

The Late Tenant

He had promised to write, but he had not written. What was he to say? That he still loved her, although she was rich? Perhaps he dreamed that she would write to him. But no; silence was the steady scheme of things — and work, fourteen hours a day work as the solatium, until his bronzed face began to take on the student's cast, and he wondered, at times, if he had ever caught and saddled a bronco, or slept under the stars. Or was it all a dream?

Wanting some bread, and being alone, the char-woman having believed his statement that he would be away until next midday, he went into the kitchen. It was now high summer; hot, with the stable-like heat of London, and the kitchen window was wide open. Some impulse prompted him to look out and examine the service-lift by way of which Van Hupfeldt had twice quitted the flat, once when driven by mad fear of being held guilty of Gwendoline's death, and again to save his life from David's revolver.

Given a steady brain and some little athletic skill, the feat was easy enough. All that was needed was to cling to two greasy iron uprights and slide from one floor to the next, where cross-bars marked the different stories and provided halting-places for the lift. It was typical of Van Hupfeldt that he had the nerve to essay this means of escape and the cunning to think of it.

David was looking into the well of the building a hundred feet below, when an electric bell jarred over his head. Some one was at the front door. It was a porter.