

soreness in my ears. My tongue, too, seemed paralyzed, and in a few moments the awful truth dawned upon me. I had been rendered deaf and dumb!

"The Baron pretended to be greatly concerned about me," it went on, "but I quickly realized that I had been the victim of a foul and dastardly plot, and that he had conceived it, fearing lest I might speak the truth concerning the Privy-Councillor Polovstoff, for of exposure he lived in constant fear. To encompass my end would be against his own interests, as he would lose my fortune, so he had silenced me lest I should reveal the terrible truth concerning both him and his associates. He was not rich, and I have reason to believe that from time to time he gave information as to persons who possessed valuable jewels, and thus shared in the plunder obtained by those on the yacht.

"From Italy we travelled on to Berlin, thence to Petersburg, and back to dreary Helsingfors, journeying as quickly as we could, yet never allowing me opportunity of being with strangers. Both my ears and tongue were very painful, but I made no complaint. He was surely a fiend in a black coat, and my only thought now was how to escape him. From the moment when that so-called dentist had ruined my hearing and deprived me of power of speech, he kept me aloof from everyone. The fear that I should reveal everything had apparently grown to haunt him, and he had conceived that terrible mode of silencing my lips. But the true depth of his villainy was not yet apparent until I was back in Finland.