

Lola, his subject, always came to sit for him in the morning for an hour or more. At first he laughed and talked with her with all the spirit of good-fellowship. But as the work progressed he grew morose and silent, until at last Lola came to dread the hour of sitting.

Thus a month and more passed by, and still the artist lingered, while the portrait daily grew under the deft touches of his brush. Then one morning he announced that it was all but finished, and that he would show it to them on the morrow.

That evening, as Lola was going to her room, she heard a voice speaking in the studio. She stepped inside the open door, expecting to find Carl and her father there. But at the first words she heard she paused. For it was Carl, alone, and he was talking to himself. From where she stood, motionless and silent, she could see him. But a screen hid the picture from her sight. The artist was on his knees before the easel, a flickering candle held high above his head, and this he moved from side to side so as to throw light on the canvas to the best possible advantage.

"Done," he was saying, "done. And I dreamed that I could never do it. How mistaken I was. And yet," a note of sadness coming into his voice, "I am not satisfied. It is not just as I had wished. Oh, you are very beautiful," addressing the portrait now, "but so is a snow crystal. Ah yes, without doubt there is something lacking. There is beauty, divine beauty, but it is cold and lifeless. What, oh, what have I failed to grasp? What is this elusive something I have missed? Beauty, innocence, truth, grace—you have them all. And yet you are incomplete."

The candle fell from his hand, rolled upon the floor, and then went out. But by the light of its momentary plunge, Lola had seen his face. It was white and drawn with pain. And in the darkness she heard him sob aloud. But at that moment he seemed more human than at any time before. The fact that he could feel sorrow seemed to draw him closer to her, and deep in her heart she pitied him. And the desire was strong upon her to go to him with soothing words and touches. But instead of following this impulse, she turned swiftly and noiselessly, and crept to her room, her cheeks and ears tingling yet with the hot blood that coursed through them. She lighted a taper and set it by the mirror. Then she loosed her luxuriant hair and let it fall in a