

# Out of the Wreck

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**STIEFF PIANOS**



THE MERE POSSESSION OF A STIEFF PIANO PUTS THE SEAL OF SUPREME APPROVAL UPON THE MUSICAL TASTE OF ITS OWNER. IT MAY COST A LITTLE MORE BUT THE RECOLLECTION OF QUALITY REMAINS LONG AFTER COST IS FORGOTTEN.

**SOUTHERN**  
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### CHAPTER I

#### A Bag of Money.

"This is a night to make a man long for his own fireside," John Austin shivered in his great shaggy overcoat, as he spoke, and drew himself farther into the corner of the stage coach.

"Yes, a little of it goes a long way," said the man who sat beside him.

"A long way toward making a man thankful for the blessings of his life, Tom," John laughed, good naturedly. "I didn't mean that." Tom said, "Some lives have little enough of blessing in them, unless it be of the disguised sort; and what good that does only he that sends it know."

"Come, Tom, don't let's be irreverent. But that reminds me, I wonder if I forgot that bundle for little Dolly Merritt? No, here it is. Now, she has few enough blessings, Tom, since her old father died four years ago."

"I believe it. That old miser ought to be lynched. I hear he nearly starved the girl."

Tom straightened up in his earnestness.

"I'm afraid so. There was a dreadful time this morning when she asked for the money to buy this dress. I thought he would have struck her, poor child," John said in his quiet way.

"And with dead loads of gold—pure gold!" Tom said, angrily.

"Yes; the girl works faithfully, too," John added, a sorrowful tone in his usually cheery voice.

"He won't even let the world get its just deserts from his wealth—keeps it locked up in that old cabinet in his room."

At Tom's words the third passenger lifted his muffled head, and John noticed his eyes gleam in the dim light. He was a stranger, very quiet and unobtrusive. After an effort at conversation in the beginning of the journey, John Austin had left the moody stranger to his own reflections.

Now the man listened intently to the conversation between his fellow passengers, though until now neither had been able to interest him.

The light was too dim to clearly show the expression of the stranger's face, under his drooping hat brim which almost met the muffings about his neck.

"Yes," said John, "he keeps it all there, if he lived in a different community he'd doubtless be relieved of the responsibility of some of it."

"The old house is lonely enough for anything," Tom said, "but strangers would not think of it, and our people are honest. Will it all be Dolly's when the old man is dead?"

"I don't know. There is talk, or there used to be, of a son, though so far as anybody here knows the old man Merritt never married. Maybe he knows the son and intends to do him justice in his last. But it isn't likely. The old man may have a long time yet. Death loves a living mark."

Tom laughed.

The stranger's face was ghastly in the dim light.

The stage rattled on over the frozen road. Now and then the driver shuddered to the horses, evidently under the impression that the faithful creatures were dead.

Tom nodded, John whistled a merry tune; the stranger sat stiff and pale.

"How far are we from Mayesville?" he asked, after a time.

John left off whistling and pressed his bearded face against the window.

"It's too dark to make out the land-

Dolly could see her uncle's pale, sleeping face. It was hard and grim even now.

She wondered if even death itself would be able to smooth out those hard lines and make the face tender. In the corner opposite the bed stood the heavy oaken cabinet. Dolly knew that the keys to it hung behind the headboard.

She had seen her uncle unlock the many doors with their queer fastenings and come at last to the yellow gold he so dearly loved.

Clouds drifted across the room, and Dolly waited, patiently for the dim light. It was all she could have to work by.

The clock struck 3 when, pale and ghastly, Dolly staggered out into the hall and crept to her room. At the door she stopped.

"It must have been a mouse, or one of the strange, unaccountable sounds we hear in old houses at night," Dolly said, shivering. "He trusted me," she said, sorrowfully, setting a bag of money on her bed.

"But it was too hard; I could not bear it any longer."

She put on the warmest clothes she could find, and then, emptying the bag of money into her little satchel, stole from the house.

Swiftly she hurried along the road, dreading the daylight for the first time in her life.

Sometimes she ran until she panted for breath. She wanted to reach the station in time for the earliest train.

Newtown, she knew, was only eight miles from Mayesville, and there was a train at 6. If only she could get there in time! No one in the town knew her; it would be too early for many persons to be out. She might slip in a car unnoticed, and be far away before any one discovered the direction she had taken.

Fear lent wings to her feet. She scarcely felt the dull November cold, but sped on like a tireless thing.

At last the station light glimmered before her. The east was growing brighter. Night was fast disappearing; still it was not yet light.

Just as she reached the station the train came puffing in. Dolly walked quickly along the platform and stepped into a car. The sleepy conductor swung his lantern; no one else was in sight. It seemed an age to Dolly before the train started on.

At 6 o'clock Mr. Merritt's cook always rapped sharply at the back door. Who would go down to her this morning? She would not know that no bell or bay held the door against any who came! What would they do when they found her gone? Suppose they were looking for her even now?

Dolly had not noticed that the car was moving until the conductor stopped beside her and called for her ticket. She took a gold piece and held it out to him. Her hand trembled like a leaf in the wind.

"You want to go to Philadelphia, do you?" he asked, looking at the coin.

"Yes," she said, faintly.

He gave her a silver piece from his pocket and walked on.

**CHAPTER II**

**The Dream Girl.**

Dolly drew a breath of relief. This trial was over, at least. Pushing her veil to one side, she began to look about her. There were only a few passengers in the car, and with one exception these were men.

Just in front of her sat an elderly gentleman, and beside him a lady.

Dolly watched the morning grow into day as they sped over fields and through bare gray woodlands.

When the sun was shining straight into the window, the train stopped,

"No, no," she said, "then I should claim half of your fortune, you know, of course, there is one."

"There'd be plenty left for me. Can't we manage it?"

"I'm afraid not," Dolly said, laughing again.

"I shall be lonely, I dare say, at Grantly Hall, with a stiff old aunt I never saw and now and then a visit from my guardian. I wish I could have you with me."

"There will be other friends, no doubt," Dolly said.

"Yes, plenty of them, but they are strangers to me, all of them. You see, I was never South, and am going now to my aunt whose heiress I am to be. My mother was my aunt's half sister, but for some reason they never visited."

"But, forgive me, these family affairs must be tiresome when you are so troubled on your own account."

"You are mistaken," Dolly said. "You help me to forget my wickedness; I am glad you came to me."

The waiter returned for the untouched tray, the gentleman came in, and the train moved on.

Dolly pulled down her veil.

"You must not go on being so unhappy. Write to your uncle; he will forgive you."

"I will. Yes, I will," Dolly said, and then there was a jar, a tremor, a crash.

Men screamed, and prayed and called for help.

The sun shone down in its pitiless, cheerful way upon the wreck, and the shrieking, dying, suffering, helpless human beings.

Human shrieks rent the air, and people gathered about in horror-stricken groups.

All was done that could be done, before the sun went down on the dreadful scene.

On a bed in a neighboring farm house they laid a pale, fainting girl. There had been only two women on the train, and one had been taken, the other left.

At last the girl struggled out of the awful blackness into which she had fallen, and opened her eyes. She heard a voice speaking. The sound seemed to come from a great way.

"I think she will do nicely. It is only in a swoon. I am glad, sir, that your ward is saved. The other poor thing is burned past all recognition. She died before we could extricate her. Ah, your ward is awake."

The girl looked up at the speaker wonderingly.

"—she began faintly.

"Fush, Miss Carter, I can't allow you to talk, it isn't best. Won't you please remember? Here, little girl, you drink this for me. You will be better after awhile. No, don't speak to her, Mr. Graham. Let's leave her alone with the nurse; she will go to sleep."

The fussy little doctor and Mr. Graham left the room. The sick girl was too weak and confused to know exactly what it all meant. She could remember nothing but the blackness out of which she had just come.

She sighed wearily and fell asleep. Strange dreams came to her. Sometimes she was bending over a pale old man as he lay in his bed, and then again she was one of the school girls at St. Mary's.

Sometimes she was going home to her aunt in the South and again she was fleeing from some threatening danger.

From these dreams she awoke to find herself in a tiny, white-walled room.

A quiet woman sat beside her, or

the little doctor fluttered about.

One day a sweet-faced woman with soft blue eyes and smooth silver hair peered over the bed when the sick girl opened her fever-bright eyes.

"Who am I?" asked the low, faint voice.

"You are my own little niece, Leslie. I am Aunt Rachel. Go to sleep, now."

"I don't like to sleep. I dream such queer things, and—and I can't remember. There were two of us, she and I. Which one am I?" the girl whispered.

"You are just Leslie, dear. You've been dreaming, that's all."

"No, that isn't all. There is something, but I can't remember."

"You mustn't talk to her, ma'am, the doctor don't allow it. She is full of such fancies, and her fever rises when she worries. Here, swallow this, dear."

The nurse held a glass to her lips and she drank the mixture greedily.

Days grew into weeks, and still the wild, strange dreams haunted the burning brain.

"Are you sure I am Leslie?" she asked one day, suddenly opening her blue eyes.

"Yes, child."

"I feel more like the other one, only I have forgotten her name. I know, but I can't think," the girl said.

"It was only a dream. Take Aunt Rachel's word for it, dear. You are just like your mother; I should know you anywhere," said the sweet-faced woman, trying to satisfy the puzzled girl.

"But there were two of us. I saw the other one, and I am not sure which was I."

"I wouldn't worry about it, dear. Sick people often take strange, unaccountable fancies. Let that explain all that distresses you, and try to be happy. There is nothing to trouble you except these imaginary shadows."

"Believe that, my child, and try to get well. You are growing stronger and the fever is quite gone. You are only weak now. You sleep beautifully," Aunt Rachel said, stroking the thin hand.

"But I can't recall anything. There are only shadowy fragments. Just let me tell you once, Aunt Rachel, only one time," she pleaded, for any allusion to the old, feverish puzzles annoyed the patient woman who rarely left her.

"Just once, Leslie. I will listen just one time if you will promise never to talk about these fancies, and try and not think of them, ever again."

"I will," the girl said, "only help me to understand. I seem to have been at school at St. Mary's, and I did not like it and I was glad to be going home to you."

"Then I seem to have taken some money from a pale, sleeping old man, and I was trying to run away. And after that there was two of me, and I can't remember which of the two was myself."

"Leslie," said the old lady very gravely, "I am going to tell you something that I think you ought to know. Sometimes when people are hurt, or shocked, or very sick, they lose all memory of the past. Sometimes a tiny, past is really gone."

"This has happened to you. It is more than likely that, after awhile, it will all come back. If it does not, you will have to take our word for it."

"You were really at St. Mary's, and I dare say you were glad to be coming to me. I hope so. But the other fancy is the veriest dream. It is something that you have read or heard. There is no reality about it, positively none. Let it pass, and take your life as you find it."

"Very possibly you will recall everything, after a time. It will come gradually, or it may be sudden. You will recollect the incidents of your early life in Vermont with the mother who died years ago, your stay at St. Mary's, the death of your father when you were half through school—how he wrote to me about you, giving you, my dear sister's child, to me."

"I was never a traveler, and I never visited my sister. I left you at St. Mary's until you should be finished. Then I sent Mr. Graham, who is my lawyer and your guardian, after you. Now that is all. If it would help you I can write to Mrs. Noel, the principal of the school. Perhaps a letter from her would do you good."

"The sick girl shook her head.

"No, I will be satisfied, I will," she said, a pathetic look in her lovely blue eyes. "I will never speak of it again, but it is not so easy to put the strange fancy away. It is so fearfully real—the running away from that white, sleeping face. I can feel the cold night air on my face, and the fear that cramped my heart. It is more real than a dream of the school, but I can't tell where the flight began or ended."

"Just in your poor, fevered little head, dear, it is a fragment from some wild story."

"This is the last time I must speak of it; let me tell you how dark and cold it was, and how I flew from that awful face."

"Leslie, there is no more to tell. You have said it all too often now. When you are strong and well you will laugh at it all. Do believe me."

"I will. I won't struggle any more. I will just rest on what you say, and be content. Aunt Rachel, I am Leslie, and not the dream-girl who has haunted me. I will forget her, and the I will just rest on what you say, and puzzle over it. Just let it go with what ever else is gone."

She lay back wearily on her pillow and closed her tired eyes.

Health and strength came never every day, but the sorrowful shadow remained in the blue eyes, and the sweet mouth retained its pathetic droop.

It was a lovely face in spite of the sadness that never left it.

The accident had left no mark on the fair, tender body of the girl, but she had awing away from her life completely as if death had claimed her for its own.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

**Something in This**

Statesville Landmark.

Many of "the greatest lawyers in the State" and numerous "first citizens" are writing the papers urging somebody to begin suit for penalties against the Southern railway, as provided in the act of the Legislature reducing passenger rates. It is also pointed out that solicitors and grand juries should indict the railroad officials for misdemeanor, as provided in the act. The Landmark has no objection to this method of procedure—in fact we would like to see it tried—but what we can't understand is why some of these eminent lawyers, first citizens and others, who are urging the bringing of the penalty suits, don't go ahead and bring 'em. Surely some of them have occasion to ride on the Southern. If they don't they might take a special trip for the purpose of getting the evidence.

I'll stop your pain free, to prove merit, samples of my Dr. Shoop's Restorative and my book on either Dyspepsia, The Heart or The Kidneys, Trouble of the Stomach, Heart or Kidneys, are made symptoms of a deeper ailment. Don't waste the common error of treating symptoms only. Symptom treatment is treated for the result of your ailment, and not the cause. Weak stomach nerves—the inside nerve—mean stomach weakness, as well. And the Heart and Kidneys as well, have their controlling of inside nerves. Weaken these nerves, and you inevitably have weak vital organs. Here is where Dr. Shoop's Restorative has made its mark. No other remedy ever claims to treat the "inside nerves." The for blotting, biliousness, bad breath or complexion, use Dr. Shoop's Restorative. Write me in-day for samples and the book. Dr. Shoop, Ruelin, Wis. The Restorative is sold by Burgess Drug and Mail Store.