

"We can go, then, Harriet."

But she made no move to go. Her eyes rested upon Eaton steadily; and while he had been appealing to her, a flush had come to her cheeks and faded away and come again and again with her impulses as he spoke.

"If you didn't do it, why don't you help us?" she cried.

"Help you?"

"Yes: tell us who you are and what you are doing? Why did you take the train because Father was on it, if you didn't mean any harm to him? Why don't you tell us where you are going or where you have been or what you have been doing? What did your appointment with Mr. Warden mean? And why, after he was killed, did you disappear until you followed Father on this train? Why can't you give the name of anybody you know or tell us of any one who knows about you?"

Eaton sank back against the seat away from her, and his eyes shifted to Avery standing ready to go, and then fell.

"I might ask you in return," Eaton said, "why you thought it worth while, Miss Santoine, to ask so much about myself when you first met me and before any of this had happened? You were not so much interested then in me personally as that; and it was not because you could have suspected I had been Mr. Warden's friend; for when the conductor charged that, it was a complete surprise to you."

"No; I did not suspect that."

"Then why were you curious about me?"

Before Avery could speak or even make a gesture, Harriet seemed to come to a decision. "My Father asked me to," she said.

"Your father? Asked you to do what?"

"To find out about you."

"Why?"

As she hesitated, Avery put his hand upon her shoulder as though warning her to be still; but she went on, after only an instant.

"I promised Mr. Avery and the conductor," she said, "that if I saw you I would listen to what you had to say but would not answer questions without their consent; but I seem already to have broken that promise. I have been wondering, since we have found out what we have about you, whether Father could possibly have suspected that you were Mr. Warden's friend; but I am quite sure that was not the original reason for his inquiring about you. My Father thought he recognized your voice, Mr. Eaton, when you were speaking to the conductor about your tickets. He thought he ought to know who you were. He knew that some time and somewhere he had been near you before, and had heard you speak, but he could not tell where or when. And neither Mr. Avery nor I could tell him who you were; so he asked us to find out. I do not know whether, after we had described you to Father, he may have connected you with Mr. Warden or not; but that could not have been in his mind at first."

Eaton had paled; Avery had seemed about to interrupt her, but watching Eaton, he suddenly had desisted.

"You and Mr. Avery?" Eaton repeated. "He sent you to find out about me?"

"Sent me—in this case—more than Mr. Avery; because he thought it would be easier for me to do it."

HARRIET had reddened under Eaton's gaze. "You understand, Mr. Eaton, it was—was entirely impersonal with me. My Father, being blind, is obliged to use the eyes of others—mine, for one; he has trained me to see for him ever since we used to take walks together when I was a little girl, and he has made me learn to tell him what I see in detail, in the way that he would see it himself; and for helping him to see other things so definitely and clearly, he has Mr. Avery. He calls us his eyes, sometimes; and it was only—only because I had been commissioned to find out about you that I was obliged to show so much curiosity."

"I understand," said Eaton quietly. "Your report to your father, I suppose, convinced him that he had been mistaken in thinking he knew my voice."

"No—not that. He knew that he had heard it; for sounds have so much meaning to him that he never neglects or forgets them, and he carries in his mind the voices of hundreds of different people and almost never makes a mistake among them. It did make him surer that you were not any one with whose voice he ought to have been familiar, but only some one whom he had heard say something—a few words or sentences, maybe—under conditions which impressed your voice upon his mind. And he told Mr. Avery so, and that has only made Mr. Avery and the conductor more certain that you must be the one. And since you will not tell—"

"To tell would only further confirm them—"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean they would be more certain it was I who—"

EATON, as he blundered with the words and checked himself, looked up apprehensively at Avery; but Avery, if he had thought that it was worth while to let this conversation go on in the expectation, that Eaton might let slip something which could be used against himself, now had lost that expectation.

"Come, Harry," he said.

Harriet arose, and Eaton got up as she did and stood as she went toward the door.

"You said Mr. Avery and the conductor believe—" he began impulsively, in answer to the something within him which was urging him to know, to make certain, how far Harriet Santoine believed him to have been concerned in the attack upon her father. And suddenly he found that he did not need to ask. He knew; and with this sudden realization he all at once understood why she had not been convinced in spite of the conviction of the others—why, as, flushing and paling, she had just now talked with him, her manner had been a continual denial of the suspicion against him.

To Avery and to Connery the attack upon Santoine was made a vital and important thing by the prominence of Santoine and their own responsibility toward him, but after all there was nothing surprising in there having been an attack. Even to Harriet Santoine it could not be a matter of surprise; she knew—she must know—that the father whom she loved and thought of as the best of men, could not have accomplished all he had done without making enemies; but she could conceive of an attack upon him being made only by some one roused to insane and unreasoning hate against him or by some agent wicked and vile enough to kill for profit. She could not conceive of its having been done by a man whom, little as she had known him, she had liked, with whom she had chatted and laughed upon terms of equality. The accusation of the second telegram had overwhelmed her for a time, and had driven her from the defence of him which she had made after he had admitted his connection with Gabriel Warden; but now, Eaton felt, the impulse in his favour had returned. She must have talked over with her father many times the matter of the man whom Warden had determined to befriend; and plainly she had become so satisfied that he deserved consideration rather than suspicion that Connery's identification of Eaton now was to his advantage. Harriet Santoine could not yet answer the accusation of the second telegram against him, but—in reason or out of reason—her feelings refused acceptance of it.

It was her feelings that were controlling her now, as suddenly she faced him, flushed and with eyes suffused, waiting for the end of the sentence he could not finish. And as his gaze met hers, he realized that life—the life that held Harriet Santoine, however indefinite the interest might be that she had taken in him—was dearer to him than he had thought.

Avery had reached the door, holding it open for her to go out. Suddenly Eaton tore the handle from Avery's grasp, slammed the door shut upon him and braced his foot against it. He would be able to hold it thus for several moments before they could force it open.

"Miss Santoine," he pleaded, his



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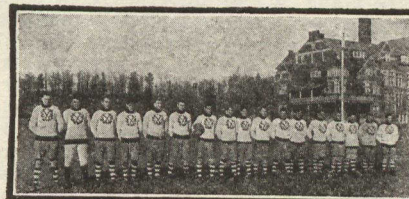
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