

PILOTS WIFE.

But Bert had married me for better or worse, and though it was pretty much as I expected, he was determined to make the best of it; and so he believed that this was all due to my weak nerves and ill health...

choked, imploring him to forgive me. "I went home to find you, Sady," murmured he "and I've been looking for you since, my darling. And so it's a boy, is it?" And he came and laid his cold, wet, rough face down on mine, and on that little velvet cheek beside mine, and stood erect, and shuddered, and was gone—gone like the breaking of a bubble.

And with the outcry that I made the nurse sprang to her feet, and mother came running in; and they both declared what a pity I had wakened, and what a sweet sleep I must have been having; and, of course, I had been dreaming; for nobody else had seen Bert, as, indeed, where could he have come from in such a storm! And I need try to deceive me for he was in the house; I had seen him. When I saw that they were in earnest, cold shivers began to run over me, till they shook me as I lay.

And I swear to you that this is the first I ever knew of her being on the steamer, said Bert then, in a great, grand voice that of itself seemed to wake me from my evil mood as if it had been a nightmare, though doubtless it was fear, calling the blood from my brain, that waked me. He turned to my mother. "Take care of her," he said; "take good care of her. I must go down the harbor before the weather thickens. Maybe I shall never come up again. I hope I never shall!"

With that he paused and hesitated, and took a step forward and towards me; but heaven only knows what imp of perversity caught my shoulder and twisted me around and away, and in a moment the door was closed gently, as Bert did everything in the house, and he was gone. And then you may imagine that chaos reigned in that room for an hour, with penitence and self-reproach and fear, and cries and sobs and hysterics, and another left off scolding and hushed me, and bathed my face, and combed my hair, afraid lest I'd do myself a mischief; and finally, as she couldn't stay, she tied on my cloak and hat, and took a basket of things out of the bureau drawer, and locked up the doors, and slipped the key under the stone, and hailed a car at the head of the street, and shoved me in, and carried me off to her own home—all in a vague, wild, cloudy state of mind, where nothing seemed to be real but a dull and universal ache, which, whether it belonged to my body or my soul, I had not wit enough to know.

And that night my baby was born. It was a furious storm outside as midnight drew on; hardly less furious within, as, in pusses of pain, I thought of Bert—his boat lying too far out in the bay, with the gale and the sheet force enough to out the eyes out of his head if he looked to windward, or maybe run down, without the hearing of a cry, by some great steamer in that weather, too thick with the driving snow to see a light or your own length ahead; I thought, in swift succession, of all the horrid chances of those dark winter seas, till my brain was raging with heat, and all my words were delirious. It was of no use the driving snow to see a light or your own length ahead; I thought, in swift succession, of all the horrid chances of those dark winter seas, till my brain was raging with heat, and all my words were delirious.

But all at once I heard mother saying in an undertone, as if she had not said it half a dozen times before, that there was Bert's chin with all the pluck of it, if ever anything was, and she shouldn't wonder if the eyes—and, without waiting for her finish, it came over me like a fresh tide of feeling and thought that this was Bert's child after all; and if I never saw Bert again, yet, perhaps, the boy might grow up to be like his father; and I don't know what was comforting in the idea, but I turned and laid my cheek down against his, and began to sink away quietly to sleep. And they darkened the room and set the lamp outside in the next one, where mother went to busy herself about something or other; and presently the nurse was nodding, as I found when suddenly starting wide awake, not having really lost myself at all. What made me start wide awake then, with all my senses about me, as alert as ever I was in my life I will tell you.

The landing of the front stairs opened directly into the room where I lay; and, as if he had just come in the door from off the sea, there, in his great storm-coat, stood Bert.

What a white, fixed face it was he wore! Not the face which I had seen in the afternoon, but a deathly, ghastly face, that it chilled one's marrow to look at; and the hair which had been about it, and about the eyes, that had an appalling, absent, vacant gaze, such as I had never seen in Bert's shining, splendid ones. "Oh, what is it, Bert?" I cried. "Don't be frightened, dear!" It's all over, and I'm very well, and it's—its a boy." Then I remembered how we had parted, and I whispered, half

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