

TOLD ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Silver, in his key, strode out into the moonlight at a sharp pace, taking the direction of the lake. The scene he had just witnessed, the knowledge that had burst upon him, filled his whole soul with the intensest wrath. For years and years he had been his darling son for the sake of untiring the large fortune of the brothers Silver, than because he loved Violet.

He loved his son with a great love, and covered Violet for him. There had been another son once, but he was not, and one more in older days. Of a boy who had been concentrated all his affection, just at the point when success had crowned his wishes—for his brother Arnold had, this very self-same evening, given consent to the marriage—it was maddening to find his airy fabric of hope dashed to the ground by the glancing wing of the bright, little creature who had fitted so inopportunely across his path. "Why," he said to himself, "did I not see this sooner? Why did I not see this sooner? Why did I not see this sooner?"

A grin smote down upon his face, but he did not smile. He had been so close to the result, his mouth was set in one firm line, as unyielding as death itself. He would have strode, his step fiercer and more fierce.

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