

wondering eyes. "Tell me quickly, or are you only playing a bit joke off on me?"

"No; I only wish it was a joke," said Lyndon, gloomily. "I don't need to ask whether you know the old story about the child, my half-brother, who disappeared from Ballymore before I was born."

"Yes, I have heard av him often and often," said Kitty, and then waited for him to tell her the rest, not caring to repeat what had often been the common talk of the parish, which had never scrupled to blame Lady Lyndon for that strange mystery.

"Well, he's turned up," said Lyndon, with the same gloomy grimness, "and there's nothing left to me but to walk out as gracefully and with as little fuss as possible."

Kitty sat aghast, scarcely able to comprehend the full meaning of his words.

"And where has he been all these years?" she managed to ask at last. "It was thought that he was drowned in the Lough."

"Well, he wasn't. I may as well make a clean breast of it to you, Kitty, and tell you the whole story. My mother paid his nurse to get him out of the way. It was a mistake, of course, and I wonder that such a clever woman as my mother could ever have made it. It is only in novels that these things ever turn out successfully. A secret can only be kept by one person, Kitty, not by two or three."

"And he has come back, did you say?"

"Yes; I don't think that I should have minded so much if it had been anybody but the person it is. You know that sneak of a fellow that is Captain Byrne's secretary at Killane. You do know him, because he's been at Arraghvanna more than once; that's the