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STOLEN FROM THE GRAVE.

The Doctor's Wife.

CONCLUDED.

SHE half withdrew from him, and yet his love was soothing to her then. "Let mine be the hand to wipe those tears away, my poor Rose!" he said, touching her cheek with his delicate hand. "Let my name be the one to shelter you, my love be the love to console you. Speak but the word, Rose, and you are safe and I happy."
"Oh, what shall I do?" murmured the girl, looking away from him.
"Am I so hateful to you that you would rather be ruined than come to me?" he asked reproachfully.
Rose turned toward him again, and softly laid her hand in his, but withdrew it instantly when he would have clasped it.
"You are very kind, dear Clarence," she said, tremulously; "but I do not know what to say now, except that I thank you. Please let me go."
She rose from her seat, putting him gently away from her; then, as if fearing that she had been unkind and ungrateful, she held out her hand, and lifted her pale face.
"O Clarence!" she said, "if I seem ungrateful to you ever, forgive me! God will reward you if I do not. Pardon me now if I seem abrupt. You cannot know what I suffer. My head is in a whirl, my heart is bursting. I am rich, Clarence, but I find that riches bring neither protection nor happiness. I had no such misery when I was a poor little pauper girl, nor when I was at the convent. I felt safe then; but now, even though you offer me protection, I do not feel safe. It must be because I am an orphan, and ignorant of the ways of the world. Don't say any more now. I want to be alone."
He drew back from her clear, pure eyes and a faint blush deepened in his cheek as she spoke to him. Perhaps some momentary shame touched his heart for the base falsehood he was winking that girl's heart with.
"I will tell you to-morrow," she said; and, turning away, left the room.
It was already evening, and Rose did not appear again that night. After an hour or two Mrs. Burkhardt went to her. She found Rose on her knees with her face bowed forward to the *prie-dieu*. The lady waited a moment, but as Rose did not stir, she went to her, and stooping, put an arm about her figure.
"My dear, can I do anything for you?" she asked tenderly.
"No, I thank you," answered Rose, in a suppressed voice, without raising her face.
"Won't you come out and sit with us a while? Clarence is very unhappy about you."
"I must be alone to-night," said Rose.
"Thank Clarence for being so kind."
"What shall I tell him, dear?" urged Mrs. Burkhardt. "Shall I say that you will give him the best thanks that he could receive, by consenting to become his wife without delay? It is your only course, my dear; and that once done, all will be right."
The girl's breath was coming in gasps.
"I can say nothing to-night. I will tell him in the morning," she said.
And, fearing to urge her too much, Mrs. Burkhardt was obliged to content herself with that.
"Good-night then, dear," she said, kissing her affectionately.

The next morning they heard Rose go out as usual to the church, and waited impatiently for her to come in. But hours passed, and there was no sign of her. They began to grow uneasy, and at length Clarence went to the church in search of her.
The door stood open, but there was no sign of the girl within. He went to the sacristies, to the chapels, and examined the confessionals. Rose was nowhere to be seen.
He hurried home to his mother.
What was to be done? They were in terror. That Rose should go to any one for advice, or repeat to one the tale which they had imposed on her, had not entered their minds. They had thought that grief and shame would keep her silent, and that fear would induce her to put herself into their hands.
While they hesitated which way to go, a servant handed them a note which had just been sent.
Mrs. Burkhardt tore it open eagerly. It was from Rose, and read thus:
"I cannot stay in the world of which I know so little, and which punishes my ignorance with such cruel severity. Do not be anxious about me; I am safe. And do not seek me; for I shall not return. I thank you and Clarence for any good you may have intended me, and I forgive you for any harm you may have done. Do not write to any one about me. I shall myself write to my guardian and Mrs. Coolidge."
"Who would have thought there was such spirit in the girl?" exclaimed Mrs. Burkhardt, crushing the note in her hand.
* * * * *
It was Thursday of Holy Week, and the nuns of the convent of Notre Dame in Saxon were in their chapel, all kneeling motionless, like so many images carved out of ebony, every face, pale and wasted by the fast of Lent, turned toward the Repository, which shone with flowers and candles. All the rest of the chapel was dim, the pictures and crucifixes veiled, the altar deserted. Every one of the nuns was in the chapel; and, when the hall door-bell rang, the portress had to rise and go out to answer the summons. After a while she returned to her place again. Just behind her came another figure, a lady dressed all in black, with a veil over her face. Gliding silently into the chapel, she knelt near the door, and, bowing forward, hid her face in her hands. Her whole form trembled, and she seemed to be praying and weeping at once. For nearly half an hour there was silence. Then one of the nuns went out. As she passed by, the stranger glanced up through her veil, and, seeing who she was, rose and followed her.
The superior had not noticed the newcomer, and supposed that the step behind her was that of one of the sisters. But, as she reached the door of the assembly-room, she heard a soft and tremulous voice.
"Mother!"
At that sound, she turned. But one in the world called her mother, and that one had been permitted to give the title partly through fondness, partly because she was an orphan. A slight hand put back the thick black veil, and Rose Blanch Stanley's pale and tear-wet face was before her, and in another moment she was hidden in her bosom.
"My dear child! where have you come from?" was all that the superior could say.
"I have come to you from a wicked world, mother," sobbed the girl. "Keep me here. There seems to be no help or safety anywhere else."
"Come to my room," the nun said, drawing her gently away. "There we shall be undisturbed, and you can tell me all your story."
She led the girl to the little room which was her own, as superior, and there gently removed her bonnet and shawl. The fair face had lost its smooth curves, and was white and thin. Blue shadows lay under the eyes, and the eyes themselves were heavy with weeping.
"Has Mrs. Burkhardt returned so soon?" the superior asked, after having placed Rose on a narrow pallet, and piled pillows under her head. For the girl seemed unable to sit up.
"No, mother," Rose answered; "I came without her. Come close, and let me hold your hand while I tell. I

left Mrs. Burkhardt in Paris. She did not know where I went, but I went to the Sisters of Notre Dame, in M. Street. After a few weeks I started for home in company with some of them who were coming to America. They went to Baltimore, and I came here. O mother! I can scarcely tell you why I left Mrs. Burkhardt. I did not dream that people could be so wicked. She told me a horrible story—made me believe that I was talked about terribly in Paris, and that the same scandals were repeated here and in London, so that it was doubtful if good people would speak to me. It was all false, mother, and it was all to get me to marry Clarence. I was wild, of course. I thought that I was ruined, and I did not know what was to become of me. I did not know that you even would receive me. The morning after they told me I went to mass, and after mass was over I went to Father St. Hilaire, and told him the whole.
"It was he who first assured me that there was no such scandal, that it was a plot to make me marry Clarence. He told me not to go back to them—that people who could do such a wicked thing would not stop there. So I went directly to the convent, and came home as I told you."
"My poor lamb!" said the nun compassionately. "It was hard, but, thank God, you found friends and a safe refuge. How much happier you are than many who can never prove their innocence. And yet, not happier; for blessed are those who are slandered, even as he was slandered. In this season, when we commemorate his sufferings, thank him that you also have your cross to unite with his. You are welcome, my dear to your old home. Have you been to the Hall?"
"No," Rose sighed. "I wanted to come to you first."
The superior smiled, and bent to kiss the pale cheek of the speaker.
"You do not forget us, dear," said she. "Neither have we forgotten you. Every day we remember you in our prayers, and at mass you are named among our benefactors."
"It is so sweet to hear the dear old pious talk again!" Rose said, smiling faintly through her tears. "I have got to feel as though trouble was a terrible thing, which must be run away from."
"You are fasting?" the superior asked.
"Why, yes, surely, mother!" surprised that such a question should be asked her in Holy Week.
The mother smiled.
"But I shall not allow it," she said; "you are too weak. Do you remember you came to me fasting when first you came, and I persuaded you to eat? Now I am going to command it. You came to me then, also, in tears."
Rose took in hers the hand that had been caressing her hair, and pressed it to her lips.
"You were ever my consolator!" said she fervently.
And in speaking a brighter color bloomed into her cheeks.
Easter Sunday was near the first of April, and the weather was unusually warm. All the gardens of Saxon were full of green and bloom, and the grounds of the Hall were superb. Rose had remained closely at the convent until after Easter, and had not announced her return, having a fancy to give Mrs. Coolidge a surprise. But on the evening of Easter Monday she sent for a close carriage, and was driven to the entrance-gate of her domain.
"Wait for me at the next street," she said to the driver; "and don't go away, though I should not return for two or three hours."
It was about sunset, and she walked slowly up the avenue. Some new life began to stir in her. She recollected that she was at home, on her own ground, and that every one there was a friend or dependent. Surely she had nothing else to fear. And yet they were happy enough without her, they had not needed her. While she had been weeping and mourning in a foreign land, her trees had budded and blossomed, daisies and dandelions and violets had laughed out all over her land, and the

birds had come merrily to build their nests.
"Perhaps Mrs. Coolidge would rather have me stay away," she sighed. Then she checked herself. "How distrustful I am growing!"
A flutter of a muslin dress at a turn of the avenue caught her eye. She drew hastily aside, and stepped into a shady little nook behind a vine-covered screen. At the same time she heard a step coming up the avenue, and, looking from her concealment, she saw a form the sight of which made the blood rush into her face—so flashing the eyes that looked up the avenue, she thought for a moment that he saw her, and that he had heard and believed that vile story. It seemed as though, knowing of her arrival, he had come to take away his sister-in-law from the place contaminated by such a presence. But she was soon undeceived as to his having seen her. His look was for the lady coming down the avenue to meet him.
"Have you any news, Eugene?" called out Mrs. Coolidge, before she reached the doctor.
"News enough!" he answered, in a voice of such concentrated passion that Rose glanced at him again, to make sure that it was he who spoke.
Mrs. Coolidge paused, and looked at him in silent anxiety. There was a little rustic seat directly in front of the screen behind which Rose stood, and there the doctor threw himself down, breathing heavily, like one who is exhausted, or whose heart beats so strongly that he pants with its motion.
Trembling with agitation, Rose could not have torn herself away, even had it been possible to do so without revealing herself. She leaned closely to the trellis and watched the two.
"Dear me! What is it, Eugene?" asked Mrs. Coolidge, impatiently, after waiting a moment.
Doctor Thayer looked at her as if his anger were for her.
"Meeta," he said, through his teeth, "those people are good for nothing but State Prison. See what a letter I have received from Mrs. Burkhardt," thrusting a letter into her hand. "That accounts for the poor child's sudden change of plans. You will see that she is coming home, is now on her way, has perhaps, even now arrived."
As he spoke, his eyes glanced swiftly down the avenue, as if he expected to see some one coming up.
"A mere silly tale which she only mentioned to Rose!" he went on, unable to keep silent, quoting scornfully from the letter. "As if Rose would be so overcome by a mere silly tale as to leave Mrs. Burkhardt in that sudden manner! And what right had she to mention such a tale to Rose, even if one were in circulation, which I do not believe? She betrays herself! It is a plot which she is trying to smooth over."
"Shameful!" murmured Mrs. Coolidge, as she read the letter, an angry and confused blush mantling her fair face. "It is shameful for that child to have been so tried!"
"You see what she says about the priests," Doctor Thayer said, with a loathing glance at the letter in his sister's hand. "She pretends to think that they tried to persuade Rose to leave her, in order that they might get her money. I have no patience with that woman!" he cried, starting up.
"She will be here soon, the dear child!" said Mrs. Coolidge, warmly. "The letter says that Mrs. Burkhardt has ascertained that Rose and these sisters are in London on their way to America. I am so rejoiced that she is coming. I hope that now she will stay; and I hope, also, that you will not let her go away again, Eugene," casting a significant glance at her companion.
He turned away from her, frowning, and, reaching, tore down a long branch of the vine directly before Rose. At the same instant the blood rushed crimson into his face.
"Do not speak in that way to me, Meeta," he said. "Rose's fortune is an insurmountable barrier. But for that!"—He stopped.
"She may be here this very night," said the lady joyfully. "I must go and prepare. Will you come?"
He waved her away, and began to walk to and fro before the vine-screen,

pausing thoughtfully now and then, but starting abruptly on his walk again.— After one of these pauses, as he turned, he saw a slight, black-robed figure standing before him, at the corner of the screen of vines. He stood still an instant, then started forward with both his arms extended. Rose stood there alternately blushing and pale, looking at him with luminous eyes. There was not one word said, but he clasped her in a rapturous embrace.
"Are you really glad to see me?" she asked, presently, drawing back a little, and looking shyly in his face.
"Glad!" he repeated, unable to take his eyes from her. And she need only look in his face to see the gladness that words would not express.
"Come and let me tell you how glad I am," he said, drawing her to the seat beside him.
She sat there leaning against him in that moment of silence.
"It is so sweet not to be afraid of you," she whispered, impulsively turning her lips toward his shoulder.
He trembled with delight, but pretended to take no notice of the caress.
"Rose," he said, "from the moment when, years ago, you lifted your eyelids which I thought were sealed forever, and looked at me with those sweet and piercing eyes which I can never forget, from that moment I loved you. You were but a child; but it wrung my heart to give you up. Do you remember that I was as fond of you then as you were of me?"
"Yes, dear!" she said softly.
"It seemed as though I forgot you," he went on, drawing her cheek close to his breast; "but I did not. I did not know how I loved you till you appeared before me, a woman. Then I knew that all the adoring fondness and passion that my heart was capable of, you had awakened."
"Why did you not tell me?" she exclaimed, raising her face to look reproachfully at him. "It would have saved me so much! I have suffered since then, Doctor Thayer; but I should not if you had told me this."
"I was prevented partly by pride," he said, smiling at her reproach, and drawing her to him again, as if he would shield her from all future suffering. "I could not bear that people should think that I took advantage of your youth and inexperience to get possession of your wealth."
"You would have sacrificed me to a whim!" she exclaimed.
"But I was not sure that you cared for me other than as a friend," he said. "I was not sure but you might prefer some one else, possibly Charles."
She lifted her face again, and looked smilingly into his.
"What awful fibs you do tell!" said she.
The sun went down, and the twilight deepened into night, and the stars came out while those two sat there. The driver waiting at the corner of the next street had a lonely time of it; but the hours flew for those who had been so strangely brought together and associated in the first place, so strangely kept for each other, and who now seemed for the first time to have really met.
It was nearly nine o'clock when Doctor Thayer led Rose down to her carriage, and, seating himself beside her, was driven to the convent gate. It was late, and the gate was closed; but Rose had stipulated for admission at what-over hour she might return, and a black-robed figure, with a huge watch-dog beside her, came gliding down the avenue in answer to her summons.
The next morning a carriage was driven up to the Hall, and Mrs. Coolidge ran out joyfully to welcome the young mistress of the domain, a troop of servants forming hastily in her wake. If the lady had expected to see a pale and drooping girl, she was disappointed.— Rose had been in Parisian society long enough to have acquired some of its style, and nature had gifted her richly. Besides, she was radiant with happiness. The servants might well gaze with admiring pride on the beautiful, bright-faced lady who stepped with such airy grace from her carriage, and came smiling up to the door, entering as a young queen might enter her palace.— Mrs. Coolidge felt a little disconcerted by the elegance of this lady whom she had called "child," till, when they were alone, Rose ran to her again, and clasped