

"He's bringing up his portmanteau," she announced breathlessly, and vanished.

Tilly turned towards the door. Laborious steps were audible upon the staircase, as of one ascending with a heavy load. Presently a man in a greatcoat passed the open doorway. On his left shoulder he carried a large portmanteau, which hid his face. He passed up the second-floor staircase and out of sight.

Tilly, hot and cold by turns, stood shaking in the middle of the floor.

There was a heavy bump overhead. Then steps descending, slowly. He was coming back.

Tilly shut her eyes tight for a full half minute; then opened them, and tottered forward with a cry.

In the doorway, laughing, joyous, open-armed, stood The Freak.

"You foolish, foolish Tilly!" he said; and caught her as she fell.



THE END.