

at seventy-two into the Home for Aged Women. But although Mrs. Rust had known this fact quite clearly in the beginning and for a long time thereafter, of late it had strayed away somewhere. In her mind, instead, the house was still there on Vine Street, still belonged to her, and still had a red geranium in the parlor window which still needed her care. To be sure, up to a few weeks ago Mrs. Rust had been willing to believe in a tenant at 14 Vine Street named Mrs. Hawkins, who, according to Emma Davis, took excellent care of the house, the polyanthus under the dining-room window, and the pippin tree in the back yard. But just lately Mrs. Hawkins had gone so far back into Melvina Rust's mind that there was no bringing her out again. She was hidden there under dark, thick layers of forgetfulness, together with Mr. Rust, who had died long ago, and a nephew called Melvin, who had done so badly by his aunt and uncle and his world at large that he had years back been moved to a place where there were no possessions of others for him to get his hands upon.

That was, in short, Mrs. Rust's story; but the only parts of it which were now real to her were that her house still stood at 14 Vine Street and that she must return to it each afternoon at

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