next night I found him loitering about the stage door, and I saw a very handsome man, and I could not avoid taking notice of him. I found that his name was Jocelyn, and that he was a captain in the army, and then stationed in the town. He was the only son of a wealthy man, and was well-to-do, and had plenty of money to throw about.

I had finished my performance earlier than usual one night, soon after ten, and was waiting for a friend, at the stage door, when Captain Jocelyn came out the dark by-street, smoking his cigar, and evidently waiting for some one. I fell back into the shadow of the door and waited, feeling pretty sure that he was on the watch for Caroline. I was right. She came out presently after me, and he put his hand under his arm, as if it were quite a usual thing for