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A TALE OF FRUSTRATED REVENGE.

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In the comfortable, old-fashioned kitchen of an Irish cottage sat a man and a woman, both evidently beyond the prime of life, but one could read in their cheerful, honest faces that time had made very little change in them to each other, however he had marked their decay to the rest of the world. The woman sat knitting a sock, which it needed no second sight to say was for one of the broad, stout feet stretching out before the blazing fire on the hearth, and on that night the breath of a fire was not a blessing of a mid-dling order, for outside the winds seemed to be tearing heaven and earth in their fury. It was no wonder the old couple had closed all the shutters of the room, for the sound of the storm was dreadful enough without adding to it the terror of seeing the tortured elements. If one could only have closed their ears also to the hoarse voice of the gale it would have been a most comfortable spot in that little kitchen, and this idea seemed to have struck the old woman also, for now and then she nodded over her needles, returning each time from her trip to dreamland to find five or six wrong stitches in the sock she was knitting. Finally she slipped her needles into the yarn, and put the provoking piece of work in a bag that lay at her side.

The old man woke up at this moment from some sort of a reverie, and shaking the ashes from the pipe, which had gone out, laid it upon the hob in the corner.

'A wild night for any poor Christian to be abroad,' said he, as he drew his chair nearer to the fire, and looked towards the window with considerable concern. The look told him nothing, however, for, as we have said, the shutters had been closely fastened for the very purpose of keeping out the sight of the storm.

'Yes,' responded his wife, 'I wish Walter was coming home on any other night than this, but the lad is so venturesome it is just such a time as he would select even if he had made no promise to be here this evening.'

'Well, it's clear he'll not be here now, since he isn't here before this, so I think it's only wasting the honest hours of sleep to wait up any longer. Besides, Sally, there's no use of fancying misfortune for the boy when he's coming home to marry our daughter. Don't put Rose in widow's weeds before she has worn the bride's blossoms. The poor girl no doubt is in trouble enough without us adding to it with sad forebodings. I would venture a naggin of whiskey now that the boy is as safe as any of us, and just as contented, all but a wee bit out of humor with himself and the sea for not getting here at the time he promised. He's in as good a craft as can be found on this coast, and the man that sails her knows every inch of the ground he travels. Tut! woman,' said he, seeing his better half still doubtful in spite of this assurance, and kicking off as he spoke a pair of old brogues that he wore for slippers, to give emphasis to his words: 'I'd as lief be lying in his hammock as in my own flock bed.'

'Well, well, said his wife, half subdued into tranquillity at this vehement declaration and half wondering where the man's wits were to make so wild a comparison.

'I may be weak-minded, but you know it is not without cause I am uneasy. There is not another harbor on the coast as dangerous as ours, and on such a night as this nothing but a miracle could save a vessel that did not know the ways of that inlet.

'That's telling me news,' said the other rather testily. 'One would think I was a stranger to the country, the way you talk. The man that carries Walter here, could course the island with his eyes shut, and where there is a dangerous spot, like the one you allude to, isn't there always some precaution or other to notify voyagers.

'Haven't we a lighthouse over there on top of the promontory, and there is not a truster man than Jonas Hull, its keeper, in the whole parish.'

At the mention of this name, the wife shook her head, but volunteered no dissent from her husband's opinion.

'Ah,' said he, remarking the gesture, 'I know you have no good wish for the man, but he's none the worse for that. That silly girl has set you against Jonas with her crazy notions about character. Let one of your women nod, or fancy she finds anything astray in a man's reputation, and instantly, like a parcel of crows you all combine to pick it to pieces.'

'But you know, John,' said his wife, 'that nobody likes him, and where everybody is of one mind about a thing, there must be some truth in it. That's just what I complain of,' said the other quickly, 'from the first moment he came here, you all made a dead set at him.'

'And what did he come here for?' rejoined his wife, almost sharply, with an indignant flash in her eye. 'Was it not to take the bread out of a poor man's mouth, and was he not aware of that when he took the place, and had Walter's father removed whom no body ever found fault with.'

'Well, woman, have it your own way: it seems a woman will always have that,' and he threw a fresh sod of turf on the fire, more for want of an answer to this last attack, than because the fire really needed any ailment. 'Twas clear he did not care to be referred to this leaf in the life of Jonas, and could say nothing in the latter's defence. He felt he was pushed to the wall, but like many others, endeavored to hide his defeat if possible. A doctor would have taken snuff in such a predicament, and parried the poke with a sneeze. A lawyer would have improved on the pinch, by putting on his spectacles, and plunging into a heap of papers, apparently to assure himself of his opponent's assertion, but really to gain time to answer it. But as the old man was not a professional man, but only a plain farmer, his cunning in getting out of the corner was not quite so artful. It was one of those plain, moral reflections that seem to be made to fill up pauses—like the lunch, it is fashionable to take between meals. 'Tis hard to know the hearts of men,' was all he said.

Now this remark was general enough in its application to have let it pass, and in an ordinary conversation it would have passed unheeded; but Sally thought she saw the drift of the words, and she evidently meant to give Jonas not even the mercy of the old adage.

'It's easy enough to read his face, then,' she said, 'and they say that is an index to the heart. I have no doubt one is as dark as the other is ugly.'

'It's not always well to take the book by the cover,' he replied; 'Jonas, I admit, is not the best looking in the world; but for all that he might have made Rose as good a husband as the youngster we've been looking for to-night.—Jonas is rough and tough,' said he, unconsciously adopting part of 'Old Joe Bagstock's' eulogy of himself, and, if Sally had ever heard of that illustrious character of Dickens, she might have might have added 'but devilish sly,' and finished the quotation to her taste, as well as any further parley. As she knew nothing, however, of any of these things, she let her worthy mate go on. 'Rough and tough,' he repeated, 'but that is only the outside of him. It is the hard kernel that often holds the sweetest nut. Beauty is only skin deep at the farthest, and—'

It is hard to say how many more wise sayings he might have spun out, but just then the storm gave a wilder shriek than usual, imitating with its invisible voice, so exactly the wail of human beings in agony, that both husband and wife involuntarily blessed themselves, and turned their pallid faces to one another in silent terror.

The argument ceased at that, and both drew a long breath of relief when the frightful noise had died away.

Just then a young girl appeared at a door at the opposite end of the room, and crept hurriedly in, her whole form in a shiver, and her face the picture of the deepest fright. One would have said she had met with something unearthly, so sudden was her entry and so strange her appearance.

'Oh, mother!' she said in a terrified whisper, as she drew near the old woman, and looked imploringly at her, 'did you hear that?'

'What, my child?' said the mother, knowing well what the girl alluded to, but not wishing to show that she felt any alarm.

'Oh, this terrible night!' cried the maiden. 'I'm sure that was some boat that went down, for I heard such terrible cries this moment that sounded just as if they came from the sea, and as if the voices grew louder in their agony, the storm seemed to get more furious in its efforts to drown them, and succeeded, for the sounds all died away after a few minutes, as if the waves had swallowed them up. Oh, if poor Walter—'

But she failed to finish the boding sentence, and sank into a chair, burying her in her lap.

The two old people looked at one another for a few moments, as if neither were able to offer any consolation to the poor girl, yet each one wishing the other would do it. At length the old man, walking over to the drooping figure of his daughter, took one of her hands in his, and raising her from her sunken attitude said—

'Rose, this is very weak of you. I thought you would be the last girl in the village, to give way to such qualms. Rose yourself and be a woman worthy of the brave boy that perhaps is now battling with the elements to get to you. There no go, to your room, and pray for him that he may come home safe, and let us have no more of this idle nonsense.'

'Oh, father,' said the poor girl, 'if he had only been delayed for a day or two till this gale had gone by, or if he had only come in, in day-

time no matter how stormy it was.'

'Why in day time, my child, more than any other?'

'Because—because—' and then as if she could go no further, she broke into a fresh burst of weeping.

'Come, daughter,' said the mother, 'this will never do, and giving the old man a warning nod as if to question her no further, she led the daughter gently out of the room.'

'You will sleep with me the rest of the night dear,' said the parent, 'and your father can stretch himself on the settee out in the kitchen there till morning, and its not many hours to that now.'

'No, no,' said the weeping girl, 'I feel better now. I shall be better alone. I would only disturb your rest, for I cannot sleep.'

'Well, cheer up, dear, all will yet be well with the help of God. Good night.'

'What is the matter with Rose,' said the old man when his wife returned.

'Why, she is naturally terrified about Walter,' responded the dame.

'No,' said he, 'there is something else that she fears, but was afraid to tell.'

The old woman looked mysterious for a moment, and then stooping down near him, uttered in a half whisper, 'She fears Jonas Hull.'

CHAPTER II.

Let us ascend an hour after this scene in the kitchen into an upper chamber of the cottage. It is tastefully, but plainly furnished, and the single window it possesses takes in a full view of the rocky headland some half mile beyond, and the ocean. On a calm day or evening the scene must have been grand from such a stand point, but now it was almost a picture of pandemonium. The sea raging at the base of the steep rocks flung up its white foam with every dash it made high in the air, and as the lightning flashed on this, the watery spray assumed all sorts of fantastic and ghostly shapes that might easily suggest the most frightful things to a weak imagination.

Rose Tyrrell was not a girl to whom that weakness might be attributed. She was naturally strong-minded, very ardent in her feelings, and of a bounding artless nature, one of those that carries your heart with her even without your consent, and does not think it any particular complaisance to have a pleasant smile or cheerful word always ready for a friend. In the little village in which she had grown up, and beyond which she had never been for a day, she was the pet and pride of every one. This was only a fair acknowledgement of her beauty and good nature; but there were other considerations besides to make people think well of her, especially some of the young men of the neighborhood, who considered themselves captivated enough in manner, or possessed of sufficient influence to make their way into the female heart. Her father was a very successful farmer of the middling class, whose name and influence was no small thing to have in a family. Rose was also the niece of the Parish Priest, and it was rumored that old Father Hanlon had a nice little competence to offer her if she happened to make a match to his choice. This was inducement enough to make most of the young farmers more exemplary characters as well as ardent advocates for the hand of the fair and fortunate maiden. She had already, however, long ago given her heart to Walter McEvoy, the cause of so much anxiety that night in the little cottage. She had known him from a boy; in fact, they had been playmates from childhood, and time had warmed their childish intimacy into youthful affection. The families of the young people had never placed any check upon this feeling which they saw springing up, and the fact grew to be tacitly admitted that Rose and Walter were to be man and wife at no distant day. That was two or three years before our story opens, and Walter's father was then keeper of the light house, and in comfortable circumstances. As has been stated already, he had been thrown out of his situation from some unknown cause, and Jonas Hull had been appointed in his place. The old man took the thing very much to heart, probably piqued as much because his successor was an Englishman as from any regret for the perquisites the place afforded. He grew melancholy and listless, unfit to take up any other labor, and if it had not been for the assistance which Walter afforded, the savings of his late office would have lasted but a short time. From a mere lad Walter had been accustomed to the sea, and had contracted a fondness for it, which constant familiarity with its wildest humors only seemed to strengthen. Some little time before his father had been removed he had secured a situation in some responsible capacity, on board an ocean steamer, and had been making voyages in her ever since. Of late, however, considerable persuasion had been made use of by Rose's mother and father, to break him off this inclination, though, perhaps, it was Rose's own pleadings that drew from him the promise to settle

down on his return home the last time he had paid them a visit. He never missed this filial as well as affectionate duty at the end of every voyage always bringing with him some rarity for his betrothed, and not infrequently some fine thing or other for all the old folks. Not being able to stay long at each visit, he had always notified them punctually when he might be expected, and they never missed meeting him at the time he appointed. This night, however, had put it out of the power of mortal to calculate on anything exactly. Yet it was not the disappointment of not seeing him that evening at supper as alarm at the thought of his tempting the waves in such a storm that created so much confusion and terror in the cottage. If Rose had known he was on land, even exposed to the blast and the pitiless pelting rain, she might have felt more tranquil. But her mind was like one crazed every time she thought of the reality.

So there she sat at her bedroom window gazing out eagerly at the distant waves, and totally unmindful of the chill damp air and the lightning that flung its forked flashes into the room every few minutes.

She was clad simply in a white wrapper, and seemed to be quite unconscious of the fact that she was endangering her health by this night exposure.

'Oh, God,' she murmured, raising her eyes to the dark sky, 'grant that my fears may be groundless. Watch over Walter, and bring him safe home.'

The attitude and the prayer were both in unison, presenting a picture of affliction that many a devotee of art would have given worlds to copy. As her lips closed on the appealing words the roaring winds without broke into a fierce fit of fury, and the sky was filled with one wild glare across its surface. It seemed for a moment as if the elements were arrayed in conflict. Spears of flame sprang out from opposite sides of the sky, and darted towards one another, followed by deep rolls of thunder sounding like invisible artillery. The girl shrank back out of sight of the terrible spectacle, and was for a short space in a sort of bewilderment. Was that meant as an answer to her prayer? Her mind was just then in that state to take any impression, and her highly dilated imagination gave life and shape even to the sounds and shadows about her. So it was not strange that she took the accidental occurrence as an omen. She arose hastily when she had recovered from the first stun of the surprise, and gazed anxiously off towards the spot where the dark form of the lighthouse was dimly perceptible in the distance.

He said last night that I should never see him,' she murmured to herself, 'and when I laughed at his threats I little imagined that he had any power over Walter's fate. He looked a very fiend as he walked off from the house, and now I know too well the dark thought in his mind when he made that menace. But he shall never carry out his purpose. The weak girl shall be more than a match for his artifice, and will foil him yet. At least he shall not wreak his demonic vengeance without a witness.'

Going over to a closet, she took a long cloak from one of the shelves, and threw it around her, pulling a hood that hung down behind over her head. Then she went over and knelt down before a small statue of the Blessed Virgin that stood in one corner of the room, and before which she had left her night lamp burning. By the faint reflection from this her features were for the first time distinctly visible, as she raised her face in supplication to the image, and besought the help and protection of her it represented. These were of that class of beauty that owes more to the disposition of the person than to any outward adornment. They were not perfectly regular, but there was a freshness about them that half the artificial damsels of fashion would have gone mad to be able to purchase. But it is scarcely fair to attempt to describe her at such a moment.

Her long masses of dark brown hair streamed about her shoulders in disorder, and her eyes, of the same color, which ordinarily must have beamed with mischief and merriment, were now dim with tears, and the fair skin around them red and swollen. In fact, she was one of those whose heart is in their face, and the anguish of hers was certainly visible in every feature.

A few minutes later the door of the cottage softly opened, though if there had been ten years' rust on the hinges, it would scarcely have been heard on such a night.

A light female form issued forth, and careless of the storm hurried off towards the sea shore.

CHAPTER III.

The lighthouse to which reference has been made was situated at the end of a narrow strip of rocky ground that stretched some distance out from the shore. The spot where it was located, though not the farthest point extending into the sea, was the loftest, and from

the top of the tower the beacon shot its red beams out over the surface of the water. There was perched the eyrie-like chamber devoted to the daily wants and nightly duties of the keeper, for the present one being a bachelor needed and reserved as little room as possible for his habitation. It was scantily furnished too. A few stools, some of them seemingly having lost the use of their legs long ago, were scattered through the apartment. A table tried to balance itself in one corner by leaning one foot on a couple of bricks, but the striking feature of the room was the quantity of navigation apparatus which one could perceive around the walls hung up and on shelves; quadrants, compass-boxes, and all the rest of the paraphernalia of sailing, which were probably picked up from the wrecks swept in from the ocean. The knowledge of this not add anything to the charms of the chamber on such a night. One could fancy the sea giving up its dead at such a moment, and image the green and ghostly figures stalking in and claiming what belonged to them.

But the owner of the apartment had no such vagaries. It needed only to look in his hard, weather-beaten face to see that there was very little of the superstitious about him. There was no weakness of that kind in the wrinkles that lined his brow and gathered round his lips; there was a selfishness in his cold grey little eyes that repelled acquaintance, and the very spirit of obstinacy seemed to hide in his bushy eyebrows.

What wonder that Rose should have laughed at the ridiculous proffer of his heart, and questioned if there was such a piece of human anatomy in his bosom, and what wonder that the darling of the village, whom every one loved, should have unconsciously inspired a tender feeling in the old crab, which he had a long struggle with himself before confessing.

The Tyrrell Cottage was one of the few houses that he entered familiarly or was allowed to enter, for the hatred between himself and the majority of those in the neighborhood never relaxed in strength since the time that he first took the place of Walter's father. That this should have been one of his resorts appears strange enough, for the relation between Rose and the son of the old lighthouse-keeper would naturally seem to have precluded the possibility of such an intimacy. But old Mr. Tyrrell was often queer in his notions. He generally liked to differ with people even on the most trivial subjects, and he often carried this eccentricity to extremes as in the present instance. It was not, perhaps, that he had any particular love for the company of Jonas that he encouraged his visits, but more from the little spiteful pleasure it gave him to know he was different from other people. Very likely had the Englishman been a boon companion of everybody else he would have nothing to do with him. How many similar characters are scattered through life.

It was the evening that preceded the one on which we have introduced our characters to the reader. The air was calm and the sky beautiful in its roke of red and blue, fringed with many another color, for the sun was just setting. Not a sign of the storm that raged so fearfully was visible anywhere. Rose had seated herself in a nook of the little garden that ran round the house, a spot to which she was accustomed to resort frequently on days when the weather was fine to do her 'pocket work,' as she called it, and which was generally a worsted stocking, or some similar piece of light handiwork. She had spent considerable time and taste in cultivating round her little boudoir, and it was certainly a very charming retreat. It was made so that the occupant could see everything around and be hidden herself, although the only tressle work about it was composed of the tendrils of some common creeping flowers and bean plants that clasped themselves about the boughs of a couple of old trees.

So it is. The commonest things may be made to appear lovely with only a little taste.

But our pen follows the face of description too fast. Rose was sitting in her little summer house, as we have said, and dreaming of the face and form of a handsome young sailor of twenty or so when she heard a step coming in the direction of herself, and, looking out, what should she see but the short ungainly shape and heavy physiognomy of Jonas Hull coming towards her. What could it mean? Had he, any news from Walter? This was the first thought that sprung to her mind. But then it occurred to her that he would be the last to bring such a message, for he had always studiously avoided making his appearance at the cottage on the occasions of Walter's return. Rose herself secretly loathed the man, though, perhaps on account of her father's cranky humor, she did not dare to show so. But it never occurred to her that his visits had anything further to do with herself than bidding her good night along with the rest of the family when he left. He had never ventured on any nearer familiarity, whether this was owing to