

CHAPTER II

AFTER she had carried Spudgin up to his nursery, Mrs. Ambrose went a little nervously to her stepdaughter's room. She knocked at the door and turned the handle at the same time.

Silvia was sitting on the end of her bed reading a letter. She had crumpled this up hurriedly and slipped to her feet as the door opened.

"What do you want?" she asked rudely.

Her stepmother paused an instant and then the hot-colour began to fade out of her cheeks.

"Why! I haven't seen you for two days. I thought I'd like to know how you were and if you had had a good time."

She went forward to poke the fire into a blaze. "I've missed you," she said simply.

Silvia's beautifully curved lips sneered.

"Please don't bother yourself about me," she said.

They looked at one another in silence for an instant. What Helen Ambrose saw was a slim, tall girl with an oval face in which the eyes so dark and large seemed to be almost too big.

Silvia was said to be the image of her dead mother. She had the same splendid way of carrying her head, the same superb movements when she walked. Nigel Ambrose had married when he had been an attaché in

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