

at least, it is so in my case. I was tied to my boyish love if she was to live. In one sense, my father's words were fulfilled. Lily did not so much as look at me; in fact, she disliked me. She was in love with another man—a man with yellow hair and steel eyes. He, too, hated me. He talked of me behind my back as that nigger. He swore it made him sick to see me in the Jenkins house . . . to have Lily in the same room with me.

"Nigger! . . . Me a nigger! . . . Hubshi! . . . A black man!"

"One day he insulted me openly, and I spoke to him. I told him that I was of better Aryan stock than he himself—that my ancestors had seen the Vedas written and been rulers whilst his fathers were wandering savages—that my white blood was as pure as his was crossed and defiled. After that I never visited the house again. I took my degree. Lily married the man she loved best. It was not a happy marriage. She was always ill. She would nearly lie and be miraculously saved . . . by the specialists. Ha, ha! . . . It was I who saved her. I—the nigger—I who loved her and worshipped her. I saved her again and again—I have given my life for hers. I have been compelled to remain near her to preserve her from the evil from afar. I am ruined; I cannot practise here. I

. . . I love this woman too much. Sometimes I wish to let her die—but I cannot. I have been thinking that when I am dead she may be all right. I think that if I protect her up to the moment I die she may be safe after. But I am not sure. . . I am not sure. . . They might go on and kill her slowly, torture her, as revenge. . .

"Ah, you think I am mad. You think I have deluded myself? You are the first to whom I have spoken of this, the first who has helped me—who has not trampled me into your gutters because I love. I was struck off the medical register so I may not practise, even could I find patients. I pick up a few pence amongst the very poor by treating them surreptitiously. I have been imprisoned for begging. And now, sir, as you see, I am dying."

There was silence. I looked into the emaciated face of the Indian and into his glowing eyes.

"Of course," I said to humor him, "this lady would not believe that the magic performed in India affected her, or that your counter-spells protected her. If she did, I should suggest that she goes to—well, if she were a Catholic, for instance, would she be able to resist the evil?"

"I do not know," he answered, "but her husband has made her practically an



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tried! I failed! You respectable people will not have a black doctor! I have lost everything, everything, save my little shrub and my power. My father answered to that last letter I sent when I was full of pride and learning and Western contempt, and he said, 'My son you will see I have given you many chances; now you must eat the dirt of the Christian gutters and drink the cup of despair. You will see the woman die and be powerless to save her.' He washed his hands of me.

"But all the time they kept sending me calamities of Lily. Her husband changed and became vile. Her children died whilst I was sick to death in the infirmary. I was arrested at the instigation of the husband for loitering. The magistrate sent me to prison, and when I came out Lily was at point of death. I stole my twig of arbor vitae from the gardens at Kew—and saved her. I lived by all manner of subterfuges and vile means—to buy a shrub and keep it alive in a little room where I now live. Her husband has lately deserted her, but by my prayers she is now well in health, and a rich old uncle of mine is looking after her. Her father died mysteriously.

"Lily will not see me or speak to me. She is afraid. She thinks that it is I who have dogged her and brought all these tortures into her life. . . . because I desired her for myself. . . .

"Lately I wrote to India and offered my people to return and undergo any penance and purification, and do anything, if they would stop their magic and spare Lily in the future. But they reply: 'No; you must finish as you have begun. The woman must die. That is your punishment.' I am at the end. I have no money . . . no hope

atheist. You will think me still madder if I state that she is thus wholly unprotected and open to the attacks of—oh, of wizards and demons. . . ."

He looked at me and laughed.

"That, too, was part of the magic . . . they robbed her of her faith. If—if—would you, if necessity compels, take care of my arbor vitae? Will you tend my little plant?"

He leaned forward, and I felt his hot, dry fingers close on mine. I said that I would, and gave him my name and address.

At least a month later the Indian doctor was recalled to mind by the sight of the beautiful fair woman in black furs. She was being wheeled out in a bath-chair and looked frightfully ill. Then a week after this, I got a letter from St. Michel's Hospital, which begged me to go to a certain street in a low neighborhood, not far away, and fetch the Thuja Occidentalis and a tin box. The doctor said that he had been suddenly stricken with pneumonia and had lain dangerously ill for four weeks. I did as I was asked, and found that the landlady had preserved the little shrub. I took it, together with the tin box, and went down to St. Michel's, and there I found the Indian wasted to a shadow. He wept like a child when I gave him his evergreen. He said that he knew that Lily was dying, and that he must save her. He heaped a multitude of blessings on my head, and I felt him muttering over the plant with fixed, unseeing eyes. The nurse told me that he was not "quite right," but that, as an old student of the hospital, they let him do as he liked. She said that he had kept on asking for the arbor vitae in his delirium.

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