

"A lie! a lie! a lie!" screamed Bella, "Harold Macfarlane never touched it. Abrahams pencilled the signatures, and I inked them over. I gave Abrahams the forged document, and Abrahams got the money. No, no, Abrahams and I committed the forgery—didn't we, Methusalem?"

"I think we'd better go," said Abrahams, getting up nervously from his seat; but Gordon and his assistant stood so provokingly in the doorway, that the suggestion was not carried out.

"Mr. Gordon, could I speak to you for one moment in the lobby?" said the curate.

"Certainly, Sir," said the obliging detective. "Bill," he added, "keep a skinned eye on these cusses, and call me if they move."

In a few minutes the door was re-opened, and Mr. Loder made his appearance alone, whilst at the same time Gordon beckoned to his assistant and Bella to leave the room, and the party was left as before the interruption.

The clergyman sat ominously at the table. The deepest anxiety was depicted in the countenance of the conspirators.

"Mr. Jackson, Mr. Abrahams, and Mr. Isaacs, if I acted according to my own sense of duty, I should persuade my friend to allow Mr. Gordon to take you into custody, on a charge of conspiracy to defraud by threats, and an assault with intent to murder, but, as doubtless you are cunning enough to see, we should be sorry to disclose to the world family secrets, therefore I now offer you these terms, which I am sure my friend will accede to.

"First. That you deliver up all claim to the document now in the possession of Sergeant Gordon, forged by Lewis Abrahams and Bella Jackson, upon payment of the sum of two thousand pounds, to be invested in the hands of trustees, for the sole use of the said Bella Jackson.

"Secondly. That Jackson signs a deed of separation from his wife, and leaves England for ever, under pain of instant apprehension on his appearing again in Great Britain.

"And, Thirdly. That the strictest silence is observed towards all matters connected with this unpleasant affair. Further punishment I think unnecessary. From what Mr. Gordon says, Mr. Isaacs and Mr. Abrahams, you are drifting fast towards a sentence of transportation; and, Mr. Jackson, your actions fully assure me of your weaving the net of your own retribution."

Crest-fallen and cowed, the three villains sneaked back to town, and by the principal actors in my little story were heard of no more. It is true that a few years afterwards a man named Augustus Jackson, and answering the description of our friend, suffered, in Carolina, the last penalty by Lynch law, for having foully murdered his wife, under peculiarly atrocious circumstances, but whether this was the Simon Pure or not, we have no means of ascertaining.

Harold and Gertrude Loder were married, and now live at Milton Hall, while Mr. Loder, an inveterate old bachelor, resides at the rectory.

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At a fashionable southern watering-place, Mrs. Jackson's Boarding-House is known far and wide for the comfort of its interior and the kind