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A WOMAN'S STORY.

I had just entered my seventh year when my father, M. Veile, gave me a new mother in the person of the handsome and imperious widow of one Colonel Lalor, and a brother in Mrs. Lalor's only child, a boy of twelve.

Albert Lalor, with his handsome face, strong will and pleasant ways, soon became my master, ruling my impetuous spirit with a success that no one else could. Madame Veile looked on with a proud, self-satisfied smile, and more than once I heard her murmur in her sweet, imperious tones:

'They must marry, Philippe. Your Vi must be my Albert's wife.'

And my father would laugh and nod his head approvingly, evidently well pleased with the idea.

But those happy days slipped by all too rapidly.

My father died. Albert was finishing his collegiate course. I, in accordance with my father's will, was sent to Paris to be finished under the care of his old and valued friend, Madame Dupont. Four years later I returned to my step-mother.

It was near the close of a bleak winter day that I reached Gray Fell. But bleak as it was, my handsome, stately step-mother met me on the steps of the great pillared portico.

'Ah!' she exclaimed, half under her breath, as she held me off a moment and keenly scrutinized me with her great, lustrous black eyes. Then a warm smile parted her lips, and kissing me tenderly, she added:

'You are beautiful, my child—far more beautiful than I imagined. My heart will be melted. Ah, a blessing on you! You have not forgotten my old hope, then? But come, come, dear; the air is bitterly keen.'

And gathering up the shining length of her black satin she swept queen-like before me, pausing only long enough in the hall to allow a kindly word or two to the assembled servants.

Then, with a rare condescension, she led me up stairs to my chamber.

As we entered the dressing room she glanced at the timepiece and turned to my maid:

'Take mademoiselle's wraps, Manton,' she said quickly and imperiously, 'and then lay out some of her handsomest dresses; adding smilingly, as her eyes returned to me, 'I shall superintend your toilet this evening, my dear. Dinner will be served in less than an hour, and I want you to appear at your best when you descend to the drawing room. Albert shall be dazzled at first sight.'

When we entered the brilliantly lighted drawing room it was tenanted by two persons—a handsome, kingly looking man, whom I recognized as my step-brother, and a tall, slender girl with heavenly blue eyes, pearly skin and a shimmering crown of pale, golden hair.

I had heard of this fair girl, and that her home would henceforth be at Gray Fell. But for the first time it occurred to me that she might be destined to step between me and the man I had slowly learned to think of only too tenderly.

With a sharp, jealous pang I extended my hand to Albert Lalor, who had hastened to me, his blue eyes glowing with admiration and pleasure.

His greeting was cordial, and evidently pleased his mother.

'But why don't you kiss her, my son, as in the old days?' she smiled gayly.

And with an answering smile, Albert bent his grand head and pressed his bearded lips lightly to hers.

'Ah, what a charming blush!' laughed my stepmother, touching my glowing cheek caressingly with her soft, white fingers.

I smiled, but my heart throbbled painfully under the ruby velvet bodice that became me so well. Beneath the pressure of those bearded lips my wayward woman's heart had leaped from tenderness to a full, fierce, passionate love.

I lifted my eyes, lustrous with the new born feeling, to the handsome, smiling face of my brother, and again my heart swelled with jealous pain at sight of his unruined calm.

But the next moment Madame Veile claimed my attention.

'Vi, dearest, my great niece, Peri Holbrook,' she smiled.

I turned my eyes from Albert's face to meet the eager half-afrighted gaze of the golden haired girl I could not but admire.

I bowed, and somewhat coldly accepted the proffered hand, and answered the few musical words of gentle welcome. Then I involuntarily flashed a swift glance at Albert.

Ah, how the blood leaped through my veins! And how I hated the charming creature standing before me, so regally

graceful and sweet. Yes, I hated her, for there could be no mistaking the brooding tenderness and passion with which my stepbrother was regarding her.

But only for an instant did his eyes betray him; and as the pleasant hours of the evening flew by, I grew half disposed to laugh at my jealous pain. Nevertheless, when my stepmother followed me to my room I smiled lightly.

'Peri is very lovely, mamma, and Albert seems to admire her.'

Madame Veile turned a glance upon me that covered my face with a flood of color.

'Nay, nay,' she laughed softly the next instant, winding her arm caressingly about me. 'You have no cause for jealousy, my love. Albert is heart whole, and knows well that it is my wish to see him your husband. Knowing this,' she added with haughty sternness, he 'would not dare brave me by loving another.' Then, with a swift return to her former tenderness, she continued: 'My dear child, I trust you can make me happy by loving my handsome and noble son?'

'Don't rush into jealousy, Vi. Peri is a good and beautiful girl, but Albert gives her only a cousinly affection. Though she is no way dependent upon me pecuniarily, I promised her dying mother to give her a home at Gray Fell as you know; and you can see, my love, how very unpleasant it would make it for you to brood over a foolish jealousy. So, dear, put all that nonsense out of your charming head and rest assured that I am right. My eyes are keen, and in the eighteen months she has been at Gray Fell she has probably have penetrated a secret of that kind.'

'Of course, mamma is right,' I murmured as the door closed on her imperious form, and I summoned Manton.

But, my maid dismissed, I sat down in my dressing gown and stared at the glowing coals, my thoughts and feelings in an anxious whirl. After a time I rose, sighing impatiently.

'I can't sleep; I will go down and get a book.'

With the words I crept out into the hall. I had traversed half its length when the sound of stealthy steps on the stairs sent me with bated breath behind the heavy damask curtains of a window near me.

Burglars were in my mind, but I made no outcry. The next minute the steps passed a few feet from me, and I was quickly undeceived.

A voice I well knew murmured in hushed tones, 'Don't grieve, my darling, it will all come right. Only be patient, my own.'

And I felt more than heard the soft kiss that finished the sentence.

'Oh, Albert! Albert!' she breathed falteringly. 'Where is it all to end? We have done very, very wrong, dearest. And oh, Albert she loves you! I saw it in those great, passionate, dusky eyes of her's to-night, and in a vague terror of the future, I stared almost wildly at her as Aunt Ray presented me.'

'Nonsense! Do you want to make me vain?' laughed my step-brother softly. And then he murmured in graver accents: 'You say we have done wrong, darling. Remember that we had to choose between two evils. Remember that my mother possesses an iron will. She would have us both ground to powder rather than consent to what we—'

'Yes, yes, I know sighed Peri, before he could finish the sentence I was panting to hear.

'Then cease to grieve my darling,' he whispered. 'And now, once more good night.'

And I know he folded her close to his heart for a brief moment.

As their doors closed noiselessly upon their retiring forms I crept weakly back to my chamber, pride, anger and despair clutching at my heart strings.

With a stifled cry I flung myself passionately on the rug before the fire and buried my face and hands in the tiger skin covering—a pile of soft yielding hassocks.

'Lost! lost! to me!' I moaned in my fierce agony. And then, starting up, I panted with vengeful breath. 'But what meant that unfinished sentence? Can they?'

And then I paused and stared breathlessly at the glowing coals.

'Ah! I will watch! I will watch I muttered later.

And I shivered at the sound of my own low, relentless voice.

I did watch.

Night after night they stole an hour of blissful peace in the ante-room of the dim old library, and night after night I was ruthlessly on their track. But in vain I listened to their fond speech. The unfinished sentence I had caught in the hall above remained unfinished.

But one wild, bleak night a month later, my task was ended. With stifled breath I noiselessly crept from the library to my stepmother's chamber.

She sat in her dressing gown before the fire, lost in an enchanting book. At my stealthy and unceremonious entrance she glanced up.

'Great Heaven!' she cried, dropping her book and staring at me in alarm. Are you ill, Vi?'

I laughed a harsh laugh.

Only transferred into a Nemesis, mamma.

'A Nemesis!' echoed my stepmother in slow tones of profound amazement, the next instant adding impetuously, 'You look like a beautiful spirit from Hades!'

I shrugged my shoulders with another harsh laugh.

'Come I said impetuously. Come and I will show you my Hades!'

She stared at me wonderingly, and half shrunk as my little icy hand clasped hers.

'Softly, madame?' I whispered, as we left her room.

Directly she was standing at the slightly open door, at which I had so often stood.

I felt her nails sink deep in the palm of my hand as her blazing eyes rested on the scene beyond. I heard her breath come in a swift, and angry gust.

For a full minute she stood thus. Then dropping my hand, she flung back the door and swept into the dimly lighted room.

The pair sitting so lovingly before the fire started to their feet. Peri with a sharp cry of anguish. Albert's first words were given to her:

'Be brave, my love!' he smiled down upon her in accents of melting tenderness.

But his lips were white and his eyes glowing.

'What means all this?' demanded Madame Veile in awful hushed voice, gazing from one to the other with an anger before which even my fierce spirit quailed.

'It means this, my mother,' replied Albert, unflinchingly, as he paced forward and encircled more closely the slender form of the palled girl beside him. It means that for three months Peri has been my wife—'

'Wife?' gasped my stepmother, staggering back as if she had received a blow. And then she screamed pleadingly: 'Not your wife Albert?'

'Yes, mother, my wife,' he returned, sadly and firmly, while great tears rolled over Peri's white face. We grieved to do it secretly, mother, but—'

My stepmother lifted her hand. She had quite recovered herself now.

'Silence!' she continued in those awfully hushed tones. Ask no forgiveness? Ask no blessing? Peri go! Leave this house, now and forever. Go or stay as you will; but know that from this hour I never speak to you again. From this hour your blessing is my bitterest curse!'

'Mother!'

'Silence!' again commanded my stepmother, in fearful concentrated tones.

'Go! Not a word! Put that creature forth at once!' pointing her white finger at Peri's bowed head.

'Say you forgive, mother,' pleaded Albert. 'Say—'

'Silence!' almost thundered Madame Veile, her face ghastly as the dead. He turned away then.

'Come, my darling, we will go,' he murmured with infinite tenderness to Peri.

And catching up a cloak and hood she had cast there only a few hours before, he wrapped her tenderly in them and led her to the door.

Then they paused and looked back at Madame Veile.

'Farewell mother,' they said softly, and Heaven forgive us and you!'

Madame gazed stonily at them with out word or gesture, and they sighed and turned away.

Directly the hall door clanged heavily after them. As it did so my stepmother turned calmly to me:

'I am sorry for you, Vi, she said briefly, in stern, even tones. 'Let us go to bed.'

And with firm step and erect form she led me up to my room. There she kissed me good-night, saying calmly as she closed the door:

'From this moment they are dead to us. Never mention their names again! It was all over now. I had sated my vengeance.

'It is well!' I said as my head touched my pillow.

The days came and went. My step-mother was erect, cold and impetuous as ever. Not by word, look or tone did she betray her secret suffering. But at the end of the year she had lost every vestige of youth and health. A pale, gaunt old woman, she sat in her chair now.

One morning she called me to her. It was on my nineteenth birthday.

'Vi, she said curtly, it is all Dead Sea fruit. I gazed at her, dimly comprehending,

her meaning. Then she said: 'They have a little daughter, Vi, and they have named her after me—Ray Lalor, Vi. Shall we have them back, Vi?'

She looked at me wistfully. There was a brief smile between the good and the evil, and then I replied: 'It is Dead Sea fruit, mamma. We will have them back. I can look upon Albert as my brother now.'

'Thank Heaven!' exclaimed Madame Veile.

And three days later Albert, Peri and the little Ray were established at Gray Fell.

THE FUTURE OF MEMPHIS.

[Baltimore Sun.]

The Memphis quarantine has been raised at last by the appearance of frost and ice. Since the disease broke out there have been about fifteen hundred cases, and between four and five hundred deaths there from it. This, however, represents but a small part of the losses suffered by the afflicted community. Thousands of people have been driven from their homes into an expensive exile the costs and inconvenience of which they could ill bear. All business has been suspended for months, and the city cut off from all but telegraphic communication with the world outside. The dreadful scenes in 1878 were repeated in 1879, on a smaller scale, to be sure. For the reason that there were fewer persons to take the disease. The question is: Will the yellow fever return to Memphis in 1880? It should be proposed to abandon the present site of the city for one which is less thoroughly saturated with the germs of pestilence will probably be considered. One of the best and most energetic business men of Memphis, who is universally respected and trusted by the citizens of the place, said not long ago that he liked Memphis very much as a place of residence and to do business in, that he had had the fever twice and that he himself profited very much from it.

It is not contended that there is any mistake in the figures. They show conclusively that education and wealth have not conspired to make the criminal statistics of Massachusetts as low as those of South Carolina, where the negroes are in great numbers and furnish nearly all of the criminals. What is true of South Carolina is true of the South generally. We believe that the statistics of crime would show that there are five white criminals throughout the North in proportion to population to one white criminal in the South.—Star.

Gleanings.

One way to let people know you are not going to the poor house is to wear rings outside your gloves.

A petrified woman has been discovered near Halifax. It is supposed that her husband gave her \$10 without asking to get a new bonnet, and she was petrified with astonishment.

There's many a girl called a 'daisy' before marriage, who, after a few years, looks like a faded old 'buttercup.' There may not be much poetry about this assertion, but it is the truth.

An Eastern paper alleged that a youth in Connecticut, engaged to a girl, facetiously deserted her with the following note: 'Money is scarce and girls are plenty. Guess I will give up the contract.'

A little wife is leaning over her husband's chair and stroking his beard in the most affectionate manner. 'Well, well, Julia,' says the husband, you are very tender to-night. Heigh ho! I wonder how much it will cost me this time!'

A lamentable mistake was made by a girl in St. Louis not long since. She married a man under the impression that he was her father's coachman, and he turned out to be a Mexican nobleman. She pronounced him a shining fraud, and wants a divorce.

After an enthusiastic lover spends two hours' hard labor on a letter to his girl, and then mars its beauty by spilling a drop of ink on it, he first swears in a scientific manner for a few moments, and then draws a circle around the blot, and tells her it is a kiss.

The late Bishop of Exeter was sitting one day at luncheon with his wife and a lady, when the hostess inquired anxiously of her husband if the nutton was to his liking. 'My dear,' replied the bishop, with his courteous little bow, 'it is like yourself, old and tender.'

Dr. C. M. Vaiden, of Vaiden, Miss., is supporting and paying tuition for seventy-five students in the State University at Oxford. He is a wealthy man, and every year gives thousands of dollars towards the education of the youth of his State.

You may talk about quality and all that sort of thing, but until a woman can go a week's journey with no other baggage than a clean handkerchief and a toothbrush, she can never hope to occupy a position upon the same plane with us who are nature's lords of the universe.

A belated husband, hunting in the dark for a match with which to light the gas, and audibly expressing his disappointment, was rendered insensible in an instant by his wife suggesting in a sleepy voice that he had better light one and look for them, and not go stumbling around in the dark breaking things.

The Hood fund now amounts to over \$15,000.