

lighted. Between her bed and the window she saw the now familiar picture, but there were several new elements in it. Above the table she could see a looking-glass in a black frame; a figure stood before it—her father. So distinct was the impression as she remembered him in the old days at Sedgford, that she started up with a cry, and the fabric of her vision slipped away like summer lightning.

That day she did not feel able to rise, a feeling of dejection, which was a stranger to her, kept a weight on her heart. She thought much about her old suffering, much about her brother Charlie, and, for the first time in years, she opened the locket and read the words he had pencilled and the message for herself. Could it be that the strange hallucination, which had come to her now three times, was in any way connected with him? Would she have to wait weeks before knowing?

She had not long to wait. One evening in October she was in her room; it was not late, but the house was quiet. She stood before her glass, her luxuriant hair flooding her shoulders, falling to her waist over the loose wrapper that she wore. In a moment she saw the picture in her mirror. She did not stir. This time there was movement. Her father's figure was actually tearing the wrapper off a packet. His back was turned to her, but she could see him thrusting something into the satchel. Suddenly, her attention was drawn to the looking-glass above the table. There she saw her brother Charlie's face, pale, serious, attentive. Her father seemed to raise his head and see it also, but in a moment it moved away, the vision faltered, and she was confronting her blank mirror.

Christine threw herself upon her bed and gave herself up to the tragic thoughts which seized upon her like lions. Her mind flew back to that old, melancholy time at Sedgford, and she felt anew the pang which had struck through her when she had been told of her brother's flight. Suddenly she sprang to her feet. An idea which had just entered her brain appalled her. It had root in that gesture of her father's figure, and the sad, significant face of her brother in the glass.

She had had for all these years a strenuous faith in his innocence; a faith with nothing tangible to support it, living like a delicate, air-fed plant, sustained upon invisible nourishment. Now that she seemed to possess a sort of evidence, no matter how subtle, how occult, she would have the truth. She knew her father was alone in his library. Her mother and sister were out, her brother was away. She went rapidly down the stairs.

Mr. Pangman was stretched upon a sofa with his fingers in the leaves of a book which he had not been reading. The day had been remarkably successful; by a shrewd manipulation of stocks, he had cleared a very large sum, but he had not been thinking of that. Whenever he was alone with his soul, there was only one subject for his thoughts. Anyone would have pitied the rich, powerful, respected man, could he have seen his gashed heart, and known how much of his life was consumed by a vain longing for his lost boy. He was absorbed in such hopeless reflection as Christine approached his door. His face followed his broken thoughts, and looked deep sorrow, and even despair.

Christine frightened him with her wan, spirit face, her streaming hair. She seemed to float, rather than move; in truth, she did not feel her limbs. She spoke at once, while he was raising himself on the sofa, with a look of apprehension, and her name on his lips. His face, with its mask of despair, shocked her, and she noticed with involuntary surprise how white his hair was, and how deep and anxious were the lines on his brow. But, while the thought was flashed upon her, she had spoken.

"Father, was there a table in the Sedgford office with a looking-glass above it?"

"Yes, Christine. Why do you ask?" He started, but it did not seem to him an unnatural question.

"I have had a strange idea. Father, did Charlie take that money?"

"Yes, dear; poor boy! What has made you think of it to-night?"

"And you knew nothing about it?"

His face fell strangely pallid, his voice almost vanished.