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# Her Grandmother's Portrait

## THE STORY OF A LOST WILL

The morrow passes; the day dies. Night comes on apace and covers everything. At the Grange the fiddles are sounding, bright forms are moving to and fro; the air is heavy with the breath of dying flowers. It is eleven o'clock, and the ball is well begun; the music grows sweeter, fainter; fans are waving gently.

Down at the cottage a girl is standing in a white gown at one of the open windows, and is gazing eagerly, and with sad, straining eyes, at certain lights that, two miles away, can be seen distinctly through the haze of the summer night.

Yes, he is there, of course, and happy regardless of everything but the moment. It is most natural, is it not? What is there else for him to think of? She herself, how dearly she would like to be there, too! She glances at her gown and tells herself that almost she might have gone—and then she shrinks within herself, and refuses to confess, even to her own heart, that it would have been agony to her to have appeared badly dressed before—before—oh! many people!

She sighs impatiently, and the tears gather in her eyes, and blot out the lights shining gayly so far away; they blot out, too, a dark figure that, advancing rapidly through the few shrubs, enters the second open window, and, crossing the room, is at her side before she has had time to recognize him.

It is George Norwood, of course—a little flushed from his run, and with his hair slightly ruffled, and with the gladdest light possible in his handsome eyes.

Monica, moving backward, involuntarily seizes the curtain with one hand and stares at him almost affrightedly. Her attitude reminds him of that happy moment when first he saw her. Before he has time to speak, she recovers herself and says, with a poor attempt at coldness:

"What has brought you here?"

"You know," replies he, calmly; an overpowering desire to see you—to hear your voice again. Your face was in every corner, smiling at me—your voice was clearer than the band, and called me incessantly. I have come!"

"Where is Julia?" asks she, reproof in her voice, unmistakable gladness in her great gleaming eyes. She has got a heavy spray of scarlet geranium in the bosom of her white gown. It rises and falls nervously, as she stands before him, trying vainly to be stern and angry.

"I don't know—I don't care. Dancing, I suppose."

"Go back to her. I won't have you here. Go back to her at once!"

"I won't," says Mr. Norwood.

"But I desire you," exclaims she, with a little stamp of her foot.

"Of course, if you turn me out, I shall have to go," says George Norwood, without showing the faintest symptom of an intention to depart, "but I certainly sha'n't go to Julia—I've had enough of Julia."

Monica's breath comes a little quickly, she lifts her hand to her soft, rounded throat.

"You ought to be with the woman you mean to marry," she says, slowly.

"I entirely agree with you," says Norwood, with the utmost vivacity. "But that wouldn't drive me back to the Grange. I shall never marry Julia."

"You don't know what you are saying," says Monica, shrinking still further from him.

"I do. Quite well. I ought to have said it before, but to-night I have made up my mind. If you refuse me, I shall never marry any woman—never! My darling, don't shrink from me; say you love me, say it—Monica, say it."

"No—no. You must be mad," says the girl as, white as death, with both hands she keeps him away from her. "It is £10,000 a year. You shall not do this thing. In the morning you will think——"

"As I do now," interrupts he. "And as I thought yesterday morning, and every morning during the past week—that I love you better than my very life—to say nothing of filthy lucre."

The pressure of the hands that repulsed him is not so strong now. Emboldened by this sign of coming weakness, he goes on with renewed spirit.

"We shall be poor, you know; but you said once you thought £700 a year quite enough to live on. You can't go back of that now. You said also that it would be a disgraceful and contemptible act on the part of any man to marry one woman when he loves another. You can't get out of that either, and I am not going to look either disgraceful or contemptible in the only eyes I worship."

The hands have grown quite reasonable now, and, indeed, have slipped from his chest to his shoulders.

"Monica, I am yours, whether you like it or not. You must try and make the best of me," he said, very humbly. "My beloved, I can only promise to be a good husband to you till death us do part!"

"Do not talk of death," she whispers, tremulously.

"No! Shall we not pray that we may die the same day, and be buried in the same grave? But, living or dying, my own darling, every thought of my heart will be yours."

The hands have slipped a little higher up, and now with a faint but heavy sigh that is almost a sob, she twines them round his neck and lays her soft cheek against his.

(You must imagine a good many asterisks here, and then we go on.)

"How was Julia looking?" asks she presently. They are now sitting close together—very close indeed—upon the patriarchal sofa that certainly has seen better days. But if it were satin and down they could not have been more contented with it.

"Very handsome," replies he, with the most satisfactory indifference. "Icily regular, splendidly null' sort of business. No soul and too much flesh. My angel, you have saved me. To think that only for you I might have married her; should, to a moral certainly, you know, as I didn't know what love meant then."

At this juncture there is no mistaking he knows what love means now.

"If you should ever be sorry about this," says Monica, nervously.

"Nonsense, darling; you know you are miles too good for me. I hope you will never be sorry, that's all;—Monica"—wistfully, "are you certain, positive, that you really love me?"

"I am sure of it as that we are sitting here," says Miss Norwood, solemnly.

A further demonstration that they now really know what love means!

"Do you know I'm awfully hungry," says George presently, without the smallest shame, or recollection that people in novels never eat anything when filled with the tender passion.

"Are you? Do you know, so am I, but I ddn't quite like to say it," confesses she, naively. "The servants are in bed, I am afraid; but there is cold chicken in the pantry, and—"

"Let us go for it ovrselves," says George. "As we are going to set up housekeeping on a limited scale, the sooner we learn how to lay a table and help ourselves the better."

"I don't believe there is any sherry," says Miss Norwood, blushing generously; "but there is"—with considerable hesitation—"beer."

"If there is one thing on earth I love, it is beer," says George Norwood.

"There now," murmurs she, reproachfully. "And just this moment you told me you loved only me."

"And so I do, and you only," declares he, fervently.

More asterisks!

"The key of the beer is always kept behind this picture," says Monica, pointing to the oil-painting of her grandmother he had admired on the first day of his arrival.

"That's a good thing to know," returns he, laughing.

"Well, take it down for me now; it will be a lesson. You will know exactly where to go for it next time."

She laughs, too, as she says this, and drawing him up to the chimney-piece, points to where the key hangs behind the picture.

Was it fatality, or was it awkwardness? As he puts up his hand, he touches the painting, and the string that supports it snapping suddenly, the picture falls heavily to the ground—so heavily that the back parts from it, and leaves it rather a dilapidated object on the hearth-rug.

But something else is on the hearth-rug, too! A piece of yellowish parchment, tightly folded, has slipped from between the picture and the frame. George and Monica, both stooping to pick up her grandmother, see this paper at the same instant. She, being the woman, is naturally the more curious, and therefore the swifter to snatch it.

"Now," she says, gayly, putting it behind her back, what do you say it is—a legacy or a hundred-pound note, or mere padding to keep the picture steady?"

"Mere padding," guesses he.

"A fairy gift," declares she.

Then they stoop over the lamp, and read two or three lines of the writing it contains, he utters an ejaculation, and turns to Monica with eyes bright with excitement.

"What was the date of our grandfather's will?" he asks, eagerly. "I mean how long before his death was it written and signed?"

"Three years," says Monica, gazing at him in wonderment.

"And this is dated six months before his death," says he, with something in his tone that resembles awe. "This is another and a later will, Monica, and it bequeaths all to your father."

* * * *

It was quite true. I suppose the old man, when feeling sickness come on him—that first attack of paralysis that suggested to him the possibility of death—had repented him of the betrayal of his promise to the wife, dead and gone for seven long years, but green still in his memory. To leave all to the son of her heart—the first, and therefore the dearest babe that had lain on her bosom—was her prayer. And the father, thought estranged from his son for many reasons too numerous to mention here, had succumbed as a husband should to the love of his youth, and had sworn to her that justice should be done.

Yet it was gall to him, the doing of it. Gladly would he have got out of the promise given to the dying woman, but even though the grave closed upon her, she had a hold over him, born of memories when spring was glad with flowers, and the sun shone, and all was youth and love.

And yet the gall rose to the top; and after a bit, so strong was it that he looked about him for a way to fulfill his promise to the dead and yet work his own desire. He would make a new will—so far she was obeyed, poor soul!—leaving all to the eldest son, whom he so deeply detested, and it should be given into his own hands, but in such wise that he should be none the better by it.

His mother's portrait was made the medium. Behind it, in between the wooden back and the picture, the old man in secret hid the will that vexed him, and in the first document, that suited his pride, he inserted a codicil, leaving portrait, concealed will, and all to his eldest son.

Yet Fate is strong, and Time brings all things to perfection.

Julia, when matters were made clear to her, took it all very badly. Having a very good income of her own, and an implacable temper, she refused to be comforted, and went abroad to Egypt, or Tangiers, or somewhere, and may now be married to a swarthy prince for all I know.

Pretty Monica has married her lover, and when last I saw her, was teaching her little son to "Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross" on his grandfather's knee.

(The End).

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# ABOUT THE HOUSEHOLD

### Carrots Are Health Producing.

Few people realize the value of carrots as a food. Following are a few recipes for their use:

**Saute**—Pare and cut into dice a cupful of carrots; boil in stock till tender, but not to pieces. Tablespoon of butter and when hot add the carrots, season with salt and pepper, brown slightly and serve.

**Soup**—Put into soup kettle five pounds of knuckle of veal, a gallon of cold water, a head of celery (or half a teaspoonful of celery salt), two and a half pounds of chopped carrots, a pinch of cayenne pepper, a tablespoonful of salt. Cover closely, simmer three hours — remove knuckle and serve.

**With Milk**—Scrape, slice, put in double boiler, cover with milk, season with butter, pepper and salt, cook all day, or until milk has thickened.

**Lemon Juice**—Lemon juice and the yolks of eggs are recommended for fried carrots, to add taste and color.

**Steamed**—Steam whole and wipe. Slice or mash; butter, pepper and salt to taste. So prepared they retain their full flavor.

**Cold**—Slice and place in stewpan with one ounce of butter, two onions minced, a little chopped parsley. Simmer slowly thirty minutes, then thicken the gravy with whole meal, add some lemon juice and serve.

**Coquettes.**—Boil carrots in two waters until tender, mash smooth, add one beaten egg, one tablespoon melted butter, pepper and salt to taste, and set paste aside until cool. Mold into croquettes with hand, roll in fine crumbs, dip in egg mixed with water, roll again in crumbs, and set aside for one-half hour. Fry good brown in deep fat.

**Marmalade**—Wash and boil until tender five pounds of carrots. Scrape and chop fine. To each pound of pulp add one pound granulated sugar and boil. Remove from fire. Add the grated rind of one lemon, the juice of two, and one teaspoon almond extract. Boil fifteen minutes longer and seal.

**Browned Carrots**—Scrape four or five good sized carrots and cut into three-inch lengths. Cut each slice into strips. Drop into boiling water and simmer until tender. Put a tablespoonful of butter in the frying pan and when very hot add the drained carrots. Dredge lightly with salt and pepper and fry until lightly colored.

**Pudding**—Take one cup of sugar one cup of suet, one cup of grated carrot (raw), one cup of grated potatoes (raw), one cup of currants, one cup of raisins, one egg, pinch of salt, one teaspoonful of soda, two cups of flour, one teaspoon of cinnamon, a little nutmeg. Tie in a cloth and boil for two to three hours.

### Helps For The Housewife.

You can almost keep the members of a family well by having proper food for them.

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