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the contents and felt for his pouch.

"I met him walking with that girl, Miss Leach, close to the Chase. He had no hat on, his clothes were all muddy and his hand was bound up in a handkerchief. He looked awful and she said he had had a fall.

In Tubby's eyes had grown an expression of incredulous alarm and horror, but his sister, occupied with her own thoughts and feelings, was unmindful of his.

"They were ahead of me when I was bicycling along the road leading to the common, and I saw him stop and try to shake her arm off. He wanted to break away from her, but she wouldn't let him. They stood arguing for some minutes, and once he got himself free and began to run, but she caught him up and hung on to him, and then he quieted down and went along with her again. I couldn't understand it at all. When I overtook them they were just plodding along, saying nothing to each other. I dismounted and asked if there was anything the matter and if I could help, but she said no, he would be all right when she got him home. But—but he didn't seem quite—all there!"

She broke off, and Tubby, who had been leaning forward, listening intently, repeated now: "All there! What do you mean?"

"I mean"—Sallie for once found ready speech difficult—"he looked as if he had had an awful shock. And—and he didn't know what he was saying. He said something about being late for parade."

TUBBY, whose uneasiness seemed to culminate at this, rose and walked to the window, filling and refilling his pipe.

"Why don't you speak?" said Sallie, with impatient vexation. "What do you think can have happened? Why was he with that girl at all? I don't like the look of it. Can't you go along and ask him and find out what's wrong?"

Tubby, without looking round, merely said, "No good! I was there this morning—went to have a match with Theo; we fixed it yesterday. The butler said they were all at home, but were sorry not to be able to see visitors—some family business."

"How extraordinary! What on earth can it all be about?"

She was silent, thinking. Then she sprang up and went across to the window, her beautiful discontented face flushed with a sudden inspiration.

"Tubby," she said, "it can't—it wouldn't be—anything to do with this horrible murder—this wretched girl, who—" She broke off aghast, for Tubby with a violent gesture and a voice that was quite different to his usual drawl, turned on her and said: "Good Lord! of course not. Don't talk such rot!"

And without another word, he stepped out on to the verandah and strode away.

Sallie stood still, as if turned to stone, her thoughts fraying the edge of a circle, in the centre of which Laurie, his blue eyes distraught, was a dark figure against a lurid background. Laurie—who had told her his leave was up the day before—still at the Chase!

Laurie, his appearance and mind equally disordered, wandering about with this girl as his keeper!

Laurie, with the face of a Greek Eros, and the heart—to herwards—of a Spartan soldier, losing his senses on the very morning after this handsome village girl had been done to death. And the family too occupied to receive visitors, though they were all at home! What did it mean?

Tubby, always so unmoved and bored—rough and abrupt and angry! Of course he was put out by Theo's refusal to see him after going there by invitation. Sallie had suspected an incipient love affair between the two for some time.

But it did not account for his extraordinary behaviour just now.

And, in a flash, she felt she had solved the puzzle of Tubby's strangeness. He had thought of this possible connection between the Chase and the murder, before she did, and he had jumped to the very conclusion he had

so forcibly negated. And as Laurie was his friend and had possibly confided in him, he might have more ground to found his guess-work on than she had. Sallie was wholly unused to strong emotions of any kind, and the agitation of these ideas, coupled with a latent jealousy of Fenella Leach, showed itself in a gust of ungovernable rage.

The dark eyes, reminiscent of the portrait of wayward "Sal," by Joshua Reynolds, flashed stormily; the lips drew themselves down at the corners, and a frown disfigured the wide, low brow, with its crown of reddish hair. But the crude, commonplace sound of the luncheon-gong recalled her to ordinary domestic life and, after a moment, she regained her careless demeanour and went to the dining-room.

Lord Brismain, punctual always to a fault, was already seated in his carved chair, with the curry and Bombay ducks and split toast that invariably formed part of his midday meal.

"Where's Theodore?" he asked in a voice that was refined but very cold in its timbre.

"Coming, I think," answered Sallie, as she took her seat, and presently Tubby lounged in, a little paler and graver than his wont, but imperturbable once more.

They discussed the news in the papers and local topics in a desultory way, with long intervals of silence, for each was preoccupied.

The lunch was nearly over when Lord Brismain gave an order to the parlormaid, to be conveyed to the gardener, to which she replied that he had gone away for an hour or two. "Gone away?" his Lordship queried. "What for?"

The maid replied, with some slight hesitation, that he had been asked for the loan of a large rake, to help drag the canal, and had gone along with it himself.

LORD BRISMAIN looked at her in lofty displeasure and asked her what she was talking about.

The maid, a little nervous, stammered that it was to do with the murder—they wanted to find the knife.

And Sallie, to end the little incident which was rousing her father's irritation, hastily explained, but Lord Brismain, whose principle it was to put everything aside that did not conduce to well-being and pleasantness, cut her short in the middle.

"I don't desire to hear any details of this sordid affair," he said; "these tragedies are very deplorable. Pray let us change the subject."

Tubby, who had again developed his abnormal impatience, got up at this moment, saying: "Yes, for God's sake let us cease harping on it," and strolled off to the window.

"Have you finished, Theodore?" asked Lord Brismain, with an ironical reflection, pouring himself out some more hock.

"Sorry, father!" Tubby returned meekly to his place and sat out the next few minutes while his father toyed with a biscuit, in silence, until the signal was given by the old man rising himself.

An ugly old man, with heavy features and build, but unmistakably well-bred in spite of them. He looked back as he reached the door and said: "What is to-day—seventh or eighth?"

"Eighth," answered Sallie. "Yesterday was the seventh, I know."

"Seventh day of the seventh month," Lord Brismain rejoined meditatively, and went out, closing the door after him.

Sallie looked at Tubby, and raised her eyebrows. "Numbers again!" she said. "I wonder what he is thinking."

Tubby merely nodded, and escaped by the window, vanishing into the garden. Later, passing his father's library, it occurred to him to look in from a vantage point at the end of the verandah. Lord Brismain was seated at a table on which a small roulette board, the exact replica of the famous tables at Monte Carlo, engaged his absorbed attention.

As he took the ball out of its groove and, putting it into the wheel, turned it rapidly, he muttered to himself:



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