

The House Of A Thousand Candles

Author - Meredith Nicholson

Editor - D.S. Martin

Chapter 1

The Will Of John Marshall Glenarm

Pickering's letter bringing news of my grandfather's death found me at Naples early in October. John Marshall Glenarm had died in June. He had left a will which gave me his property conditionally, Pickering wrote, and it was necessary for me to return immediately to qualify as legatee. It was the merest luck that the letter came to my hands at all, for it had been sent to Constantinople, in care of the consul-general instead of my banker there.

It was not Pickering's fault that the consul was a friend of mine who kept track of my wanderings and was able to hurry the executor's letter after me to Italy, where I had gone to meet an English financier who had, I was advised, unlimited money to spend on African railways.

I am an engineer, a graduate of an American institution familiarly known as "Tech" and as my funds were running low, I naturally turned to my profession for employment.



But this letter changed my plans, and the following day I cabled Pickering of my departure and was outward bound on a steamer for New York. Fourteen days later I sat in Pickering's office in the Alex Building and listened intently while he read, with much ponderous emphasis, the provisions of my grandfather's will.

When he concluded, I laughed. Pickering was a serious man, and I was glad to see that my levity pained him. I had, for that matter, always been a source of annoyance to him, and his look of distrust and rebuke did not trouble me in the least.

I reached across the table for the paper, and he gave the sealed and beribboned copy of John Marshall Glenarm's will into my hands. I read it through for myself, feeling conscious meanwhile that Pickering's cool gaze was bent inquiringly upon me. These are the paragraphs that interested me most:

I give and bequeath unto my said grandson, John Glenarm, sometimes a resident of the City and State of New York, and later a vagabond of parts unknown, a certain property known as Glenarm House, with the land there unto pertaining and hereinafter more particularly described, and all personal property or whatsoever kind thereunto belonging and attached thereto---the said realty lying in the County of Wabana in the State of Indiana---upon this condition, faithfully and honestly performed:

That said John Glenarm shall remain for the period of one year an occupant of said Glenarm House and my lands attached thereto, demeaning himself meanwhile in an orderly and temperate manner. Should he fail at any time during said year to comply with this provision, said property shall revert to my general estate and become, without reservation, and without necessity for any process of law, the property, absolutely, of Marian Devereux, of the County and State of New York.

"Well," he demanded, striking his hands upon the arms of his chair, "what do you think of it?"

For the life of me I could not help laughing again. There was, in the first place, a delicious irony in the fact that I should learn through him of my grandfather's wishes with respect to myself. Pickering and I had grown up in the same town in Vermont; we had attended the same preparatory school, but there had been from boyhood a certain antagonism between us.

He had always succeeded where I had failed, which is to say, I must admit, that he had succeeded pretty frequently. When I refused to settle down to my profession, but chose to see something of the world first, Pickering gave himself seriously to the law, and there was, I knew from the beginning, no manner of chance that he would fail.

I am not more or less than human, and I remembered with joy that once I had thrashed him soundly at the prep school for bullying a smaller boy; but our score from school-days was not without tallies on his side.

He was easily the better scholar---I grant him that; and he was shrewd and plausible. You never quite knew the extent of his powers and resources, and he had, I always maintained, the most amazing good luck, ---as witness the fact that John Marshall Glenarm had taken a friendly interest in him. It was wholly like my grandfather, who was a man of many whims, to give his affairs into Pickering's keeping; and I could not complain, for I had missed my own chance with him.

It was, I knew readily enough, part of my punishment for having succeeded so signally in incurring my grandfather's displeasure that he had made it necessary for me to treat with Arthur

Pickering in this matter of the will; and Pickering was enjoying the situation to the full.

He sank back in his chair with an air of complacency that had always been insufferably in him. I was quite willing to be patronized by a man of years and experience; but Pickering was my own age, and his experience of life seemed to me preposterously inadequate. To find him settled in New York, where he had had been established through my grandfather's generosity, and the executor of my grandfather's estate, was hard to bear.

But there was something not wholly honest in my mirth, for my conduct during the three preceding years had been reprehensible. I had used my grandfather shabbily. My parents died when I was a child, and he had cared for me as far back as my memory ran. He had suffered me to spend without restraint the fortune left by my father; he had expected much of me, and I had grievously disappointed him.

It was his hope that I should devote myself to architecture, a profession for which he had the greatest admiration, whereas I had insisted on engineering.

I am not writing an apology for my life, and I shall not attempt to extenuate my conduct in going abroad at the end of my course at Tech and, when I made Laurance Donovan's acquaintance, in setting off with him on a career of adventure.

I do not regret, though possibly it would be more to my credit if I did, the months spent leisurely following the Danube east of the Iron Gate--Laurance Donovan always with me, while we urged

the villagers and inn-loafers to all manner of sedition, acquitting ourselves so well that, when we came out into the Black Sea for further pleasure, Russia did us the honor to keep a spy at our heels. I should like, for my own satisfaction, at least, to set down an account of certain affairs in which we were concerned at Belgrade, but without Larry's consent I am not at liberty to do so.

Nor shall I take time here to describe our travels in Africa, though our study of the Atlas Mountain dwarfs won us honorable mention by the British Ethnological Society.

These were my yesterdays; but today I sat in Arthur Pickering's office in the towering Alexis Building, conscious of the muffled roar of Broadway, discussing the terms of my Grandfather Glenarm's will with a man whom I disliked as heartily as it is safe for one man to dislike another. Pickering had asked me a question, and I was suddenly aware that his eyes were fixed upon me and that he awaited my answer.

"What do I think of it?" I repeated. "I don't know that it makes any difference what I think, but I'll tell you, if you want to know, that I call it infamous, outrageous, that a man should leave a ridiculous will of that sort behind him. All the old money-bags who pile up fortunes magnify the importance of their money".

"They imagine that every kindness, every ordinary courtesy shown them, is merely a bid for a slice of the cake. I'm disappointed in my grandfather. He was a splendid old man, though God knows he had his queer ways."

"I'll bet a thousand dollars, if I had so much money in the world, that this scheme is yours, Pickering, and not his. It smacks of

your ancient vindictiveness, and John Marshall Glenarm had none of that in his blood. That stipulation about my residence out there is fantastic. I don't have to be a lawyer to know that; and no doubt I could break the will; I've a good notion to try it, anyhow."

"To be sure. You can tie up the estate for half a dozen years if you like," he replied coolly. He did not look upon me as likely to become a formidable litigant. My staying qualities had been proved weak long ago, as Pickering knew well enough.

"No doubt you would like that," I answered. "But I'm not going to give you the pleasure. I abide by the terms of the will. My grandfather was a fine old gentleman. I shan't drag his name through the courts---not even to please you, Arthur Pickering," I declared hotly.

"The sentiment is worthy of a good man, Glenarm," he rejoined.

"But this woman who is to succeed to my rights---I don't seem to remember her."

"It is not surprising that you never heard of her."

"Then she's not a connection of the family, ---no long-lost cousin whom I ought to remember?"

"No; she was a late acquaintance of your grandfather's. He met her through an old friend of his---Miss Evans, known as Sister Theresa. Miss Devereux is Sister Theresa's niece."

I whistled. I had a dim recollection that during my grandfather's long widowerhood there were occasional reports that he was about to marry. The name of Miss Evans had been mentioned in this connection. I had heard it spoken of in my family, and not, I remembered, with much kindness. Later, I heard of her joining a Sisterhood, and opening a school somewhere in the West.

"And Miss Devereux---is she an elderly nun, too?"

"I don't know how elderly she is, but she isn't a nun at present. Still, she's almost alone in the world, and she and Sister Theresa are very intimate."

"Pass the will again, Pickering, while I make sure I grasp these diverting ideas. Sister Theresa isn't the one I mustn't marry, is she? It's the other ecclesiastical embroidery artist---the one with the x in her name, suggesting the algebra of my vanishing youth."

I read aloud this paragraph:

Provided, further, that in the event of the marriage of said John Glenarm to the said Marian Devereux, or in the event of any promise or contract of marriage between said persons within five years from the date of said John Glenarm's acceptance of the provisions of this will, the whole estate shall become the property absolutely of St. Agatha's School, at Annandale, Wabana County, Indiana, a corporation under the laws of said state.

"For a touch of comedy commend me to my grandfather! Pickering, you always were a well-meaning fellow---I'll turn over to you all my right, interest and title in and to these angelic Sisters. Marry! I like the idea! I suppose someone will try to marry me for my money. Marriage, Pickering, is not embraced in my scheme of life!"

"I should hardly call you a marrying man," he observed.

"Perfectly right, my friend! Sister Theresa was considered a possible match for my grandfather in my youth. She and I are hardly contemporaries. And the other lady with the fascinating algebraic climax to her name---she, too, is impossible; it seems that I can't get the money by marrying her. I'd better let her take it. She's as poor as the devil, I dare say."

"I imagine not. The Evans' are a wealthy family, in spots, and she ought to have some money of her own if her aunt doesn't coax it out of her for educational schemes."

"And where on the map are these lovely creatures to be found?"

"Sister Theresa's school adjoins your preserve; Miss Devereux has, I think, some of your own weakness for travel. Sister Theresa is her nearest relative, and she occasionally visits St. Agatha's---that's the school."

"I suppose they embroiderer altar-cloths together and otherwise labor valiantly to bring confusion upon Satan and his cohorts. Just the people to pull the wool over the eyes of my grandfather!"

Pickering smiled at my resentment.

"You'd better give them a wide berth; they might catch you in their net. Sister Theresa is said to have quite a winning way. She certainly plucked your grandfather."

"Nuns in spectacles, the gentle educators of youth and that sort of thing, with a good-natured old man for their prey. None of them for me!"

"I rather thought so," remarked Pickering---and he pulled his watch from his pocket and turned the stem with his heavy fingers. He was short, thick-set and sleek, with a square jaw, hair already thin and a close-clipped mustache. Age, I reflected, was not improving him.

I had no intention of allowing him to see that I was irritated. I drew out my cigarette case and passed it across the table.

"After you! They're made quite specially for me in Madrid."

"You forget that I never use tobacco in any form."

"You always did miss a good deal of the joy of living," I observed, throwing my smoking match into his waste-paper basket, to his obvious annoyance. "Well, I'm the bad boy of the story-books; but I'm really sorry my inheritance has a string tied to it. I'm about out of money. I suppose you wouldn't advance me a few thousands on my expectations---"

"Not a cent," he declared, with quite unnecessary vigor; and I laughed again, remembering that in my old appraisal of him, generosity had not been represented in large figures. "It's not in keeping with your grandfather's wishes that I should do so. You must have spent a good bit of money in your tiger-hunting exploits," he added.

"I have spent all I had," I replied amiably. "Thank God I'm not a clam! I've seen the world and paid for it. I don't want anything from you. You undoubtedly share my grandfather's idea of me that I'm a wild man who can't sit still or lead an orderly, decent" "life; but I'm going to give you a terrible disappointment. What's the size of the estate?"

Pickering eyed me---uneasily, I thought---and began playing with a pencil. I never liked Pickering's hands; they were thick and white and better kept than I like to see a man's hands.

"I fear it's going to be disappointing. In his trust-company boxes here I have been able to find only about ten thousand dollars worth of securities. Possibly---quite possibly---we were all deceived in the amount of his fortune."

"Sister Theresa wheedled large sums out of him, and he spent, as you will see, a small fortune on the house at Annandale without finishing it. It wasn't a cheap proposition, and in its unfinished condition it is practically valueless. You must know that Mr. Glenarm gave away a great deal of money in his lifetime. Moreover, he established your father. You know what he left, --- it was not a small fortune as those things are reckoned."

I was restless under this recital. My father's estate had been of respectable size, and I had dissipated the whole of it. My conscience pricked me as I recalled an item of forty thousand dollars that I had spent---somewhat grandly---on an expedition that I led, with considerable satisfaction to myself, at least, through the Sudan. But Pickering's words amazed me.

"Let me understand you," I said, bending toward him. "My grandfather was supposed to be rich, and yet you tell me you find little property. Sister Theresa got money from him to help build a school. How much was that?"

"Fifty Thousand dollars. It was an open account. His books show the advances, but he took no notes."

"And that claim is worth---?"

"It is good as against her individually. But she contends---"

"Yes, go on!"

I had struck the right note. He was annoyed at my persistence and his apparent discomfort pleased me.

"She refuses to pay. She says Mr. Glenarm made her a gift of the money."

"That's possible, isn't it? He was for ever making gifts to churches. Schools and theological seminaries were a sort of weakness with him."

"That is quite true, but this account is among the assets of the estate. It's my business as executor to collect it."

"We'll pass that. If you get this money, the estate is worth sixty thousand dollars, plus the value of the land out there at Annandale, and Glenarm House is worth---"

"There you have me!"



It was the first lightness he had shown, and it put me on guard.

"I should like an idea of its value. Even an unfinished house is worth something."

"Land out there is worth from one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars an acre. There's an even hundred acres. I'll be glad to have your appraisal of the house when you get there."

"Humph! You flatter my judgment, Pickering. The loose stuff there is worth how much?"

"It's all in the library. Your grandfather's weakness was architecture---"

"So I remember!" I interposed, recalling my stormy interviews with John Marshall Glenarm over my choice of a profession."

"In his last years he turned more and more to his books. He placed out there what is, I suppose, the finest collection of books relating to architecture to be found in this country. That was his chief hobby, after church affairs, as you may remember, and he rode it hard. But he derived a great deal of satisfaction from his studies."

I laughed again; it was better to laugh than to cry over the situation.

"I suppose he wanted me to sit down there, surrounded by works on architecture, with the idea that a study of the subject would be my only resource. The scheme is eminently Glenarmian! And all I get is a worthless house, a hundred acres

of land, ten thousand dollars and a doubtful claim against a Protestant nun who hoodwinked my grandfather into setting up a school for her."

Bless your heart, man, so far as my inheritance is concerned it would have been money in my pocket to have stayed in Africa. "That's about the size of it."

"But the personal property is all mine, ---anything that's loose on the place. Perhaps my grandfather planted old plate and government bonds just to pique the curiosity of his heirs, successors and assigns. It would be in keeping!"

I had walked to the window and looked out across the city. As I turned suddenly I found Pickering's eyes bent upon me with curious intentness. I had never liked his eyes; they were too steady. When a man always meets your gaze tranquilly and readily, it is just as well to be wary of him.

"Yes; no doubt you will find the place literally packed with treasure," he said, and laughed. "When you find anything you might wire me."

He smiled; the idea seemed to give him pleasure.

"Are you sure there's nothing else?" I asked. "No substitute---no codicil?"

"If you know of anything of the kind it's your duty to produce it. We have exhausted the possibilities. I'll admit that the provisions of the will are unusual; your grandfather was a

peculiar man in many respects; but he was thoroughly sane and his faculties were all sound to the last."

"He treated me a lot better than I deserved," I said, with a heartache that I had not known often in my irresponsible life; but I could not afford to show feeling before Arthur Pickering.

I picked up the copy of the will and examined it. It was undoubtedly authentic; it bore the certificate of the Clerk of Wabana County, Indiana. The witnesses were Thomas Bates and Arthur Pickering.

"Who is Bates?" I asked, pointing to the man's signature.

"One of your grandfather's discoveries. He's in charge of the house out there, and a trustworthy fellow. He's a fair cook, among other things. I don't know where Mr. Glenarm got Bates, but he had every confidence in him. The man was with him at the end."

A picture of my grandfather dying, alone with a servant, while I, his only kinsman, wandered in strange lands, was not one that I could contemplate with much satisfaction. My grandfather had been an odd little figure of a man, who always wore a long black coat and a silk hat, and carried a curious silver-headed staff, and said puzzling things at which everybody was afraid either to laugh or to cry.

He refused to be thanked for favors, though he was generous and helpful and constantly performing kind deeds. His whimsical philanthropies were often described in the newspapers. He had once given a considerable sum of money to

a fashionable church in Boston with the express stipulation, which he safeguarded legally, that if the congregation ever entrusted its spiritual welfare to a minister named Reginald, Harold or Claude, an amount equal to his gift, with interest, should be paid to the Massachusetts Human Society.

The thought of him touched me now. I was glad to feel that his money had never been an allure to me; it did not matter whether his estate was great or small, I could, at least, ease my conscience by obeying the behest of the old man whose name I bore, and whose interest in the finer things of life and art had given him an undeniable distinction.

"I should like to know something of Mr. Glenarm's last days," I said abruptly.

"He wishes to visit the village where he was born, and Bates, his companion and servant, went to Vermont with him. He died quite suddenly, and was buried beside his father in the old village cemetery. I saw him last early in the summer. I was away from home and did not know of his death until it was all over. Bates came to report it to me, and to sign the necessary papers in probating the will."

"It had to be done in the place of the decedent's residence, and we went together to Wabana, the seat of the county in which Annandale lies."

I was silent after this, looking out toward the sea that had lured me since my earliest dreams of the world that lay beyond it.

"It's a poor stake, Glenarm," remarked Pickering consolingly, and I wheeled upon him.

"I suppose you think it a poor stake! I suppose you can't see anything in that old man's life beyond his money; but I don't care a curse what my inheritance is! I never obeyed any of my grandfather's wishes in his lifetime, but now that he's dead his last wish is mandatory. I'm going out there to spend a year if I die for it. Do you get my idea?"

"Humph! You always were a stormy petrel," he sneered. "I fancy it will be safer to keep our most agreeable acquaintance on a strictly business basis. If you accept the terms of the will---"

"Of course I accept them! Do you think I am going to make a row, refuse to fulfil that old man's last wish! I gave him enough trouble in his life without disappointing him in his grave. I suppose you'd like to have me fight the will; but I'm going to disappoint you."

He said nothing, but played with his pencil. I had never disliked him so heartily; he was so smug and comfortable. His office breathed the very spirit of prosperity. I wished to finish my business and get away.

"I suppose the region out there has a high death-rate. How's the malaria?"

"Not alarmingly prevalent, I understand. There's a summer resort over on one side of Lake Annandale. The place is really supposed to be wholesome. I don't believe your grandfather had homicide in mind in sending you there."

"No, he probably thought the rustication would make a man of me. Must I do my own victualing? I suppose I'll be allowed to eat."

"Bates can cook for you. He'll supply the necessities. I'll instruct him to obey your orders. I assume you'll not have many guests" "in fact"---he studied the back of his hand intently, ---"while that isn't stipulated, I doubt whether it was your grandfather's intention that you should surrounding yourself---"

"With boisterous companions!" I supplied the words in my cheerfullest tone. "No; my conduct shall be exemplary, Mr. Pickering," I added, with affable irony.

He picked up a single sheet of thin type written paper and passed it across the table. It was a formal acquiescence in the provisions of the will, Pickering had prepared it in advance of my coming, and this assumption that I would accept the terms irritated me.

Assumptions as to what I should do under given conditions had always irritated me, and accounted, in a large measure, for my proneness to surprise and disappoint people Pickering summoned a clerk to witness my signature.

"How soon shall you take possession?" he asked. "I have to make a record of that."

"I shall start for Indiana tomorrow," I answered.

"You are prompt," he replied, deliberately folding in quarters the paper I had just signed. "I hoped you might dine with me before going out; but I fancy New York is pretty tame after the cafes and bazaars of the East."

His reference to my wanderings angered me again; for here was the point at which I was most sensitive. I was twenty-seven and had spent my patrimony; I had tasted the bread of many lands and I was doomed to spend a year qualifying myself for my grandfather's legacy by settling down on an abandoned and lonely Indiana farm that I had never seen and had no interest in whatever.

As I rose to go, Pickering said:

"It will be sufficient if you drop me a line, say once a month, to let me know you are there. The post office is Annandale."

"I suppose I might file a supply of postal cards in the village and arrange for the mailing of one every month."

"It might be done that way," he answered evenly.

"We may perhaps meet again, if I don't die of starvation or boredom. Goodbye."

We shook hands stiffly and I left him, going down in an elevator filled with eager-eyed, anxious men. I, at least, had no cares of business. It made no difference to me whether the market rose or fell. Something of the spirit of adventure that had been my curse quickened in my heart as I walked through crowded Broadway

past Trinity Church to a bank and drew the balance remaining on my letter of credit.

I received in currency slightly less than one thousand dollars.

As I turned from the teller's window I ran into the arms of the last man in the world I expected to see.

This, let it be remembered, was in October of the year of our Lord, nineteen hundred and one.

Chapter 2

A Face At Sherry's

"Don't mention my name and thou lovest me!" said Laurance Donovan, and he drew me aside, ignored my hand and otherwise threw into our meeting a casual quality that was somewhat amazing in view of the fact that we had met last at Cairo.

"Allah il Allah!"

It was undoubtedly Larry. I felt the heat of the desert and heard the camel-drivers cursing and our Sudanese guides plotting mischief under a window far away.

"Well!" we both exclaimed interrogatively.

He rocked gently back and forth, with his hands in his pockets, on the tile floor of the banking-house. I had seen him stand thus once on a time when we had eaten nothing in four days---it was in Abyssinia, and our guides had lost us in the worst possible place--with the same untroubled look in his eyes.

"Please don't appear surprised, or scared or anything, Jack," he said, with his delicious intonation. "I saw a fellow looking for me an hour or so ago. He's been at it for several months; hence my presence on these shores of the brave and the free. I'm here, as we may say, quite incog. Staying at an East-side lodging-house, where I shan't invite you to call on me. But I must see you."

"Dine with me tonight, at Sherry's---"

"Too big, too many people---"

"Therein lies security, if you're in trouble. I'm about to go into exile, and I want to eat one more civilized dinner before I go."

"Perhaps it's just as well. Where are you off for, ---not Africa again?"

"No. Just Indiana, ---one of the sovereign American states, as you ought to know."

"Indiana?"

"No; warranted all dead."

"Pack-train---balloon---automobile---camels, ---how do you get there?"

"Varnished cars. It's easy. It's not the getting there; it's the not dying of boredom after you're on the spot."

"Humph! What hour did you say for the dinner?"

"Seven o'clock. Meet me at the entrance."

"If I'm at large! Allow me to precede you through the door, and don't follow me on the street, please!"

He walked away, his gloved hands clasped lazily behind him, lounged out upon Broadway and turned toward the Battery. I waited until he disappeared, then took an uptown car.

My first meeting with Laurance Donovan was in Constantinople, at a café where I was dining. He got into a row with an Englishman and knocked him down. It was not my affair, but I liked the ease and definiteness with which Larry put his foe out of commission. I learned later that it was a way he had. The Englishman meant well enough, but he could not, of course, know the intensity of Larry's feeling about the unhappy lot of Ireland.

In the beginning of my own acquaintance with Donovan I sometimes argued with him, but I soon learned better manners. He quite converted me to his own notion of Irish affairs, and I was as hot an advocate as he of head-smashing as a means of restoring Ireland's lost prestige.

My friend, the American consul-general at Constantinople, was not without a sense of humor, and I easily enlisted him in Larry's behalf. The Englishman thirsted for vengeance and invoked all the powers. He insisted, with reason, that Larry was a British subject and that the American consul had no right to give him asylum---a point that was, I understand, thoroughly well-grounded in law and fact.

Larry maintained, on the other hand, that he was not English but Irish, and that, as his country maintained no representative in Turkey, it was his privilege to find refuge wherever it was offered. Larry was always the most plausible of human beings, and with the connivance of the American consul we made an impression, and got him off.

I did not realize until later that the real joke lay in the fact that Larry was English-born, and that his devotion to Ireland was purely sentimental and quixotic. His family had, to be sure, come out of Ireland some time in the dim past, and settled in England;

but when Larry reached years of knowledge, if not of discretion, he cut Oxford and insisted on taking his degree at Dublin.

He even believed---or thought he believed---in banshees. He allied himself during his university days with the most radical and turbulent advocates of a separate national existence for Ireland, and occasionally spent a month in jail for rioting. But Larry's instincts were scholarly; he made a brilliant record at the University; then, at twenty-two, he came forth to look at the world, and liked it exceedingly well.

His father was a busy man and he had other sons; he granted Larry an allowance and told him to keep away from home until he got ready to be respectable. So, from Constantinople, after a tour of Europe, we together crossed the Mediterranean in search of the fleshpots of lost kingdoms, spending three years in the pursuit.

We parted at Cairo on excellent terms. He returned to England and later to his beloved Ireland, for he had blithely sung the wildest Gaelic songs in the darkest days of our adventures, and never lost his love for The Sod, as he apostrophized---and capitalized---his adopted country.

Larry had the habit of immaculateness. He emerged from his East-side lodging-house that night clothed properly, and wearing the gentlemanly air of peace and reserve that is so wholly incompatible with his disposition to breed discord and indulge in riot.

When we sat down for a leisurely dinner at Sherry's we were not, I modestly maintain, a forbidding pair. We---if I may drag myself into the matter---are both a trifle under the average height,

sinewy, nervous, and, just then, trained fine. Our lean, clean-shaven faces were well-browned---mine wearing a fresh coat from my days on the steamer's deck.

Larry had never been in America before, and the scene had for both of us the charm of a gay and novel spectacle. I have always maintained, in talking to Larry of nations and races, that the Americans are the handsomest and best put-up people in the world, and I believe he was persuaded of it that night as we gazed with eyes long unaccustomed to splendor upon the great company assembled in the restaurant.

The lights, the music, the variety and richness of the costumes of the women, the many unmistakably foreign faces, wrought a welcome spell on senses inured to hardship in the waste and dreary places of earth.

"Now tell me the story," I said. "Have you done murder? Is the offense treasonable?"

"It was a tenant's row in Galway, and I smashed a constable. I smashed him pretty hard, I dare say, from the row they kicked up in the newspapers. I lay low for a couple of weeks, caught a boat to Queenstown, and here I am, waiting for a chance to get back to The Sod without going in irons."

"You were certainly born to be hanged, Larry. You'd better stay in America. There's more room here than anywhere else, and it's not easy to kidnap a man in America and carry him off."

"Possibly not; and yet the situation isn't wholly tranquil," he said, transfixing a bit of pompano with his fork. "Kindly note the florid

gentleman at your right---at the table with four---he's next the lady in pink. It may interest you to know that he's the British consul."

"Interesting, but not important. You don't for a moment suppose--"

"That he's looking for me? Not at all. But he undoubtedly has my name on his tablets. The detective that's here following me around is pretty dull. He lost me this morning while I was talking to you in the bank."

"Later on I had the pleasure of trailing him for an hour or so until he finally brought up at the British consul's office. Thanks; no more of the fish. Let us banish care. I wasn't born to be hanged; and as I'm a political offender, I doubt whether I can be deported if they lay hands on me."

He watched the bubbles in his glass dreamily, holding it up in his slim well-kept fingers.

"Tell me something of your own immediate present and future," he said.

I made the story of my Grandfather Glenarm's legacy as brief as possible, for brevity was a definite law of our intercourse.

"A year, you say, with nothing to do but fold your hands and wait. It doesn't sound awfully attractive to me. I'd rather do without the money."

"But I intend to do some work. I owe it to my grandfather's memory to make good, if there's any good in me."

"The sentiment is worthy of you, Glenarm," he said mockingly. "What do you see---a ghost?"

I must have started slightly at espying suddenly Arthur Pickering not twenty-feet away. A party of half a dozen or more had risen, and Pickering and a girl were detached from the others for a moment.

She was young---quite the youngest in the group about Pickering's table. A certain girlishness of height and outline may have been emphasized by her juxtaposition to Pickering's heavy figure. She was in black, with white showing at neck and wrists---a somber contrast to the other women of the party, who were arrayed with a degree of splendor.

She had dropped her fan, and Pickering stooped to pick it up. In the second that she waited she turned carelessly toward me, and our eyes met for an instant. Very likely she was Pickering's sister, and I tried to reconstruct his family, which I had known in my youth; but I could not place her. As she walked out before him my eyes followed her---the erect figure, free and graceful, but with a charming dignity and poise, and the gold of her fair hair glinting under her small black hat.

Her eyes, as she turned them full upon me, were the saddest loveliest eyes I had ever seen, and even in that brilliant, crowded room I felt their spell. They were fixed in my memory indelibly, --mournful, dreamy and wistful. In my absorption I forgot Larry.

"You're taking unfair advantage," he observed quietly. "Friends of yours?"

"The big chap in the lead is my friend Pickering," I answered; and Larry turned his head slightly.

"Yes, I supposed you weren't looking at the women," he observed dryly. "I'm sorry I couldn't see the object of your interest. Bah! these men!"

I laughed carelessly enough, but I was already summoning from my memory the grave face of the girl in black---her mournful eyes, the glint of gold in her hair. Pickering was certainly finding the pleasant places in this vale of tears, and I felt my heart hot against him. It hurts, this seeing a man you have never liked succeeding where you have failed!

"Why didn't you present me? I'd like to make the acquaintance of a few representative Americans---I may need them to go bail for me."

"Pickering didn't see me, for one thing; and for another he wouldn't go bail for you or me if he did. He isn't built that way."

Larry smiled quizzically.

"You needn't explain further. The sight of the lady has shaken you. She reminds me of Tennyson:

"The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes---"

And the rest of it ought to be a solemn warning to you ---many 'drew swords and died' and calamity followed in her train. Bah! these women! I thought you were past all that!"

"I don't know why a man should be past it at twenty-seven! Besides, Pickering's friends are strangers to me. But what became of that Irish colleen you used to moon over? Her distinguishing feature, as I remember her photograph, was a short upper lip. You used to force her upon me frequently when we were in Africa."

"Humph! When I got back to Dublin I found that she had married a brewer's son---think of it!"

"Put not your faith in a short upper lip! Her face never inspired any confidence in me."

"That will do, thank you. I'll have a bit more of that mayonnaise if the waiter isn't dead. I think you said your grandfather died in June. A letter advising you of the fact reached you at Naples in October. Has it occurred to you that there was quite an interim there? "

"What, may I ask, was the executor doing all that time? You may be sure he was taking advantage of the opportunity to look for the red, red gold. I suppose you didn't give him a sound drubbing for not keeping the cables hot with inquiries for you?"

He eyed me in that disdain for my stupidity which I have never suffered from any other man.

"Well, no; to tell the truth, I was thinking of other things during the interview."

"Your grandfather should have provided a guardian for you, lad. You oughtn't to be trusted with money. Is that bottle empty?"

Well, if that person with the fat neck was your friend Pickering, I'd have a care of what's coming to me. I'd be quite sure that Mr. Pickering hadn't made away with the old gentleman's boodle, or that it didn't get lost on the way from him to me."

"The time's running now, and I'm in for the year. My grandfather was a fine old gentleman, and I treated him like a dog. I'm going to do what he directs in that will no matter what the size of the reward may be."

"Certainly; that's the eminently proper thing for you to do. But--- but keep your wits about you. If a fellow with that neck can't find money where money has been known to exist, it must be buried pretty deep. Your grandfather was a trifle eccentric, I judge, but not a fool by any manner of means."

"The situation appeals to my imagination, Jack. I like the idea of it---the lost treasure and the whole business. Lord, what a salad that is! Cheer up, comrade! You're as grim as an owl!"

Whereupon we fell to talking of people and places we had known in other lands.

We spent the next day together, and in the evening, at my hotel, he criticized my effects while I packed, in his usual ironical vein.

"You're not going to take those things with you, I hope!" He indicated the rifles and several revolvers which I brought from the closet and threw upon the bed. "They make me homesick for the jungle." He drew from its cover the heavy rifle I had used last on a leopard hunt and tested its weight.

"Precious little use you'll have for this! Better let me take it back to The Sod to use on the landlords. I say, Jack, are we never to seek our fortunes together again? WE hit it off pretty well, old man, come to think of it---I don't like to lose you."

He bent over the straps of the rifle case with unnecessary care, but there was a quaver in his voice that was not like Larry Donovan.

"Come with me now!" I exclaimed, wheeling upon him.

"I'd rather be with you than with any other living man, Jack Glenarm, but I can't think of it. I have my own troubles; and, moreover, you've got to stick it out there alone. It's part of the game the old gentleman set up for you, as I understand it. Go ahead, collect your fortune, and then, if I haven't been hanged in the meantime, we'll join forces later."

"There's no chap anywhere with a pleasanter knack at spending money than your old friend L.D."

He grinned, and I smiled ruefully, knowing that we must soon part again, for Larry was one of the few men I had ever called friend, and this meeting had only quickened my old affection for him.

"I suppose," he continued, "you accept as gospel truth what that fellow tells you about the estate. I should be a little wary if I were you. Now, I've been kicking around here for a couple of weeks, dodging the detectives, and incidentally reading the newspapers. Perhaps you don't understand that this estate of John Marshall Glenarm has been talked about a good bit."

"I didn't know it," I admitted lamely. Larry had always been able to instruct me about most matters; it was wholly possible that he could speak wisely about my inheritance.

"You couldn't know, when you were coming from the Mediterranean on a steamer. But the house out there and the mysterious disappearance of the property have been duly discussed. You're evidently an object of some public interest,"---and he drew from his pocket a newspaper cutting.

"Here's a sample item." He read:

John Glenarm, the grandson of John Marshall Glenarm, the eccentric Millionaire, who died suddenly in Vermont last summer, arrived on the Maxinkuckee from Naples yesterday. Under the terms of his Grandfather's will, Glenarm is required to reside for a year at a curious house established by John Marshall Glenarm near Lake Annandale, Indiana.

This provision was made, according to friends of the family, to test young Glenarm's staying qualities, as he has, since his graduation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology five years ago, distributed a considerable fortune left him by his father in contemplating the wonders of the old world. It is reported--"

"That will do! Signs and wonders I have certainly beheld, and if I spent the money I submit that I got my money back."

I paid my bill and took a hansom for the ferry---Larry with me, chaffing away drolly with his old zest. He crossed with me, and as the boat drew out into the river a silence fell upon us,---the silence that is possible only between old friends. As I looked back at the lights of the city, something beyond the sorrow at parting from a comrade touched me. A sense of foreboding, of coming danger, crept into my heart. But I was going upon the tamest

possible excursion; for the first time in my life I was submitting to the direction of another, ---albeit one who lay in the grave.

How like my grandfather it was, to die leaving this compulsion upon me! My mood changed suddenly, and as the boat bumped at the pier I laughed.

"Bah! these men!" shouted Larry.

"What men?" I demanded, giving my bags to a porter.

"These men who are in love," he said. "I know the signs--- mooning, silence, sudden inexplicable laughter! I hope I'll not be in jail when you're married."

"You'll be in a long time if they hold you for that. Here's my train."

We talked of old times, and of future meetings, during the few minutes that remained.

"You can write me at my place of rustication," I said, scribbling "Annandale, Wabana County, Indiana," on a card. "Now, if you need me at any time I'll come to you wherever you are. You understand that, old man. Goodbye."

"Write me, care of my father---he'll have my address, though this last row of mine made him pretty hot."

I passed through the gate and down the long train to my sleeper. Turning, with my foot on the step, I waved a farewell to Larry, who stood outside watching me.

In a moment the heavy train was moving slowly out into the night upon its westward journey.

Chapter 3

The House Of A Thousand Candles

Annandale derives its chief importance from the fact that two railway lines intersect there. The Chicago Express paused only for a moment while the porter deposited my things beside me on the platform. Light streamed from the open door of the station; a few idlers paced the platform, staring into the windows of the cars; the village hackman languidly solicited my business.

Suddenly out of the shadows came a tall, curious figure of a man clad in a long loose overcoat. As I write, it is with a quickening of the sensation I received on the occasion of my first meeting with Bates. His lank gloomy figure rises before me now, and I heard his deep melancholy voice, as, touching his hat respectfully, he said:

"Beg pardon, sir; is this Mr. Glenarm? I am Bates from Glenarm House. Mr. Pickering wired me to meet you, sir."

"Yes; to be sure," I said.

The hackman was already gathering up my traps, and I gave him my trunk-checks.

"How far is it?" I asked, my eyes resting, a little regretfully, I must confess, on the rear lights of the vanishing train.

"Two miles, sir," Bates replied. "There's no way over but the hack in winter. In summer the steamer comes right into our dock."

"My legs need stretching; I'll walk," I suggested, drawing the cool air into my lungs. It was a still, starry October night, and its freshness was grateful after the hot sleeper. Bates accepted the suggestion without comment. We walked to the end of the platform, where the hackman was already tumbling my trunks about, and after we had seen them piled upon his nondescript wagon, I followed Bates down through the broad quiet street of the village.

There was more of Annandale than I had imagined, and several tall smoke-stacks loomed here and there in the thin starlight.

"Brick-yards, sir," said Bates, waving his hand at the stacks. "It's a considerable center for that kind of business."

"Bricks without straw?" I asked, as we passed a radiant saloon that blazed upon the boardwalk.

"Beg pardon, sir, but such places are the ruin of men"---on which remark I based a mental note that Bates wished to impress me with his own rectitude.

He swung along beside me, answering questions with dogged brevity. Clearly, here was a man who had reduced human intercourse to a basis of necessity. I was to be shut up with him for a year, and he was not likely to prove a cheerful jailer. My feet struck upon a graveled highway at the end of the village street, and I heard suddenly the lapping of water.

"It's the lake, sir. This road leads right out to the house," Bates explained.

I was doomed to meditate pretty steadily, I imagined, on the beauty of the landscape in these parts, and I was rejoiced to know that it was not all cheerless prairie or gloomy woodland. The wind freshened and blew sharply upon us off the water.

"The fishing's quite good in season. Mr. Glenarm used to take great pleasure in it. Bass---yes, sir. Mr. Glenarm held there was nothing quite equal to a black bass."

I liked the way the fellow spoke of my grandfather. He was evidently a loyal retainer. No doubt he could summon from the past many pictures of my grandfather, and I determined to encourage his confidence.

Any resentment I felt on first hearing the terms of my grandfather's will had passed. He had treated me as well as I deserved, and the least I could do was to accept the penalty he had laid upon me in a sane and amiable spirit. This train of thought occupied me as we tramped along the highway.

The road now led away from the lake and through a heavy wood. Presently, on the right loomed a dark barrier, and I put out my hand and touched a wall of rough stone that rose to a height of about eight feet.

"What is this, Bates?" I asked.

"This is Glenarm land, sir. The wall was one of your grandfather's ideas. It's a quarter of a mile long and cost him a pretty penny, I warrant you. The road turns off from the lake now, but the Glenarm property is all lakefront."

So there was a wall about my prison house! I grinned cheerfully to myself. When, a few moments later, my guide paused at an arched gateway in the long wall, drew from his overcoat a bunch of keys and fumbled at the lock of an iron gate, I felt the spirit of adventure quicken within me.

The gate clicked behind us and Bates found a lantern and lit it with the ease of custom.

"I use this gate because it's nearer. The regular entrance is farther down the road. Keep close, sir, as the timber isn't much cleared."

The undergrowth was indeed heavy, and I followed the lantern of my guide with difficulty. In the darkness the place seemed as wild and rough as a tropical wilderness.

"Only a little farther," rose Bates' voice ahead of me; and then: "There's the light, sir"---and, lifting my eyes as I stumbled over the roots of a great tree, I saw for the first time the dark outlines of Glenarm House.

"Here we are, sir!" exclaimed Bates, stamping his feet upon a walk. I followed him to what I assumed to be the front door of the house, where a lamp shone brightly at either side of a massive entrance. Bates flung it open without ado, and I stepped quickly into a great hall that was lit dimly by candles fastened into brackets on the walls.

"I hope you've not expected too much, Mr. Glenarm," said Bates, with a tone of mild apology. "It's very incomplete for living purposes."

"Well, we've got to make the best of it," I answered, though without much cheer. The sound of our steps reverberated and echoed in the well of a great staircase. There was not, as far as I could see, a single article of furniture in the place.

"Here's something you'll like better, sir"---and Bates paused far down the hall and opened a door.

A single candle made a little pool of light in what I felt to be a large room. I was prepared for a disclosure of barren ugliness, and waited, in heartsick foreboding, for the silent guide to reveal a dreary prison.

"Please sit here, sir," said Bates, "while I make a better light."

He moved through the dark room with perfect ease, struck a match, lit a taper and went swiftly and softly about. He touched the taper to one candle after another---they seemed to be everywhere---and won from the dark a faint twilight, that yielded slowly to a growing mellow splendor of light.

I have often watched the acolytes in dim cathedrals of the Old World set countless candles ablaze on magnificent altars---always with awe for the beauty of the spectacle; but in this unknown house the austere serving-man summoned from the shadows a lovelier and more bewildering on enchantment. Youth alone, of beautiful things, is lovelier than light.

The lines of the walls receded as the light increased, and the raftered ceiling drew away, luring the eyes upward. I rose with a smothered exclamation on my lips and stared about, snatching off my hat in reverence as the spirit of the place wove its spell

about me. Everywhere there were books; they covered the walls to the ceiling, with only long French windows and an enormous fireplace breaking the line.

Above the fireplace a massive dark oak chimney-breast further emphasized the grand scale of the room. From every conceivable place---from shelves built for the purpose, from brackets that thrust out long arms among the books, from a great crystal chandelier suspended from the ceiling, and from the breast of the chimney---innumerable candles blazed with dazzling brilliancy. I exclaimed in wonder and pleasure as Bates paused, his sorcerer's wand in hand.

"Mr. Glenarm was very fond of candle-light; he liked to gather up candlesticks and his collection is very fine. He called his place 'The House Of A Thousand Candles.' There's only about a hundred here; but it was one of his conceits that when the house was finished there would be a thousand lights. He had quite a joking way, your grandfather. It suited his humor to call it a thousand. He enjoyed his own pleasantries, sir."

"I fancy he did," I replied, staring in bewilderment.

"Oil lamps might be more suited to your own taste, sir. But your grandfather would not have them. Old brass and copper were specialties with him, and he had a particular taste, Mr. Glenarm had, in glass candlesticks. He held that the crystal was most effective of all. I'll go and let in the baggage-man and then serve you some supper."

He went somberly out and I examined the room with amazed and delighted eyes. It was fifty feet long and half as wide. The

hardwood floor was covered with handsome rugs; every piece of furniture was quaint or interesting. Carved in the heavy oak paneling above the fireplace, in large Old English letters, was the inscription:

The Spirit Of Man Is The Candle Of The Lord

and on either side great candelabra sent long arms across the hearth. All the books seemed related to architecture; German and French works stood side by side among those by English and American authorities. I found archaeology represented in a division where all the titles were Latin or Italian.

I opened several cabinets that contained sketches and drawings, all in careful order; and in another I found an elaborate card catalogue, evidently the work of a practiced hand. The minute examination was too much for me; I threw myself into a great chair that might have been spoil from a cathedral, satisfied to enjoy the general effect.

To find an apartment so handsome and so marked by good taste in the midst of an Indiana wood, staggered me. To be sure, in approaching the house I had seen only a dark bulk that conveyed no sense of its character or proportions; and certainly the entrance hall had not prepared me for the beauty of this room. I was so lost in contemplation that I did not hear a door open behind me. The respectful, mournful voice of Bates announced:

"There's a bite ready for you, sir."

I followed him through the hall to a small high wainscoted room where a table was simply set.

"This is what Mr. Glenarm called the refectory. The dining room, on the other side of the house, is unfinished. He took his own meals here. The library was the main thing with him. He never lived to finish the house---more's the pity, sir. He would have made something very handsome of it if he'd had a few years more. But he hoped, sir, that you'd see it completed. It was his wish, sir."

"Yes, to be sure," I replied.

He brought cold fowl and a salad, and produced a bit of Stilton cheese of unmistakable authenticity.

"I trust the ale is cooled to your liking. It's your grandfather's favorite, if I may say it, sir."

I liked the fellow's humility. He served me with a grave deference and an accustomed hand. Candles in crystal holders shed an agreeable light upon the table; the room was snug and comfortable, and hickory logs in a small fireplace crackled cheerily.

If my grandfather had designed to punish me, with loneliness as his weapon, his shade, if it lurked near, must have been grievously disappointed. I had long been inured to my own society. I had often eaten my bread alone, and I found a pleasure in the quiet of the strange unknown house. There stole over me, too, the satisfaction that I was at last obeying a wish of my grandfather's, that I was doing something he would have me do.

I was touched by the traces everywhere of his interest in what was to him the art of arts; there was something quite fine in his devotion to it. The little refectory had its air of distinction, though it was without decoration.

There had been, we always said in the family, something whimsical or even morbid in my grandsire's devotion to architecture; but I felt that it had really appealed to something dignified and noble in his own mind and character, and a gentler mood than I had known in years possessed my heart. He had asked little of me, and I determined that in that little I would not fail.

Bates gave me my coffee, put matches within reach and left the room. I drew out my cigarette case and was holding it half-opened, when the glass in the window back of me cracked sharply, a bullet whistled over my head, struck the opposite wall and fell, flattened and marred, on the table under my hand.

Chapter 4

A Voice From The Lake

I ran to the window and peered out into the night. The wood through which we had approached the house seemed to encompass it. The branches of a great tree brushed the panes. I was tugging at the fastening of the window when I became aware of Bates at my elbow.

"Did something happen, sir?"

His unbroken calm angered me. Some one had fired at me through a window and I had narrowly escaped being shot. I resented the unconcern with which this servant accepted the situation.

"Nothing worth mentioning. Somebody tried to assassinate me, that's all," I said, in a voice that failed to be calmly ironical. I was still fumbling at the catch of the window.

"Allow me, sir"---and he threw up the sash with an ease that increased my irritation.

I leaned out and tried to find some clue to my assailant. Bates opened another window and surveyed the dark landscape with me.

"It was a shot from without, was it, sir?"

"Of course it was; you didn't suppose I shot at myself, did you?"

He examined the broken pane and picked up the bullet from the table.

"It's a rifle-ball, I should say."

The bullet was half-flattened by its contact with the wall. It was a cartridge ball of large caliber and might have been fired from either a rifle or a pistol.

"It's very unusual, sir!" I wheeled upon him angrily and found him fumbling with the bit of metal, a trouble look in his face. He at once continued, as though anxious to allay my fears. "Quite accidental, most likely. Probably boys on the lake are shooting at ducks."

I laughed out so suddenly that Bates started back in alarm.

"You idiot!" I roared, seizing him by the collar with both hands and shaking him fiercely. "You fool! Do the people around here shoot ducks at night? Do they shot water-fowl with elephant guns and fire at people through windows just for fun?"

I threw him back against the table so that it leaped away from him, and he fell prone on the floor.

"Get up!" I commanded, "and fetch a lantern."

He said nothing, but did as I bade him. We traversed the long cheerless hall to the front door, and I sent him before me into the woodland. My notions of the geography of the region were the vaguest, but I wished to examine for myself the premises that evidently contained a dangerous prowler.

I was very angry and my rage increased as I followed Bates, who had suddenly retired within himself. We stood soon beneath the lights of the refectory window.

The ground was covered with leaves which broke crisply under our feet.

"What lies beyond here?" I demanded.

"About a quarter of a mile of woods, sir, and then the lake."

"Go ahead," I ordered, "straight to the lake."

I was soon stumbling through rough underbrush similar to that through which we had approached the house. Bates swung along confidently enough ahead of me, pausing occasionally to hold back the branches. I began to feel, as my rage abated, that I had set out on a foolish undertaking. I was utterly at sea as to the character of the grounds; I was following a man whom I had not seen until two hours before, and whom I began to suspect of all manner of designs upon me.

It was wholly unlikely that the person who had fired into the windows would lurk about, and, moreover, the light of the lantern, the crack of the leaves and the breaking of the boughs advertised our approach loudly.

I am, however, a person given to steadfastness in error, if nothing else, and I plunged along behind my guide with a grim determination to reach the margin of the lake, if for no other

reason than to exercise my authority over the custodian of this strange estate.

A bush slapped me sharply and I stopped to rub the sting from my face.

"Are you hurt, sir?" asked Bates solicitously, turning with the lantern.

"Of course not," I snapped. "I'm having the time of my life. Are there no paths in this jungle?"

"Not through here, sir. It was Mr. Glenarm's idea not to disturb the wood at all. He was very fond of walking through the timber."

"Not at night, I hope! Where are we now?"

"Quite near the lake, sir."

"Then go on."

I was out of patience with Bates, with the pathless woodland, and, I must confess, with the spirit of John Marshall Glenarm, my grandfather.

We came out presently upon a gravelly beach, and Bates stamped suddenly on planking.

"This is the Glenarm dock, sir" and that's the boathouse."

He waved his lantern toward a low structure that rose dark beside us. As we stood silent, peering out into the starlight, I heard distinctly the dip of a paddle and the soft gliding motion of a canoe.

"It's a boat, sir," whispered Bates, hiding the lantern under his coat.

I brushed past him and crept to the end of the dock. The paddle dipped on silently and evenly in the still water, but the sound grew fainter. A canoe is the most graceful, the most sensitive, the most inexplicable contrivance of man. With its paddle you may dip up stars along quiet shores or steal into the very harbor of dreams. I knew that furtive splash instantly, and knew that a trained hand wielded the paddle. My boyhood summers in the Maine woods were not, I frequently find, wholly wasted.

The owner of the canoe had evidently stolen close to the Glenarm dock, and had made off when alarmed by the noise of our approach through the wood.

"Have you a boat here?"

"The boathouse is locked and I haven't the key with me, sir," he replied without excitement.

"Of course you haven't it," I snapped, full of anger at his tone of irreproachable respect, and at my own helplessness. I had not even seen the place by daylight, and the woodland behind me and the lake at my feet were things of shadow and mystery. In my rage I stamped my foot.

"Lead the way back," I roared.

I had turned toward the woodland when suddenly there stole across the water a voice---a woman's voice, deep, musical and deliberate.

"Really, I shouldn't be so angry if I were you!" it said, with a lingering note on the word angry.

"Who are you? What are you doing there?" I bawled.

"Just enjoying a little tranquil thought!" was the drawling, mocking reply.

Far out upon the water I heard the dip and glide of the canoe, and saw faintly its outline for a moment; then it was gone. The lake, the surrounding wood, were an unknown world---the canoe, a boat of dreams. Then again came the voice:

"Good night, merry gentlemen!"

"It was a lady, sir," remarked Bates, after we had waited silently for a full minute.

"How clever you are!" I sneered. "I suppose ladies prowl about here at night, shooting ducks or into people's houses."

"It would seem quite likely, sir."

I should have liked to cast him into the lake, but he was already moving away, the lantern swinging at his side. I followed him, back through the woodland to the house.

My spirits quickly responded to the cheering influence of the great library. I stirred the fire on the hearth into life and sat down before it, tired from my tramp. I was mystified and perplexed by the incident that had already marked my coming.

It was possible, to be sure, that the bullet which narrowly missed my head in the little dining room had been a wild shot that carried no evil intent. I dismissed at once the idea that it might have been fired from the lake; it had crashed through the glass with too much force to have come so far; and, moreover, I could hardly imagine even a rifle ball's finding an unimpeded right of way through so dense a strip of wood.

I found it difficult to get rid of the idea that someone had taken a pot-shot at me.

The woman's mocking voice from the lake added to my perplexity. It was not, I reflected, such a voice as one might expect to hear from a country girl; nor could I imagine any errand that would excuse a woman's presence abroad on an October night whose cool air inspired first confidences with fire and lamp. There was something haunting in that last cry across the water; it kept repeating itself over and over in my ears. It was a voice of quality, of breeding and charm.

"Good night, merry gentlemen!"

In Indiana, I reflected, rustics, young or old, men or women, were probably not greatly given to salutations of just this temper.

Bates now appeared.

"Beg pardon, sir; but your room's ready whenever you wish to retire."

I looked about in search of a clock.

"There are no timepieces in the house, Mr. Glenarm. Your grandfather was quite opposed to them. He had a theory, sir, that they were conducive, as he said, to idleness. He considered that a man should work by his conscience, sir, and not by the clock---the one being more exacting than the other."

I smiled as I drew out my watch---as much at Bates' solemn tones and grim lean visage as at his quotation from my grandsire. But the fellow puzzled and annoyed me. His unobtrusive black clothes, his smoothly-brushed hair, his shaven face, awakened an antagonism in me.

"Bates, if you didn't fire that shot through the window, who did--will you answer me that?"

"Yes, sir; if I didn't do it, it's quite a large question who did. I'll grant you that, sir."

I stared at him. He met my gaze directly without flinching; nor was there anything insolent in his tone or attitude. He continued:

"I didn't do it, sir. I was in the pantry when i heard the crash in the refectory window. The bullet came from out of doors, as I should judge, sir."

The facts and conclusions were undoubtedly with Bates, and I felt that I had not acquitted myself creditably in my effort to fix the crime on him. My abuse of him had been tactless, to say the least, and I now tried another line of attack.

"Of course, Bates, I was merely joking. What's your own theory of the matter?"

"I have no theory, sir. Mr. Glenarm always warned me against theories. He said---if you will pardon me---there was great danger in the speculative mind."

The man spoke with a slight Irish accent, which in itself puzzled me. I have always been attentive to the peculiarities of speech, and his was not the brogue of the Irish servant class. Larry Donovan, who was English born, used on occasions and exaggerated Irish dialect that was wholly different from the smooth liquid tones of Bates. But more things than his speech were to puzzle me in this man.

"The person in the canoe? How do you account for her?" I asked.

"I haven't accounted for her, sir. There's no women on these grounds, or any sort of person except ourselves."

"But there are neighbors---farmers, people of some kind must live along the lake."

"A few sir; and then there's the school quite a bit beyond your own west wall."

His slight reference to my proprietorship, my own wall, as he put it, pleased me.

"Oh, yes; there is a school---girls? ---yes; Mr. Pickering mentioned it. But the girls hardly paddle on the lake at night, at this season-- hunting ducks---should you say, Bates?"

"I don't believe they do any shooting, Mr. Glenarm. It's a pretty strict school, I judge, sir, from all accounts."

"And the teachers---they are all women?"

"They're the Sisters of St. Agatha, I believe they call them. I sometimes see them walking abroad. They're very quiet neighbors, and they go away in the summer usually, except Sister Theresa. The school's her regular home, sir. And there's the little chapel quite near the wall; the young minister lives there; and the gardener's the only other man on the grounds."

So my immediate neighbors were Protestant nuns and school girls, with a chaplain and gardener thrown in for variety. Still, the chaplain might be a social resource. There was nothing in the terms of my grandfather's will to prevent my cultivating the acquaintance of a clergyman.

It even occurred to me that this might be a part of the game: my soul was to be watched over by a rural priest, while, there being nothing else to do, I was to give my attention to the study of architecture. Bates, my guard and housekeeper, was brushing the hearth with deliberate care.

"Show me my cell," I said, rising, "and I'll go to bed."

He brought from somewhere a great brass candelabrum that held a dozen lights, and explained:

"This was Mr. Glenarm's habit. He always used this one to go to bed with. I'm sure he'd wish you to have it, sir."

I thought I detected something like a quaver in the man's voice. My grandfather's memory was dear to him. I reflected, and I was moved to compassion for him.

"How long were you with Mr. Glenarm, Bates?" I inquired, as I followed him into the hall.

"Five years, sir. He employed me the year you went abroad. I remember very well his speaking of it. He greatly admired you, sir."

He led the way, holding the cluster of lights high for my guidance up the broad stairway.

The hall above shared the generous lines of the whole house, but the walls were white and hard to the eye. Rough planks had been laid down for a floor, and beyond the light of the candles lay a dark region that gave out ghostly echoes as the loose boards rattled under our feet.

"I hope you'll not be too much disappointed, sir," said Bates, pausing a moment before opening a door.

"It's all quite unfinished, but comfortable, I should say, quite comfortable."

"Open the door!"

He was not my host and I did not relish his apology. I walked past him into a small sitting room that was, in a way, a miniature of the great library below. Open shelves filled with books lined the apartment to the ceiling on every hand, save where a small fireplace, a cabinet and table were built into the walls. In the center of the room was a long table with writing materials set in nice order. I opened a handsome case and found that it contained a set of draftsman's instruments.

I groaned aloud.

"Mr. Glenarm preferred this room for working. The tools were his very own, sir."

"The devil they were!" I exclaimed irascibly. I snatched a book from the nearest shelf and threw it open on the table. It was *The Tower: Its Early Use for Purposes of Defense. London: 1816.*

I closed it with a slam.

"The sleeping room is beyond, sir. I hope---"

"Don't you hope anymore?" I growled, "and it doesn't make any difference whether I'm disappointed or not."

"Certainly not, sir!" he replied in a tone that made me ashamed of myself.

The adjoining bedroom was small and meagerly furnished. The walls were untinted and were relieved only by prints of English

cathedrals, French chateaux, and like suggestions of the best things known to architecture. The bed was the commonest iron type; and the other articles of furniture were chosen with a strict regard for utility. My trunks and bags had been carried in, and Bates asked from the door for my commands.

"Mr. Glenarm always breakfasted at seven-thirty, sir, as near as he could hit it without a timepiece, and he was quite punctual. His ways were a little odd, sir. He used to prowl about at night a good deal, and there was no following him."

"I fancy I shan't do much prowling," I declared.

"And my grandfather's breakfast hour will suit me exactly, Bates."

"If there's nothing further, sir---"

"That's all---and Bates---"

"Yes, Mr. Glenarm."

"Of course you understand that I didn't really mean to imply that you had fired that shot at me?"

"I beg you not to mention it, Mr. Glenarm."

"But it *was* a little queer. If you should gain any light on the subject, let me know."

"Certainly, sir."

"But I believe, Bates---that we'd better keep the shades down at night. These duck hunters hereabouts are apparently reckless."
"And you might attend to those now---and every evening hereafter."

I wound my watch as he obeyed. I admit that in my heart I still half-suspected the fellow of complicity with the person who had fired at me through the dining room window. It was rather odd, I reflected, that the shades should have been open, though I might account for this by the fact that this curious unfinished establishment was not subject to the usual laws governing orderly housekeeping. Bates was evidently aware of my suspicions, and he remarked, drawing down the last of the plain green shades:

"Mr. Glenarm never drew them, sir. It was a saying of his, if I may repeat his words, that he liked the open. These are eastern windows, and he took a quiet pleasure in letting the light waken him. It was one of his oddities, sir."

"To be sure. That's all, Bates."

He gravely bade me goodnight, and I followed him to the outer door and watched his departing figure, lit by a single candle that he had produced from his pocket.

I stood for several minutes listening to his step, tracing it through the hall below---as far as my knowledge of the house would permit. Then, in unknown regions, I could hear the closing of doors and drawing of bolts. Verily, my jailer was a person of painstaking habits.

I opened my traveling case and distributed its contents on the dressing table. I had carried through all my adventures a folding leather photograph holder, containing portraits of my father and mother and of John Marshall Glenarm, my grandfather, and this I set up on the mantel in the little sitting room.

I felt tonight as never before how alone I was in the world, and a need for companionship and sympathy stirred in me. It was with a new and curious interest that I peered into my grandfather's shrewd old eyes. He used to come and go fitfully at my father's house; but my father had displeased him in various ways that I need not recite, and my father's death had left me with an estrangement which I had widened by my own acts.

Now that I had reached Glenarm, my mind reverted to Pickering's estimate of the value of my grandfather's estate. Although John Marshall Glenarm was an eccentric man, he had been able to accumulate a large fortune, and yet I had allowed the executor to tell me that he had died comparatively poor.

In so readily accepting the terms of the will and burying myself in a region of which I knew nothing, I had cut myself off from the usual channels of counsel. If I left the place to return to New York I should simply disinherit myself.

At Glenarm I was, and there I must remain to the end of the year; I grew bitter against Pickering as I reflected upon the ease with which he had got rid of me. I had always satisfied myself that my wits were as keen as his, but I wondered now whether I had not stupidly put myself in his power.

Chapter 5

A Red Tam-O'-Shanter

I looked out on the bright October morning with a renewed sense of isolation. Trees crowded about my windows, many of them still wearing their festal colors, scarlet and brown and gold, with the bright green of some sulking companion standing out here and there with startling vividness. I put on an old corduroy outing suit and heavy shoes, ready for a tramp abroad, and went below.

The great library seemed larger than ever when I beheld it in the morning light. I opened one of the French windows and stepped out on a stone terrace, where I gained a fair view of the exterior of the house, which proved to be a modified Tudor, with battlements and two towers. One of the latter was only half-finished, and to it and to other parts of the house the workmen's scaffolding still clung.

Heaps of stone and piles of lumber were scattered about in great disorder. The house extended partly along the edge of a ravine, through which a slender creek ran toward the lake. The terrace became a broad balcony immediately outside the library, and beneath it the water bubbled pleasantly around heavy stone pillars.

Two pretty rustic bridges spanned the ravine, one near the front entrance, the other at the rear. My grandfather had begun his house on a generous plan, but, buried as it was among the trees, it suffered from lack of perspective. However, on one side toward the lake was a fair meadow, broken by a water-tower,

and just beyond the west dividing wall I saw a little chapel; and still farther, in the same direction, the outlines of the buildings of St. Agatha's were vaguely perceptible in another strip of woodland.

The thought of gentle nuns and school girls as neighbors amused me. All I asked was that they should keep to their own side of the wall.

I heard behind me the careful step of Bates.

"Good morning, Mr. Glenarm. I trust you rested quite well, sir."

His figure was as austere, his tone as respectful and colorless as by night. The morning light gave him a pallid cast. He suffered my examination coolly enough; his eyes were, indeed, the best thing about him.

"This is what Mr. Glenarm called the platform. I believe it's in *Hamlet*, sir."

I laughed aloud. "*Elsinore: A Platform Before the Castle.*"

"It was one of Mr. Glenarm's little fancies, you might call it, sir."

"And the ghost---where does the murdered majesty of Denmark lie by day?"

"I fear it wasn't provided, sir! As you see, Mr. Glenarm, the house is quite incomplete. My late master had not carried out all his plans."

Bates did not smile. I fancied he never smiled, and I wondered whether John Marshall Glenarm had played upon the man's lack of humor. My grandfather had been possessed of a certain grim, ironical gift at a jesting, and quite likely he had amused himself by experimenting upon his serving man.

"You may breakfast when you like, sir,"---and thus admonished I went into the refectory.

A newspaper lay at my plate; it was the morning's issue of a Chicago daily. I was, then, not wholly out of the world, I reflected, scanning the headlines.

"Your grandfather rarely examined the paper. Mr. Glenarm was more particularly interested in the old times. He wasn't what you might call up to date---if you will pardon the expression, sir."

"You are quit right about that, Bates. He was a medievalist in his sympathies."

"Thank you for that word, sir; I've frequently heard him apply it to himself. The plain omelet was a great favorite with your grandfather. I hope it is to your liking, sir."

"It's excellent, Bates. And your coffee is beyond praise."

"Thank you, Mr. Glenarm. One does what one can, sir."

He had placed me so that I faced the windows, an attention to my comfort and safety which I appreciated. The broken pane

told the tale of the shot that had so narrowly missed me the night before.

"I'll repair that today, sir," Bates remarked, seeing my eyes upon the window.

"You know that I'm to spend a year on this place; I assume that you understand the circumstances," I said, feeling it wise that we should understand each other.

"Quite so, Mr. Glenarm."

"I'm a student, you know, and all I want is to be left alone."

This I threw in to reassure myself rather than for his information. It was just as well, I reflected, to assert a little authority, even though the fellow undoubtedly represented Pickering and received orders from him.

"In a day or two, or as soon as I have got used to the place, I shall settle down to work in the library. You may give me breakfast at seven-thirty; luncheon at one-thirty and dinner at seven."

"Those were my late master's hours, sir."

"Very good. And I'll eat anything you please, except mutton broth, meat pie and canned strawberries. Strawberries in tins, Bates, are not well calculated to lift the spirit of man."

"I quite agree with you, sir, if you will pardon my opinion."

"And the bills---"

"They are provided for by Mr. Pickering. He sends me an allowance for the household expenses."

"So you are to report to him, are you, as heretofore?"

I blew out a match with which I had lit a cigar and watched the smoking end intently.

"I believe that's the idea, sir."

It is not pleasant to be under compulsion---to feel your freedom curtailed, to be conscious of espionage. I rose without a word and went into the hall.

"You may like to have the keys," said Bates, following me. "There's two for the gates in the outer wall and one for the St. Agatha's gate; they're marked, as you see. And here's the hall door key and the boathouse key that you asked for last night."

After an hour spent in unpacking I went out into the grounds. I had thought it well to wire Pickering of my arrival, and I set out for Annandale to send him a telegram. My spirit lit under the influences of the crisp air and cheering sunshine. What had seemed strange and shadowy at night was clear enough by day.

I found the gate through which we had entered the grounds the night before without difficulty. The stone wall was assuredly no flimsy thing. It was built in a thoroughly workmanlike manner, and I mentally computed its probable cost with amazement. There were, I reflected, much more satisfactory

ways of spending money than in building walls around Indiana forests.

But the place was mine, or as good as mine, and there was no manner of use in quarreling with the whims of my dead grandfather. At the expiration of a year I could tear down the wall if I pleased; and as to the incomplete house, that I should sell or remodel to my liking.

On the whole, I settled into an amiable state of mind; my perplexity over the shot of the night before was passing away under the benign influences of blue sky and warm sunshine. A few farm-folk passed me in the highway and gave me good morning in the fashion of the country, inspecting my knickerbockers at the same time with frank disapproval.

I reached the lake and gazed out upon its quiet waters with satisfaction. At the foot of Annandale's main street was a dock where several small steam-craft and a number of catboats were being dismantled for the winter. As I passed, a man approached the dock in a skiff, landed and tied his boat. He started toward the village at a quick pace, but turned and eyed me with rustic directness.

"Good morning!" I said. "Any ducks about?"

He paused, nodded and fell into step with me.

"No---not enough to pay for the trouble."

"I'm sorry for that. I'd hoped to pick up a few."

“I guess you’re a stranger in these parts,” he remarked, eyeing me again---my knickerbockers no doubt marking me as an alien.

“Quite so. My name is Glenarm, and I’ve just come.”

“I thought you might be him. We’ve rather been expecting you here in the village. I’m John Morgan, caretaker of the resort’ houses up the lake.”

“I suppose you all knew my grandfather hereabouts.”

“Well, yes; you might say as we did, or you might say as we didn’t. He wasn’t just the sort that you got next to in a hurry. He kept pretty much to himself. He built a wall there to keep us out, but he needn’t have troubled himself. We’re not the kind around here to meddle, and you may be sure the summer people never bothered him.”

There was a tone of resentment in his voice, and I hastened to say:

“I’m sure you’re mistaken about the purposes of that wall. My grandfather was a student of architecture. It was a hobby of his. The house and wall were in the line of his experiments, and to please his whims.”

“I hope the people of the village won’t hold any hard feelings against his memory or against me. Why, the labor there must have been a good thing for the people hereabouts.”

“It ought to have been,” said the man gruffly; “but that’s where the trouble comes in. He brought a lot of queer fellows here” “under contract to work for him---Italians, or Greeks, or some sort of foreigners. They built the wall, and he had them at work inside for half a year. He didn’t even let them out for air; and when they finished his job he loaded ‘em on to a train one day and hauled ‘em away.”

“That was quite like him, I’m sure,” I said, remembering with amusement my grandfather’s secretive ways.

“I guess he was a crank all right,” said the man conclusively.

It was evident that he did not care to establish friendly relations with the resident of Glenarm. He was about forty, light, with a yellow beard and pale blue eyes. He was dressed roughly and wore a shabby soft hat.

“Well, I suppose I’ll have to assume responsibility for him and his acts,” I remarked, piqued by the fellow’s surliness.

We had reached the center of the village, and he left me abruptly, crossing the street to one of the shops. I continued on to the railway station, where I wrote and paid for my message. The station-master inspected me carefully as I searched my pockets for change.

“You want your telegrams delivered at the house?” he asked.

“Yes, please,” I answered, and he turned away to his desk of clicking instruments without looking at me again.

It seemed wise to establish relations with the post office, so I made myself known to the girl who stood at the delivery window.

“You already have a box,” she advised me. “There’s a boy carries the mail to your house; Mr. Bates hires him.”

Bates had himself given me this information, but the girl seemed to find pleasure in imparting it with a certain severity. I then bought a cake of soap at the principal drug store and purchased a package of smoking tobacco, which I did not need, at a grocery.

News of my arrival had evidently reached the villagers; I was conceited enough to imagine that my presence was probably of interest to them; but the station master, the girl at the post office and the clerks in the shops treated me with an unmistakable cold reserve. There was a certain evenness of the chill which they visited upon me, as though a particular degree of frigidity had been determined in advance.

I shrugged my shoulders and turned toward Glenarm. My grandfather had left me a cheerful legacy of distrust among my neighbors, the result, probably, of importing foreign labor to work on his house. The surly Morgan had intimated as much; but it did not greatly matter.

I had not come to Glenarm to cultivate the rustics, but to fulfill certain obligations laid down in my grandfather’s will. I was, so to speak, on duty, and I much preferred that the villagers should let me alone. Comforting myself with these reflections I

reached the wharf, where I saw Morgan sitting with his feet dangling over the water, smoking a pipe.

I nodded in his direction, but he feigned not to see me. A moment later he jumped into his boat and rowed out into the lake.

When I returned to the house Bates was at work in the kitchen. This was a large square room with heavy timbers showing in the walls and low ceiling. There was a great fireplace having an enormous chimney and fitted with a crane and bobs, but for practical purposes a small range was provided.

Bates received me placidly.

“Yes; it’s an unusual kitchen, sir. Mr. Glenarm copied it from an old kitchen in England. He took quite a pride in it. It’s a pleasant place to sit in the evening, sir.”

He showed me the way below, where I found that the cellar extended under every part of the house, and was divided into large chambers. The door of one of them was of heavy oak, bound in iron, with a barred opening at the top. A great iron hasp with a heavy padlock and grilled area windows gave further the impression of a cell, and I fear that at this, as at many other things in the curious house, I swore---if I did not laugh---thinking of the money my grandfather had expended in realizing his whims.

The room was used, I noted with pleasure, as a depository for potatoes. I asked Bates whether he knew my grandfather’s purpose in providing a cell in his house.

“That, sir, was another of the dead master’s ideas. He remarked to me once that it was just as well to have a dungeon in a well-appointed house---his humor again, sir! And it comes in quite handy for the potatoes.”

In another room I found a curious collection of lanterns of every conceivable description, grouped on shelves, and next door to this was a store room filled with brass candlesticks of many odd designs. I shall not undertake to describe my sensations as, peering about with a candle in my hand, the vagaries of John Marshall Glenarm’s mind were further disclosed to me. It was almost beyond belief that any man with such whims should ever have had the money to gratify them.

I returned to the main floor and studied the titles of the books in the library, finally smoking a pipe over a very tedious chapter in an exceedingly dull work on *Norman Revivals and Influences*. Then I went out, assuring myself that I should get steadily to work in a day or two. It was not yet eleven o’clock, and time was sure to move deliberately within the stone walls of my prison. The long winter lay before me in which I must study perforce, and just now it was pleasant to view the landscape in all its autumn splendor.

Bates was soberly chopping wood at a rough pile of timber at the rear of the house. His industry had already impressed me. He had the quiet ways of an ideal serving man.

“Well, Bates, you don’t intend to let me freeze to death, do you? There must be enough in the pile there to last all winter.”

“Yes, sir; I am just cutting a little more of the hickory, sir. Mr. Glenarm always preferred it to beech or maple. We only take out the old timber. The summer storms eat into the wood pretty bad, sir.”

“Oh, hickory, to be sure! I’ve heard it’s the best firewood. That’s very thoughtful of you.”

I turned next to the unfinished tower in the meadow, from which a windmill pumped water to the house. The iron frame was not wholly covered with stone, but material for the remainder of the work lay scattered at the base. I went on through the wood to the lake and inspected the boathouse. It was far more pretentious than I had imagined from my visit in the dark.

It was of two stories, the upper half being a cozy lounging room, with wide windows and a fine outlook over the water. The unplastered walls were hung with Indian blankets; lounging chairs and a broad seat under the windows, colored matting on the floor and a few prints pinned upon the Navajos gave further color to the place.

I followed the pebbly shore to the stone wall where it marked the line of the school grounds. The wall, I observed, was of the same solid character here as along the road. I tramped beside it, reflecting that my grandfather’s estate, in the heart of the Republic, would someday give the lie to foreign complaints that we have no ruins in America.

I had assumed that there was no opening in the wall, but half-way to the road I found an iron gate, fastened with chain and

padlock, by means of which I climbed to the top. The pillars at either side of the gate were of huge dimensions and were higher than I could reach.

An intelligent forester had cleared the wood in the school grounds, which were of the same general character as the Glenarm estate. The little Gothic church near at hand was built of stone similar to that used in Glenarm House. As I surveyed the scene a number of young women came from one of the school buildings and, forming in twos and fours, walked back and forth in a rough path that led to the chapel.

A Sister clad in a brown habit lingered near or walked first with one and then another of the students. It was all very pretty and interesting and not at all the ugly school for paupers I had expected to find. The students were not the charity children I had carelessly pictured; they were not so young, for one thing, and they seemed to be appareled decently enough.

I smiled to find myself adjusting my scarf and straightening my collar as I beheld my neighbors for the first time.

As I sat thus on the wall I heard the sound of angry voices back of me on the Glenarm side, and a crash of underbrush marked a flight and pursuit. I crouched down on the wall and waited. In a moment a man plunged through the wood and stumbled over a low hanging vine and fell, not ten yards from where I lay.

To my great surprise it was Morgan, my acquaintance of the morning. He rose, cursed his ill luck and, hugging the wall close, ran toward the lake. Instantly the pursuer broke into view. It was Bates, evidently much excited and with an ugly

cut across his forehead. He carried a heavy club, and, after listening for a moment for sounds of the enemy, he hurried after the caretaker.

It was not my row, though I must say it quickened my curiosity. I straightened myself out, threw my legs over the school side of the wall and lit a cigar, feeling cheered by the opportunity the stone barricade offered for observing the world.

As I looked off toward the little church I found two other actors appearing on the scene. A girl stood in a little opening of the wood, talking to a man. Her hands were thrust into the pockets of her covert coat; she wore a red tam-o'-shanter that made a bright bit of color in the wood.

They were not more than twenty feet away, but a wild growth of young maples lay between us, screening the wall. Their profiles were toward me, and the tones of the girl's voice reached me clearly, as she addressed her companion. He wore a clergyman's high waistcoat, and I assumed that he was the chaplain whom Bates had mentioned.

I am not by nature an eavesdropper, but the girl was clearly making a plea of some kind, and the chaplain's stalwart figure awoke in me an antagonism that held me to the wall.

"If he comes here I shall go away, so you may as well understand it and tell him. I shan't see him under any circumstances, and I'm not going to Florida or California or anywhere else in a private car, no matter who chaperones it."

“Certainly not, unless you want to---certainly not,” said the chaplain. “You understand that I’m only giving you his message. He thought it best---”

“Not to write to me or to Sister Theresa!” interrupted the girl contemptuously. “What a clever man he is!”

“And how unclever I am!” said the clergyman, laughing. “Well, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to present his message.”

She smiled, nodded and turned swiftly toward the school. The chaplain looked after her for a few moments, then walked away soberly toward the lake. He was a young fellow, clean shaven and dark, and with a pair of shoulders that gave me a twinge of envy.

I could not guess how great a factor that vigorous figure was to be in my own affairs. As I swung down from the wall and walked toward Glenarm House, my thoughts were not with the athletic chaplain, but with the girl, whose youth was, I reflected, marked by her short skirt, the unconcern with which her hands were thrust into the pockets of her coat, and the irresponsible tilt of the tam-o’-shanter.

There is something jaunty, a suggestion of spirit and independence in a tam-o’-shanter, particularly a red one. If the red tam-o’-shanter expressed, so to speak the keynote of St. Agatha’s, the proximity of the school was not so bad a thing after all.

In high good humor and with a sharp appetite I went in to luncheon.

Chapter 6

The Girl And The Canoe

"The persimmons are off the place, sir. Mr. Glenarm was very fond of the fruit."

I had never seen a persimmon before, but I was in a mood for experiment. The frost-broken rind was certainly forbidding, but the rich pulp brought a surprise of joy to my palate. Bates watched me with respectful satisfaction. His gravity was in no degree diminished by the presence of a neat strip of flesh-colored court-plaster over his right eye. A faint suggestion of arnica hung in the air.

"This is a quiet life," I remarked, wishing to give him an opportunity to explain his encounter of the morning.

"You are quite right, sir. As your grandfather used to say, it's a place of peace."

"When nobody shoots at you through a window," I suggested.

"Such a thing is likely to happen to any gentleman", he replied, "but not likely to happen more than once, if you'll allow the philosophy."

He did not refer to his encounter with the caretaker, and I resolved to keep my knowledge of it to myself. I always prefer to let a rascal hang himself, and here was a case, I reasoned, where, if Bates were disloyal to the duties Pickering had imposed upon him, the fact of his perfidy was bound to disclose itself

eventually. Glancing around at him when he was off guard I surprised a look of utter dejection upon his face as he stood with folded arms behind my chair.

He flushed and started, then put his hand to his forehead.

"I met with a slight accident this morning, sir. The hickory's very tough, sir. A piece of wood flew up and struck me."

"Too bad!" I said with sympathy. "You'd better rest a bit this afternoon."

"Thank you, sir' but it's a small matter---only, you might think it a trifle disfiguring."

He struck a match for my cigarette, and I left without looking at him again. But as I crossed the threshold of the library I formulated this note: "Bates is a liar, for one thing, and a person with active enemies for another; watch him."

All things considered, the day was passing well enough. I picked up a book, and threw myself on a comfortable divan to smoke and reflect before continuing my explorations.

As I lay there, Bates brought me a telegram, a reply to my message to Pickering. It read: "Yours announcing arrival received and filed."

It was certainly a queer business, my errand to Glenarm. I lay for a couple of hours dreaming, and counted the candles in the great crystal chandelier until my eyes ached. Then I rose, took my cap, and was soon trampling off toward the lake.

There were several small boats and a naphtha launch in the boat-house. I dropped a canoe into the water and paddled off toward the summer colony, whose gables and chimneys were plainly visible from the Glenarm shore.

I landed and roamed idly over leaf-strewn walks past nearly a hundred cottages, to whose windows and verandas the winter blinds gave a dreary and inhospitable air.

There was, at one point, a casino, whose broad veranda hung over the edge of the lake, while beneath, on the water-side, was a boat-house. I had from this point a fine view of the lake, and I took advantage of it to fix in my mind the topography of the region.

I could see the bold outlines of Glenarm House and its red-tile roofs; and the gray tower of the little chapel beyond the wall rose above the wood with a placid dignity. Above the trees everywhere hung the shadowy smoke of autumn.

I walked back to the wharf, where I had left my canoe, and was about to step into it when I saw, rocking at a similar landing-place hear-by, another slight craft of the same type as my own, but painted dark maroon.

I was sure the canoe had not been there when I landed. Possibly it belonged to Morgan, the caretaker. I walked over and examined it. I even lifted it slightly in the water to test its weight. The paddle lay on the dock beside me and it, too, I weighed critically, deciding that it was a trifle light for my own taste.

"Please---if you don't mind---"

I turned to stand face to face with the girl in the red tam-o'-shanter.

"I beg your pardon," I said, stepping away from the canoe.

She did not wear the covert coat of the morning, but a red knit jacket, buttoned tight about her. She was young with every emphasis of youth. A pair of dark blue eyes examined me with good-humored curiosity. She was on good terms with the sun---I rejoiced in the brown of her cheeks, so eloquent of companionship with the outdoor world---a certificate indeed of the favor of Heaven.

Show me, in October, a girl with a face of tan, whose hands have plied a paddle or driven a golf ball or cast a fly beneath the blue arches of summer, and I will suffer her scorn in joy. She may vote me dull and refute my wisest word with laughter, for hers are the privileges of the sisterhood of Diana; and that soft bronze, those daring fugitive freckles beneath her eyes, link her to times when Pan whistled upon his reed and all the days were long.

She had approached silently and was enjoying, I felt sure, my discomfiture at being taken unawares.

I had snatched off my cap and stood waiting beside the canoe, feeling, I must admit, a trifle guilty at being caught in the unwarrantable inspection of another person's property---particularly a person so wholly pleasing to the eye.

"Really, if you don't need that paddle anymore---?"

I looked down and found to my annoyance that I held it in my hand---was in fact leaning upon it with a cool air of proprietorship.

"Again, I beg your pardon," I said. "I hadn't expected---"

She eyed me calmly with the stare of the child that arrives at a drawing-room door by mistake and scrutinizes the guests without awe. I didn't know what I had expected or had not expected, and she manifested no intention of helping me to explain.

Her short skirt suggested fifteen or sixteen---not more---and such being the case there was no reason why I should not be master of the situation. As I fumbled my pipe the hot coals of tobacco burned my hand and I cast the thing from me.

She laughed a little and watched the pipe bound from the dock into the water.

"Too bad!" she said, her eyes upon it; "but if you hurry you may get it before it floats away."

"Thank you for the suggestion," I said. But I did not relish the idea of kneeling on the dock to fish for a pipe before a strange school girl who was, I felt sure, anxious to laugh at me.

She took a step toward the line by which her boat was fastened.

"Allow me."

"If you think you can---safely," she said; and the laughter that lurked in her eyes annoyed me.

"The feminine knot is designed for the confusion of man," I observed, twitching vainly at the rope, which was tied securely in unfamiliar loops.

She was singularly unresponsive. The thought that she was probably laughing at my clumsiness did not make my fingers more nimble.

"The nautical instructor at St. Agatha's is undoubtedly a woman. This knowledge must come in the post-graduate course. But my gallantry is equal, I trust, to your patience."

The maid in the red tam-o'-shanter continued silent. The wet rope was stubborn, the knot more and more hopeless, and my efforts to make light of the situation awakened no response in the girl. I tugged away at the rope, attacking its tangle on various theories.

"A case for surgery, I'm afraid. A truly Gordian knot, but I haven't my knife."

"Oh, but you wouldn't!" she exclaimed. "I think I can mange."

She bent down---I was aware that the sleeve of her jacket brushed my shoulder---seized an end that I had ignored, gave it a sharp tug with a slim brown hand and pulled the knot free.

"There!" she exclaimed with a little laugh; "I might have saved you all the bother."

"How dull of me! But I didn't have the combination," I said, steadying the canoe carefully to mitigate the ignominy of my failure.

She scorned the hand I extended, but embarked with light confident step and took the paddle. It was growing late. The shadows in the wood were deepening; a chill crept over the water, and, beyond the tower of the chapel, the sky was bright with the splendor of sunset.

With a few skillful strokes she brought her little craft beside my pipe, picked it up and tossed it to the wharf.

"Perhaps you can pipe a tune upon it," she said, dipping the paddle tentatively.

"You put me under great obligations," I declared. "Are all the girls at St. Agatha's as amiable?"

"I should say not! I'm a great exception---and---I really shouldn't be talking to you at all! It's against the rules! And we don't encourage smoking."

"The chaplain doesn't smoke, I suppose."

"Not in chapel; I believe it isn't done! And we rarely see him elsewhere."

She had idled with the paddle so far, but now lifted her eyes and drew back the blade for a long stroke.

"But in the wood---this morning---by the wall!"

I hate myself to this day for having so startled her. The poised blade dropped into the water with a splash; she brought the canoe a trifle nearer to the wharf with an almost imperceptible stroke, and turned toward me with wonder and dismay in her eyes.

"So you are an eavesdropper and detective, are you?"

I beg that you will give your master my compliments! I really owe you an apology; I *thought* you were a gentleman---she exclaimed with withering emphasis, and dipped her blade deep in flight.

I called, stammering incoherently, after her, but her light argosy skimmed the water steadily. The paddle rose and fell with trained precision, making scarcely a ripple as she stole softly away toward the fairy towers of the sunset.

I stood looking after her, goaded with self-contempt. A glory of yellow and red filled the west. Suddenly the wind moaned in the wood behind the line of cottages, swept over me and rippled the surface of the lake.

I watched its flight until it caught her canoe and I marked the flimsy craft's quick response, as the shaken waters bore her alert figure upward on the swell, her blade still maintaining its regular

dip, until she disappeared behind a little peninsula that made a harbor near the school grounds.

The red tam-o'-shanter seemed at last to merge in the red sky, and I turned to my canoe and paddled cheerlessly home.

Buy Entire Book: [now](#)

This book offered by: David Realty Company

Email David at: david@davidrealty.com