

ed with the reality of her existence that at times he would extend his arms with the thought that she would throw herself forward to receive his passionate embrace. Then, disappointed and realizing his hallucination, he would be assailed by the horrible fear that some morning he should come to the studio and find her gone as mysteriously as she came.

As time passed the world that knew Trowe marveled at his sudden seclusion, and his changed demeanor and appearance. Once bouyant and strong, within a brief space he had become morose and emaciated, and he did not so much as recognize those of his friends that chanced to pass him, as he walked from his studio to his chambers. Some over solicitous thought him ill or mad, and went to his studio to ascertain the truth regarding his condition, but to their repeated demonstrations at his door there was no response.

It is to be doubted if Trowe so much as heard them. His mind and soul were so completely centred in the beautiful woman of the canvas that he was oblivious to all else. His engagements were forgotten; it was nothing to him now if the *City of London* had arrived at her pier, bringing the fair Mrs. Tescott to pay tribute to his genius. Beauty though she be, there was no other beauty in the world for him now but the one that seemed to have sprung into life within the four walls of his studio.

The picture was now virtually completed; but the last finishing touches remained to be administered—one more night's work for the unknown artist. Trowe was at the highest pitch of ardor and suspense. All the day he sat before the marvelous creature of the canvas in a speechless transport of love.

From her glorious crown of unbound hair to her shapely white feet she was perfect. Every curve and proportion of her full, firm figure was a feast for an artist's eye. The dreamy attitude, the swelling bust, the languorous look in her deep, dark eyes, all seemed to speak of an ineffable desire. It is little wonder that Gideon Trowe, strong man that he was, became mad gazing into those yearning orbs.

Did I say she was faultless? There was one mark—a little brown beauty spot just below her left shoulder. But that was not a fault. It only served to further convince Trowe that she lived in flesh and blood.

"She is mine," he said under his breath, as he staggered from the studio in the gathering darkness—"mine against all the world!"

The next morning a young woman mounted the steps leading to Gideon Trowe's studio and knocked at the door. There was no answer from within. She turned the knob, that yielded to her hand, and pushed open the door and entered.

The painter was lying at full length on the floor, as if he had fallen in utter exhaustion. He lay at the feet of the beautiful creature of the canvas. In his hand was a brush, and by his side was his broken palette.

The visitor stood for a moment looking first at the picture, then at the prostrated artist.

Finally she bent over Trowe and shook him till his eyes opened. As his glance rested on her face he started to his feet.

"It is the picture come to life!" he cried hoarsely.

A wave of color swept over the young woman's face.

"I cannot understand it, but it is true," she said, calmly. "Night after night, as the ship floundered through the storm, and each hour seemed the last for all on board, I dreamed of being here—I was here, can there be any doubt of that?"

"Then you are"—he began, and paused.

"Mrs. Tescott," she concluded. "Come all the way from England to sit to the greatest artist in the world, only to find you have my picture painted."

"I?" he repeated, stupidly. I do not understand. It was not I that painted it."

"Look at your hands," she said; "they are stained with fresh paint. There is your palette—broken when you fell exhausted. There is the brush in your hand with which you signed your name at the bottom of the picture!"

He gazed at his hands, the palette, the brush, the signature. But he could find no words.

"It is you that painted the picture!" she affirmed. "Do I not know? Was I not here to see? Who else could paint like that?"

For a space he stood in profound meditation; then a light broke over his face.

"In my sleep—I did it in my sleep," he muttered, more to himself than to her. "I have been restless—ill—it was somnambulism. Strange—strange."

Suddenly he advanced and grasped her arm. "You shall not have her!" he uttered, fiercely. "She is mine! I love her—no, it is you I love! I knew I should find you. My very soul was in the picture, and I knew it would bring you to me. But ah, are you really she? Perhaps I dream—perhaps it is all a dream. Tell me the truth—*prove* to me that you are she—that I do not love merely a phantom of my disordered brain!"

For answer she turned back the rich folds of her gown and displayed to him the singular little beauty mark below her left shoulder.

Truly, there are mysteries in life that pass understanding.

—The Romancist in *Town Topics*.

WITH THE DEAR GIRLS.

Miss Antique—These horrid seventeen-year locusts come once every seventeen years.

Miss Waspish—How interesting! Did you have much occasion to notice them the last two times they were here?

DOUBTFUL COMPLIMENT.

"There's one thing about your boarding house," said the fresh guest; "Living here increases one's appetite so. Actually Mrs. Housekeeper, after a dinner here I go away as hungry as a bear."

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