

# The DARK MIRROR

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By  
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Author of "The False Faces,"  
"The Lone Wolf," Etc.  
Illustrated by Irwin Myers

## CHAPTER NINE The Changeling.

### I. TRANSLATION.

As on that first occasion when sleep had stolen upon and overcome her unawares in the studio, her unclosing eyes comprehended only darkness absolute.

Unlike that time, when she had roused instantaneously, self-consciousness springing suddenly, full witted, full powered, clear, out of nightmare thralldom, now she awoke slowly and at expense of effort almost painful: senses and perceptions struggling long and ardently to break the embrace of a lethargy so deep and undisturbed that the self-sense had lain in it benumbed and stifled, like a seed that slumbers in the pent darkness of the earth against the coming of the spring.

In the confusion of those first waking moments she believed herself to be at home, in bed.

But the darkness of her bedchamber had never been sheer; there was always a diffused glow from the lights in the street to temper it.

Then she remembered, dully, the studio and the weariness that had weighed upon her in the afternoon.

She must have slept several hours at the least reckoning, for it had been broad daylight when she lay down, the evenings were long, and it was now, judging by the blackness of it and the silence, dead of night.

But she looked in vain for the violet-tinted rectangle of the north-light.

And mysteriously the windows were shut which had been open when she stretched out to rest. For there was not only an utter absence of light but a smothering lack of fresh air. Her lungs starving, she lay for some time stupidly contemplating the exertion that would be needed to rise and open one of the windows. Somehow she could not seem to nerve herself to it.

She was feeling actually ill, squeamish. Her limbs were stiff and heavy, her hands hot, her cheeks and forehead afebrile, a prickling sensation afflicted her body, she was athirst and the taste in her mouth was evil; and when she moved her head upon the pillow, pain like a brutal blow crashed from temple to temple and back again and again, forcing feeble groans past her lips.

Nevertheless conditions such as these were unendurable. At whatever cost, she must have water and fresh air.

She steeled herself and presently, by a supreme exertion of will power, forced herself to sit up. For the time being she could no more. The pain rocked and smashed about like a mad thing, till she wondered would it break her skull. And as by degrees those transports subsided, she was taken with qualms of nausea.

She must have kicked off her shoes in her sleep. At least, she could not remember removing them before lying down. At all events—whatever had become of them—they were gone. Beneath her stockings feet the floor was bare and rough, of unfinished wood. Now, there was a rug beside the divan in the studio. And even had it been spirited away like her shoes, the studio floor was of hardwood neatly joined and polished till its surface was like glass.

Then a hand that she dropped to the edge of her couch encountered the coarse ticking of an uncovered mattress, instead of the silken rug that clothed the divan.

Slowly it was borne in upon her that she was neither in her bedchamber nor in her studio.

This conviction struck home to her understanding with a shock that brought her to her feet. What had happened? Where was she—and who?

Was she Priscilla Maine, delirious? Or was she Leonora—yet once again that puppet of her life in dreams, embarked upon some new and still more terrible adventure?

But Leonora was no more . . . She took a blind step into obscurity, and another, blundered into a chair and knocked it over with a clatter.

While she waited, dashed, hands clutched wildly at vacant blackness, a key turned in a reluctant lock, a door opened, closed, and was relocked. Priscilla failed to elicit more than a harsh, inarticulate whisper from a swollen throat.

A match rasped and spluttered in the mark, a gas-jet hissed from a wall-bracket, spreading a fan-like flame with a body of ghastly blue and a border of tawny yellow.

It revealed a mean and ugly cubicle, perhaps six feet by eight, with dingy walls to whose crumbling plaster clung a few dismal rags of ancient paper. The single window was sturdily boarded on the inside. The begrimed floor was a stranger alike to carpeting and soap and water, had apparently been so since time out of memory. For furnishing there was a small table of painted wood, the overturned chair, and a scorbite iron bedstead with sway-backed springs, a lumpy mattress and one emaciated pillow.

Silent beneath the wheezing gas-light, the woman Inez bent upon Priscilla a lurking regard.

II. INEZ.  
"Well, Inez, drawn in overcolored surprise, 'would you look who's here! As I live 'tis none other than the Duplex Kid—Little Nora of the Double Life—and Face!"

Arms akimbo, with feering mouth and hostile eyes, she waited hopefully for her gibe to draw the spirited response which might have been expected of Leonora, and so provide excuse for further insolence.

She was disappointed. Her victim was too far gone in wretchedness to know or care whether she were the butt of ill-natured derision. Added to the misery of her body, she had now to cope with an intellectual confusion that seemed past raveling.

She had fallen asleep in the tranquil spaciousness of her studio; she was awake in this confined place of unspeakable squalor. She had been free and alone: she was now in a manner jailed, at the mercy of this truculent vixen. No later than this afternoon she had been Priscilla Maine: tonight she was cast for the role of Leonora. Both hands clasping her tortured head, as if to prevent its splitting asunder, the girl stared at Inez with distraught eyes in a haggard countenance.

"Thought you'd pay the old place a visit, did you? Found Flit' avenue and all too rich for your stumbluck, I presume. How's it feel to be back on the farm? Like old home week, I guess."

Again Priscilla tried to speak; but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. The sounds, when at length they came, were unrecognizable as her own voice.

"Water!" she croaked—"in pity's name—water!"

Momentarily the other seemed of a mind to refuse her. Then, perhaps because she saw she would get no satisfaction from her prey otherwise, she decided to indulge her.

"All right, dearie; I'll fetch you a nice long drink. Back in a minute. Just make yourself perfectly at home."

Defly unfastening the door, Inez slipped out.

Priscilla was kept waiting a cruel time. Whether prompted by need for stealth or by common hatefulness seeking to prolong her torments, Inez chose to return noiselessly. Priscilla, sitting with drooping head, had no warning till she heard the door close softly. Then, seeing Inez poised with her back to it, a large goblet of thick glass held high, the girl lurched to her feet and toward her.

"Please!" Priscilla begged huskily. With a quick movement Inez placed the glass on the little table and met Priscilla with a straight-arm blow on the bosom that drove her reeling back to the bed, where uprights she grasped to save herself a fall.

"Don't be in such a sweat. You'll get your drink, all right—when you've done what I want you to."

"What—what do you want me to do?"

Inez tossed toward her a bundle of garments she had brought under her arm. "I want that suit you've got



"As I Live, 'Tis None Other Than the Duplex Kid—Little Nora of the Double Life."

on—it's too d—n' good for you—and your rings and that brooch and everything. Hand 'em over and you can have your drink."

"I don't understand. You can't—it can't be possible you mean to rob me?"

"Say, lis'n!" With the stride of an infuriated animal Inez crossed to her and stopped with her shrewish face thrust forward pugnaciously, not six inches from Priscilla's. "I'm goin' to have them swell duds and jools if

I have to rip 'em off your back with my own hands—and the skin off your face, too. Get me? I mean every word of it. You're goin' to come down to where you belong this minute, and you're goin' to look the part, too, or my name ain't Inez. You've come the haughty over me for the last time. It's my innins now, and when I'm finished with you everything 'll be perfectly even between you and Inez, forever and ever—a-men!"

With trembling, awkward fingers Priscilla began to pluck at the buttons of her blouse.

Inez retreated to the table, picked up the glass and rattled the ice musically within it.

"Hurry, dear heart!" Priscilla removed coat and blouse and stepped out of her skirt, then lifted her hands for the glass. Her tormentor warned her off.

"Wait—a—minute! You're forgettin' them rings."

Silently the girl stripped her fingers, dropping their jewels into the greedy palm. Nothing mattered, so that she earned that drink of water.

But yet once again was she put off. "Don't crowd me so! I might get nervous and spill something."

Climb into them clothes I brought you first—and if I was you I wouldn't waste no time, neither. Can't tell when Harry or someone 'll bump in here and catch you with nothin' on but your pretties. And be thankful I let you keep them . . ."

For an instant, indeed, the woman seemed disposed to repent of that generosity, eyeing Priscilla's undergarments of lace and flimsy silk.

In fumbling haste Priscilla covered them with the cheap and none too clean cotton blouse, the shoddy and ill-fashioned coat and skirt which Inez had brought her.

At long last she had her reward. At first in frantic gulps, then more slowly if with no less avidity, she drained the glass; while Inez at the bed snatched up and tucked under her arm the spoils of this her first victory over her rival.

"Well, how about it, Nora? Feelin' chirpier?" she inquired with magnanimity when Priscilla put down the empty glass.

"I don't know." Priscilla's feet wove uncertainly toward the bed. Too late she was realizing that the glass had held something more than mere water.

She sat down suddenly and began again to nurse her head. "I'm ill," she murmured—"very ill. How did I get here?"

"I guess maybe that's something you don't know." Inez laughed spitefully. "And I don't mind tellin' Harry followed you down Flit' avenue 'afternoon and seen where you stopped, and then when you got to Charlie and left him to watch you while he 'phoned for the rest of the bunch. When it got dark and everything 'was quiet, they picked the girl, found you doin' a Rip van Winkle that looked good for twenty year, give you a shot of the hop to make sure you wouldn't wake up at the wrong time, and brought you down here in a taxi. That's your history up to date. Cheer up; the worst is yet to come. And when it comes—grab this from me—innocent 'll Inez is goin' to have a ringside seat."

"I don't understand . . ."

The words were barely audible; but the turgid heard. Her sneer darkened.

"Well, if you gotta know, the bunch's outside makin' up their minds what to do with you. I haven't got no idea what they'll finally settle on, but I'll be plenty, whatever it is. If it was anybody else I'd feel sorry for them; but you—!"

Her laugh was harsh and jeering. For sole response the cowering figure on the bed suddenly sank in upon itself, then over upon one side, where it lay sprawling, inert, whites of eyes showing under half closed lids.

Started, the woman bent over Priscilla. But her breathing went on monotonously. She had merely fainted.

III. THE TRAP.  
The blinding prismatic glare that filled all space dwindled slowly to a hand's breadth of porticolored flame, its thunderous roar to a sustained snore: overhead the serrate gas jet by fits and starts hissed and spat angrily.

She had no means of knowing how long it had been burning; that is to say, how long she had been insensible; but it was long enough, at all events, for the atmosphere of that stuffy hole to have grown sickening with heat and its aggravation of the native stench.

Her mouth and throat once more were parched. The drink brought her by Inez had served only to render her thirst more intense: a matter of spiteful calculation, in all likelihood: even though diluted, alcohol in any form is no quencher of thirst, rather the contrary. Inez had not, however, reckoned with its stimulating properties: Priscilla was no less unhappy to body and mind, on recovering from her swoon, but she felt stronger, better able to think and to work out thought in action.

At present, however, two considerations dominated all others: her need of water; the necessity somehow to escape from that place of terror and abomination.

She got up, unsteadily enough, padded to the door, and listened there with an ear to the joint between door and jamb.

Hearing what she believed to be a rumor of distant voices, nothing else, she laid hold of the knob and turned it cautiously. A thrill shot through her heart when the door opened: Whether by design or inadvertence, Inez had neglected to lock it!

A peering reconnaissance showed nothing but gloom immediately beyond the door. Trembling, the girl opened it wide. The light from the gas jet then revealed a length of malodorous hallway, broken by two more doors, both closed. At its far end it turned off at a right angle. What lay beyond was unguessable: there was no light.

The air of the hallway was heavy with that subtle, sickly smell, alluring and appalling . . . the breath of death . . . She had smelt it before, somewhere, at some time indelicate . . . At length she knew it!

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the reek of opium smoke in the den of Sing Ho, to which she—or Leonora—had gone that night (so long ago!) to meet Charlie the Cook.

She advanced one unshod, timid foot across the threshold, faltered, took another step and closed the door behind her, shutting herself out into untempered darkness, and stole fearfully on, feeling her way with hands that brushed the walls.

She drew near to the farther door. The voices became more definite. Seemingly several persons were closeted in that room, all talking at once, in discordant dissension. The notion came to her, was entertained and established as an idea fixed, that if she could only win past that door, the rest would be easy, an unimpeded way of escape would open out to her . . .

She was within two paces of success when an especially violent wrangle ended in a harsh rasping of chair legs on a bare, rough floor; and in a sudden dull heavy heels thumped toward the door. The girl shrank back, instinctively flattening herself to the wall to one side of the door. This last was thrown open, letting out a flood of gaslight and a choking gust of air heavy laden with tobacco smoke. A man came out, turning toward Priscilla's recent prison. Blinded by the transition from light to darkness, he stopped and, cursing, put out a hand toward the wall. It touched Priscilla's shoulder. She winced with a stifled cry of fright. Instantly the hand closed cruelly on her shoulder; its owner uttered an exclamation of mingled wrath and satisfaction, and with one ruffianly swing sent her staggering into the room.

Somehow she escaped a tumble, righted herself, stood cringing, blinking, trembling.

The door closed with a bang. The time of all pretensions to polish, accents of the Nut, destitute for the nonce.

"Here she is now! Caught her just in time—tryin' to do a sneak. Who left the door unlocked on her? You Inez?"

Coolly the voice of Inez replied: "Maybe I did—I don't remember."

"D—n' careless of you—"

"Ah, shut up. What difference does it make? She didn't get away, did she? She couldn't, not in a thousand years, without we let her."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Delectable Prerogative.  
During the reign of Louis XII kissing was very popular at court. Every dance movement ended with every man kissing his partner, and no gallant thought of greeting a lady friend without kissing her on the lips. The king, himself, enjoyed this to the full, and always kissed every pretty girl at any dance or entertainment he attended. At social affairs it was a custom for courtiers to watch Louis, and when he was in high good humor ask such favors as they wished.

Rulers' Postage Privileges.  
The king of England pays no postage, which is perhaps just as well, since he yearly receives about a quarter of a million business letters. The heads of all kingdoms and republics enjoy similar privileges.

## THE KITCHEN CABINET

(By 1724, Western Newspaper Union.)

Ethereal Goddess of the Days, Sweet, fragrant May, enticing Our hearts with thy alluring ways, Eliciting our warmest praise, Our year's path spicing!

When every child of nature wakes To springtime's charms succumbing; And in all haste each one forsakes Its cloak of gray for green, it makes Us know thou'rt coming.

—Caroline Sumner.

### GOOD THINGS FOR FAMILY.

A dainty salad is always a welcome dish. The following will be found good and uncommon:

**Pineapple and Cheese.**—Arrange slices of pineapple on white leaves of lettuce. Fill the hole in the center of the

pineapple with cream cheese that has been softened to a paste with a little thick cream. Place a dash of paprika on the cheese and pile lightly on each ring pieces of apple, banana and grapefruit. Garnish with cherries and serve with French dressing.

**Buttered Cream Onions.**—Cook two bunches of young green onions, stems and all, in boiling salted water until tender, then drain. Lay the onions on a spoonful of melted butter and serve very hot. A thick rich cream sauce may be used if preferred.

**Chocolate Cream Pie.**—Line a deep plate with plain paste, wet the edge and put on a half-inch rim. Prick with a fork and bake in a hot oven. Prepare a filling by mixing five tablespoonfuls of cornstarch with one-half cupful of sugar and one-fourth teaspoonful of salt. Dilute with one-fourth of a cupful of cold milk, add two cupfuls of scalded milk and cook over hot water for half an hour, stirring while thickening. Melt two squares of chocolate, add four tablespoonfuls of hot water, stir until smooth and add to the mixture. Remove from the stove and fold in the whites of two eggs, beaten stiff. Flavor with one teaspoonful of vanilla. While still hot pour the filling into the pie, just as the crust comes from the oven. Serve cold, covered with one cupful of whipped cream unsweetened.

**Baked Stuffed Heart.**—Wash a beef heart, remove veins and arteries. Stuff with bread stuffing. Lard with salt pork, sprinkle with salt and pepper and dredge with flour. Place in a double boiler and cook in a moderate oven three hours.

**Noisette Bread.**—Soften one cake of compressed yeast in one-fourth of a cupful of lukewarm water. Add to one cupful of scalded and cooled milk. Stir in one tablespoonful of shortening, two tablespoonfuls of molasses, one cupful of flintbert meats, whole, and one-half cupful of whole wheat flour. Add white flour as needed for dough. Knead thoroughly, return to the bowl, cover closely and stand in a warm place free from draft until it has doubled in bulk. Shape into a loaf, place in pan, set aside to rise and bake in a moderate oven.

**SEASONABLE GOOD THINGS.**  
Now that the young tender dandelion greens are here, let us try them with the following dressing:

**Dutch Dressing.**—Wash and drain one pint of fresh tender greens, cut in two-inch pieces. Cut two ounces of bacon into small cubes and fry until crisp and brown. Beat one egg until light, add

two tablespoonfuls of sugar, one-fourth teaspoonful of salt, one-third of a cupful of water, one-fourth cupful of vinegar. Pour this mixture into the frying pan with the bacon and mix well, stirring constantly until thickened. It should be about the consistency of cream. Pour boiling hot over the dandelion greens.

**Pepper Pot.**—Take a knuckle of veal, one and one-half pounds of honeycomb tripe. Cook the veal with a tablespoonful of salt, two large onions sliced, six allspice, ten peppercorns, two bay leaves, one tablespoonful of marjoram, one tablespoonful each of sweet basil and thyme, one hot red pepper, one-fourth of a teaspoonful of pepper, all in a bag, the red pepper cut in small pieces. Simmer for two hours, or until the veal is tender. Remove the veal from the stock. Cut the cleaned tripe, which has been washed in salt water and lastly in soda water, in julienne strips. Simmer in the stock for one hour. Add two large potatoes cut in dice and add egg balls the size of marbles, made by beating an egg and adding flour to make a dough stiff enough to roll in the hands. Cook for half an hour longer, then thicken with two tablespoonfuls of sweet fat and three of flour. Cook until well blended and serve hot. The veal may be chopped, or part of it, and added to the dish. This will serve ten persons.

**Steamed Strawberry Shortcake.**—Sift together two cupfuls and a half of flour, one-half cupful of sugar, three teaspoonfuls of baking powder and one-fourth teaspoonful of salt; cut in one-fourth of a cupful of butter. Beat one egg, add one cupful of milk and mix all together. Turn into a buttered mold and steam three hours. Serve hot, with whipped cream and strawberry jam.

**Denied the Charge.**  
Kind Lady—You should brace up, my poor man. Remember what you owe to society.

Hobo—I don't owe society nuthin', lady. What do yer 'tink I've been doin'—playin' bridge?—Boston Transcript.

## FINE CROPS SURE

Farmers in Western Canada Jubilant at Prospect.

Splendid Winter Weather Has Put the Naturally Fertile Land in Splendid Condition, and Bountiful Yields Are Assured.

"What a delightful winter we have had," is an expression that could be heard almost anywhere when the topic of the weather became the subject of conversation. Not only in the Middle West and "down east" could it be heard, but also in the Far West, up in the Canadian West. There the same remarkable features that brought forth a wonderful winter existed. Reports from all parts of the country, from famed Medicine Hat in Alberta to Winnipeg in Manitoba, indicate that all through the winter season very little cold weather was experienced. In December, we read that golf playing had put into the discard all ice sports, that farmers were caught "red-handed" plowing their fields. In January, the Alberta yeoman got out his tractor and in his shirt sleeves was seen preparing ground for the 1921 crop. During February, in Saskatchewan, one farmer harrowed fifty acres and planted the seed. "Why, yes, of course, in March," said an Iowa farmer, who had just heard from his son, who was looking after the Western Canadian farm, "my boy writes me they had some snow, and a few cold dips, but what did that matter? The cattle and the horses came through the winter in better condition than they looked three or four months ago. Grass was plentiful on the prairies, the stubble was rich and valuable as food, and the straw stacks and groves proved ample for shelter."

Spring is now fully upon the Western Canada farmer, his machinery is all in shape for a spring's work, and he is looking forward to an excellent crop year. Last fall there was a splendid lot of moisture that permeated the ground sufficiently to leave a perfect seed bed. Indications are now that the crop will go in in the condition required for successful germination. Then, with the lengthened days of May and June, the many hours of sunshine that they bring, accompanied by showers of rain, and with a soil of which there is none richer nor more generous, there will be seen preparing for a ripening harvest the hundreds of thousands of acres of wheat, oats, barley, rye, alfalfa and corn that will make the hearts of the Western Canada farmers swell with pride as they reasonably look forward to an abundant harvest.

There is a great deal that can be said in favor of the climate of Western Canada. The most important is that those who live there, and have lived in other countries, prefer it to any they have experienced elsewhere. It is true the winters as a rule are colder than are those in countries lying much farther south, but it is also true that they are tempered by a dryness of the atmosphere that makes a lower temperature preferable to that several degrees higher where greater humidity prevails. Enervation and listlessness are unknown; the air is bracing, but the cold is not penetrating. Then the summers and the autumns—they could not be more enjoyable.—Advertisement.

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Shop Talk.  
First Printer (having got rid of bore)—"That fellow's a type, isn't he?" Second Printer—"A type? He's a case."

Don't Forget Cuticura Talcum  
When adding to your toilet requisites. An exquisitely scented face, skin, baby and dusting powder and perfume, rendering other perfumes superfluous. You may rely on it because one of the Cuticura Trio (Soap, Ointment and Talcum). 25c each everywhere.—Adv.

The man who believes is the one who achieves.

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