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JOHN'S DAUGHTER.

"You will care for my child? You will not let my little one suffer?" My old friend and college chum, John Harmon said this as he wrung my hand hard. I repeated my promise that in my own hometown, where there was a nursery full of little ones, Susie Harmon should hold a daughter's place. We were standing upon the wharf waiting for the signal that it was time for my friend to step aboard an out-going California steamer. He had lost his wife within the year, and soon after was beggared by a fire that totally destroyed the cotton mills in which he had held the position of superintendent for ten years. With his home desolate, his purse empty, he resolved, as many a man had done before him to seek his fortune in the modern El Dorado, and dig for gold in her mines.

The only drawback to this scheme was the difficulty of taking his three-year-old daughter, who had been in the care of hired nurses since her mother died. I, who shared every thought of John's mind, talked with my wife, and found her eagerly willing to take care of the little one. "I am sure I loved Mary as well as you loved John," she said, "and there is no one can have a stronger claim upon the child than we have." So, sure of her cordial welcome in our nursery, I made John the offer of a home for his little one, and it was accepted as lovingly as it was offered. This care removed, my friend hastened his preparations for departure, and I accompanied him to New York and saw him off.

The next morning I returned home to find Susie almost inconsolable, crying perpetually for "papa to come to Susie." My wife was distracted at the failure to comfort this childish sorrow, and our own three children looked on wonderingly at — "Naughty Susie, who cried and cried, after mamma told her to be quiet."

Fortunately, Susie was accustomed to see me, to snuggle in my arms when I talked with John, to associate me with her father, and she allowed me to comfort her. In time this violent grief wore away, and the child became very happy in our care. My business, that of a hardware merchant, being very prosperous, we did not feel the additional expense of the child's support a burden; and as the years wore by, she was as dear to us as our own little ones.

But she understood always that she was not our child, but had a dear father who loved her fondly, and was away from her only to make a fortune for her. As soon as she was old enough she had her father's letter read to her, and her first effort at penmanship where letters to "Papa."

John wrote often for ten years, recounting his varying success, sometimes sending money to buy presents for Susie. He was winning fortune slowly, not at the mines, where his health broke down, but in the employ of a San Francisco merchant, and some speculations in real estate. He was not a rich man, he wrote, after an absence of ten years, but prospering, when he purposed paying us a visit. He wrote hopefully of seeing his child, perhaps of taking her home with him, setting no definite time, but leading us to expect soon to see him. Then his letters ceased, and he did not come. I wrote again and again. Susie wrote. No answer came to either one or the other. We did not know the name of his employer, and after nearly two years more passed we sadly thought he must be dead.

It might have seemed to many unnatural for Susie to grieve so deeply as she did for a father almost unknown to her in reality, but she was a girl of most sensitive feelings, with a tender, loving heart, and we had always kept her father's name before her, striving to win him a place in her fondest affection. That we had succeeded only too well was shown by her sorrow, when week after week passed, and there was no good news from California.

When we had really lost all hope, it became Susie's great pleasure to sit beside me and ask me again and again for the stories I remembered of her father's boyhood and youth, his college life, our many excursions, and, above all, of his marriage and the gentle wife and mother so early called to heaven. She dearly loved those talks, and no memories were more precious than my description of her father's pain in parting from her, and his desire to win money in California only for her.

Time softened Susie's grief, and at eighteen she was one of the sweetest, most winning girls I ever saw. Without being a wonder of erudition she was well educated, had a fair musical

talent and a sweet, well-cultivated voice. She was tall and graceful, and when she was introduced to society with Joanna, my handsome, brunette daughter, both became popular.

Albert and Will, my boys, were older than the girls; Albert in business with me, and Will at college, the winter when Joanna and Susie made their debut. It would take me quite too long to tell of the pleasure of the young folks during this winter, but Joanna was won from us by a Cuban gentleman, and Susie became, if possible dearer than ever.

Spring had come, when one evening Albert came into my library, where I was plodding over a book, having worked busily all day. He fessed about the books in a nervous way, quite unlike his usual quiet manner and finally said: "Father, you have often said Susie is as dear to you as one of your own children. I looked up amazed at this opening speech. "Well?" I asked. "Will you make her your daughter in fact by giving her to me for a wife?"

"Dear! dear! To think I had been so blind. Susie had in truth become so much one of our children that I was as much astonished as if Albert had fallen in love with Joanna. But I soon found, when Susie's blushing face was hidden upon my breast, that she, too, had given away her heart, and I was only too well pleased that no stranger had won the precious gift.

In September they were married, my son and the child of our adoption, and I gave them a house next our own for a home, having old-fashioned ideas about such matters, and believing it is better for young married people to live by themselves and assume housekeeping cares.

The new home was a gem of neatness under Susie's dainty fingers, and the spirit of perfect love kept it ever bright. Having been brother and sister for so many years, Albert and Susie thoroughly understood each other's dispositions and I have never known domestic happiness more perfect than theirs.

Susie's first child, named for her father, John Harmon, was two years old, when the mail brought me a letter in an unknown hand from Cincinnati. I opened it, and upon a large sheet of paper found written, in a scrawling, uneven hand, three lines: "DEAR SIR: Will you come to me at 48 M street without letting Susie know. JOHN HARMON."

At first I believed it was a hoax, John had written a bold, clerk-like hand, clear as print. This was a scrawl, struggling all over the paper, uneven as the first penmanship of a little child. But the more I pondered over the matter the more I was inclined to obey the summons. So, pleading business, saying nothing of the letter to any one, I left home by the night train for Cincinnati.

No. 47 M street I found to be a boarding house for the poorest classes, and in a shabby room, half furnished, I found an aged worn man, perfectly blind, who rose to greet me, sobbing. "Fred, I knew you would come." "Why, old friend, I said, when surprised and emotion would let me speak, "how is this? We thought you were dead."

"Does Susie think so?" "Yes. We all gave you up." "Do not deceive her, Fred. I meant to come home to her rich, able to gratify every desire of her girlish heart. Do not let her know that only a blind, sick wreck is left for her to call father. Tell me of her, Fred. Is she well? Is she happy?" "She is both, John—a happy wife and mother."

"Married! My little Susie?" "Married to Albert, my son, of whom you may judge when I tell you folks say he is his father over again." "I would ask no more for my child," said John.

Then, in answer to my anxious questions, he told me the story of the years of silence. He was preparing to pay us his promised visit when a great fire broke out in San Francisco, that ruined his employer for the time, and swept away a row of building uninsured, in which John had invested all his savings. Worst of all, in trying to save the books of the firm, John was injured on the head by a falling beam, and lay for months in a hospital. When he so far recovered as to be discharged, his mind was still impaired, and he could not perform the duties of clerk or superintendent, while his health was too feeble for manual labor.

"I struggled for daily bread alone, Fred," he told me, "and when I received your loving letters, and dear Susie's, I would not write, hoping to

send better tidings if I waited for a turn of fortune's wheel. It never came, Fred. I left California three years ago, and came here, where I was promised the place of foreman in a great pork-packing house. I saved a little money and was hoping for better times when my health failed again, and this time with it my eye-sight. I hoped against hope, spending my savings to have the best advice, and not until I was pronounced incurable would I write to you. I want you to take me to an asylum, Fred; and as I must be a pauper patient, I must go to my own town. You will take me, Fred?"

"I will take you to an asylum, John," I promised. "And Susie? You will keep my secret. You will not disturb Susie's happiness?" "I will not trouble Susie's happiness," I said.

Yet an hour later I was writing to Susie, and I delayed our departure from Cincinnati till an answer came. It was the answer I expected from the tender loving heart, but I said nothing of it to John.

Caring tenderly for his comfort, I took him on his way homeward. It was evening when we reached the railway depot of our own town, and as we had been long cramped in the car-seats, I proposed to walk home. "Is it not too far off?" John asked. "I thought the asylum was a long way from here."

"Oh, the whole place is changed from the little village you left!" I answered; "We have a great town here now, and your asylum is not very far from here."

He let me lead him then, willingly enough, and we were not long in reaching Susie's home. She was alone in the cheerful sitting-room as we entered, but obeyed my motion for silence, as I placed John in a great arm-chair, after removing his hat and coat. He looked wretchedly old and worn, and his clothes were shabby, yet Susie's soft eyes, misty with tears, had only love in their expression as she waited permission to speak.

"John," I said to him, "if I had found you in a pleasant home, happy and prosperous, and I had known that Susie was poor, sick and blind, would it have been a kindly act for me to hide her misfortune from you, and passing by your home, to have placed her in the care of charitable strangers?"

"Fred, you would never have done that!" he said, much agitated. "Never!" I answered. "You are right. But you, John, ask me to take from Susie the happiness of knowing a father's love, the sweet duty of caring for a father's affliction."

"No, no Fred, I only ask you to put no burden upon her young life, to throw no cloud over her happiness. I am old and feeble; I shall trouble no one long."

"And when you die, you would deprive your only child of the satisfaction of ministering to your wants—take from her her father's blessing."

He turned his sightless eyes toward me, his whole face working convulsively. "Where is she, Fred? You would not talk so if you did not know my child still loves her father."

"I am here, father," Susie said; and I stole softly away, as John clasped his child in his arms. Albert was in the dining-room with Johnnie, and I was chatting still with him, when I heard John calling: "Fred! Fred!"

I hurried to the room to find him struggling to rise, Susie vainly trying to calm him. "I want my child!" he cried, desperately, "you promised me my child!"

I saw at a glance that the agitation of the evening had brought back the wandering mind, of which he had told me. Albert and I released Susie, who left us quickly. Some finer instinct than we possessed guided her, for she returned with Johnnie, and whispering him to be very good and kiss grandpapa, she put him in her father's arms. In a second his excitement was gone, and he fondled the curly head, while Johnnie obediently pressed his lips upon the withered cheek. So, in a little time, they fell asleep, Johnnie nestled in the feeble arms, and the withered face drooping upon the golden curls. We watched them silently, till we saw a shadow pass over John's face, and a change settled there that comes but once in life.

Gently Albert lifted the sleeping child, and carried him to the nursery, while Susie and I sat beside the arm-chair. "Uncle Fred," she whispered, "I want you for a doctor. But may I waken him? Let him speak to me once more!"

A Terrible Adventure.

"I have had such an adventure," exclaimed Mrs. Badger as she flounced into the sitting room, sauk into an easy chair and gasped for breath. "What is the matter, my dear?" inquired Mr. Badger as he laid down his newspaper to listen.

"That is a nice way to speak to a woman after she has just seen a sight that curdled her blood. Oh, my!" exclaimed the worthy lady as she covered her pink face with her terra cotta gloves, totally oblivious for the moment of the fact that the two colors formed a very inharmonious contrast. "I can see it before me now. I don't believe I will ever forget it, ever."

"Compose yourself, my dear, and tell me all about it."

"That is the way with you men," responded Mrs. Badger as she removed her hands from her face and began unbuttoning her gloves. "You have no feeling. You don't know what sentiment is. If you had passed through what I have to-day the first intimation I would have of it would be an unusual odor about your breath. You would go into a saloon just as if nothing had happened and talk the matter over with a friend, and by the time you got home you would forget all about it. Compose myself, indeed, I know I shan't recover from the shock for six weeks, if ever I will."

Here the excited matron paused to allow her husband an opportunity to interrupt her again, but that individual wisely refrained from taking advantage of it.

"When I got through my work this noon—you know we had company for lunch? Mrs. Simpson and her daughter were here. How I detest that woman! I know she came here on purpose to make mean remarks about our new silverware. By the way, Isaac, that silverware is wearing very badly. The plating has been rubbed off in three places on our coffee-pot already. That comes of buying your table ware at a tea store. I always knew you were no judge of such things. The next time perhaps you will let me buy stuff for my own house. But you always think you know so much about such things."

"No one can teach you anything. If you would take your wife's advice once or twice a year, instead of that miserable Jim Wilson's, it would be better for you—and me, too. I suppose now you will go and tell that odious man just what I have said. That is the way you always do. You know you do. The last time I told you the truth about him you went right off and repeated it to him like a little, leaky schoolboy. You needn't try and deny it, for Mrs. Wilson came over the next day and made the most scandalous statements about you I ever heard, and I know she only did it to get even. Oh if I was only a man I'd show you some things that you ought to know."

Here Mrs. Badger stopped for breath and glanced across the fire place at her unfortunate husband in a way that would have chilled the marrow in the bones of a less experienced Benedict.

"Well, my dear," suggested Mr. Badger, with a faint sigh, "as you were about to say, Mrs. Simpson called."

"That's right," snapped Mrs. Badger, viciously. "That's right. Since you were down town and saw the terrible sight, suppose you finish the story. That's right. Go ahead and tell me all about it. I'm impatient to hear."

"I didn't intend to interrupt you, my dear," responded Mr. Badger, wearily. "Don't 'my dear,' me, sir. Please don't. Well, since you don't know anything about it and are willing to listen to me relate it I will continue. Mrs. Simpson and her freckled-face Miss Simpson came to lunch. We had pickled salmon, hot biscuits—you know what delicious biscuits Mary makes? It is the only good thing about the baggage. She does everything else terribly. She broke three saucers this morning while she was trying to listen to what I was saying to you about Jennie Parsons while we were in the pantry. I think I shall discharge her. She is too careless for any use, but then she is cheap and knows our ways, and Heaven knows what I should do with a new girl, but I suppose you would be glad to have a change—you don't have any of the work to do. You men are so selfish. I wish I was a man."

"So do I, my dear," observed Mr. Badger. "Then I might possibly hear the end of this story some time this year."

"That's right, Mr. Badger; when you can't treat me cruelly and neglect me, abuse me. That's the way with you men. I have a good mind not to tell the story at all now, just for spite."

At this moment Mr. Badger picked up his newspaper and resumed his reading. "As I was saying," continued Mrs. Badger, after five minutes of silence, which seemed to her like a month, "when Mrs. Simpson and Miss Simpson left the house I put on my cloak and hat and started down to buy some groceries that I asked you to order several days ago, but which you forgot as usual. You always forget such things until you sit down to the table to eat and

then you storm and raise a row because you don't find the articles all cooked and ready for you in silver-colored dishes. I got in a red car and started down town. The car didn't stop for me at first. I had to walk over to the other side of the street and walk through a pool of water, but I don't suppose it would make any difference to you if I had drowned. After wading nearly up to my boot tops I finally got into the car and there wasn't any seat for me. The car was crowded with men and women. There wasn't a gentleman there. It's a pity the street car companies don't run cattle cars for those brutes who sit down and pretend to read newspapers while ladies stand up. There was one pretty-faced dude who wasn't reading. He didn't dare look me in the face. He fumbled around in his pockets and pulled out a newspaper, and when I looked at him he began reading it upside down. Some map would do anything rather than stand up and let a lady sit down. Then the brute of a conductor asked me if I didn't have small change when I gave him a five dollar bill. Of course I had, but I wouldn't give it to him after he had insulted me before the car full of people, not that I cared for them, though. Then he looked at the bill suspiciously, and carried it out on the platform and asked the driver if it was good. He then went through the car and asked every man if he had change. None had any, of course, and he had to give it back to me. I hope he had to pay my fare himself, just because he was such a selfish brute. But he was like all you men."

"At Twenty-third street a woman got in the car with that lovely dress pattern I saw on Broadway last fall and wanted you to buy for me, but you said it was too expensive. She had it made over, and it was perfectly beautiful. I know it didn't cost her over \$50, and it was worth twice that much. You will see how much it costs when I get my new dress next month. Dress goods are twice as high now, but you always think you know so much about such things."

"I got out at Fourteenth street and was walking past that new building on Sixth avenue. You know which one I mean? It has such lovely windows. They are plate glass and reach clear across the store, and are filled with the greatest bargains I ever saw. I know some of the lace that they have marked down to 62 cents didn't cost one cent less than 60 cents. Well, right over the top of the building there is a scaffold and there were some men working on it. They had apple of bricks and a whole dry goods box full of mortar. I met Mr. Jones there—that pleasant-faced gentleman who comes here and talks so beautifully about Paris and the latest fashions. He had his charming little pug dog with him, and the moment he saw me he bowed and that dear little doggie barked. You know the last time he came here I gave him your slippers to play with. He is such a cute little fellow. He nearly choked to death, you remember, on the heel of one of the slippers. But you can buy a new pair for \$2, and you know I never liked that pair any way. You bought them without consulting me. He said he was coming up to see us to-night."

"Who?" interrupted Mr. Badger, as he started from his chair. "Jones or his dog?"

"Mr. Jones, of course; you don't suppose I would talk to a pug dog, do you?"

"Well, my dear," continued Mr. Badger, as he buttoned up his coat, "I shall have to be out this evening. I have a business meeting to attend to. I am sorry I can't stay at home to enjoy the society of Mr. Jones and the Jones pug, but I can't neglect business, you know. I must go right off. I haven't a moment to spare."

"You needn't run away to avoid meeting Mr. Jones. He won't be here."

"But you just said he was coming."

"So I did, but he won't. While we were talking a whole bucketful of bricks fell off the scaffold and struck him on the head before my eyes and flattened him out like a pancake."

"Oh!" shuddered Mr. Badger, "that was horrible. No wonder you were shocked. I wonder whether he leaves a widow and a family. He really wasn't such a bad fellow after all."

"Leave a widow? What do you mean? How could he marry?"

"I don't see any reason why Mr. Jones shouldn't marry."

"Mr. Jones? He wasn't hurt. It was the dog that was crushed."

"Oh," replied Mr. Badger, as he seated himself again and picked up the newspaper. "Is that the terrible adventure you had?"

"Well, isn't that adventure enough? I was so weak I had to order a carriage to take me home, and that cost \$4; and you will have to go without meat for your breakfast to-morrow morning unless you order it yourself to-night, and, Mr. Badger, let me say that the next time I tell you a story you will understand it at once."

"I doubt it," replied Mr. Badger, as his wife flounced out of the room to change her dress for dinner.

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