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dearest! It is terrible—poor Helen! Tell me how it happened."

Even then I did not lose my head. I crept closer to him. "I had just come in," I said, "and we had scarcely spoken when she grew faint and—it was all over—before I could call anyone, it must have been her heart.

"Yes," he agreed, and led me into the death-chamber again. Hand in hand we stood and looked at her lying there so peacefully. Yates Lorimer gazed into the dead face of his wife, and I held my breath in terror. There were tears in his eyes, but they were not those of anguish. "Poor little Helen, my sister!" he said, softly and, bending, kissed her forehead. And that was his farewell to the woman he had loved madly with the one love of his life—and I stood there with clenched hands and did not tell him! Surely, I did not have the power to do all I had done that afternoon unaided—Satan himself must have stood by and prompted me. Not once did I get confused. From the minute I had been seized with my idea I was no longer Helen. I was Louise, and Yates was mine. Still striving to comfort me in his great-hearted gentleness, he took me home.

He was so good to me, so kind and thoughtful in the days which followed, because of the great blow that had fallen upon me, that I had had work to be sad enough for my part. How could I mourn for Louise when she had had for a year the perfect happiness that was now mine? How could I be doing wrong to take this happiness, now that she no longer claimed it? With a cunning and a cleverness I had not suspected in myself I played my role. So successful was I that I think I grew even gentle and sweet as Louise had been. I could not be otherwise in my life with Yates. Sometimes he would hold me at arm's length and shake his head. "You are changing, Louise," he said once. "There is a strange, new fire and sparkle about you. You are growing more like poor Helen; she was always the gayer of the two. Forgive me, dear," for I had burst into wild weeping. My nerves were not so firm as they had been.

I had my fool's paradise, and I lived in it fiercely, unthinkingly, grudging every minute of it. I dreaded no blow, yet I feared the end of all things. What if Yates should die? Or I? Then I would pace the floor with doubled fists, as I had in those days when I was nursing myself to stand and see Yates married to another woman. All lies! He had never been married to anyone but me—and at such moments I would rush in upon him as he sat reading, just to hear his voice and feel it calm my fears.

And Yates was happy, even happier than he had been, I think, because he was more interested. The infinitesimal differences between my character and Louise's piqued him and kept his attention. Yet his happiness was not of the old, quiet order, for at times he was restless and moody. As the weeks went on I began to lose the grip on myself, and the wretched fear of his finding out left me. There were times when I actually believed I was Louise, and

again, when I remembered my identity, I took a grim pleasure in my talent as an actress. One day Yates asked: "Where is that little brown mole on your ear I always liked?"

I laughed. "You have heard of beauty doctors?" And he was satisfied. Again it was: "Why don't you play Chopin lately?"

"I am tired of Chopin," I answered, carelessly, when, in truth, I could no more play his fairy music than I could have written a symphony. These little danger reefs made my heart beat unpleasantly, and I fancied there was a dawning wonder in his eyes when he looked at me.

Who knows the recesses of the soul? Once he waked, crying wildly, "Louise! Louise!" with a fear and yearning in his voice that were terrible, and when he came to himself and saw me he smiled wanly. "A dream," he said. "Such a dream—I thought you were stretching out your hands to me from a great distance and calling me, and your face—oh, your face was pale with a blinding woe! And I could not come to you!"

I shrank away from him, sick and trembling. Could Louise, away in another world, could she, did she know? And some time I must face her—with all my guilt. How would she look at me? And Yates—for the first time since my living lie began I remembered that sometime, somewhere, Yates must know, and he would look at me—

I knew every line, every shadow, on the face that some day I must confront, and it poisoned and blighted my happiness and killed my heart, and slowly began to kill me. A barrier fell between Yates and me. I shunned him, shuddering, and he was afraid of me; yes, afraid.

It was one evening in the dusk. He came and put his hands on my shoulders. His voice was hollow and his eyes were sombre and burning. "Louise," he said, huskily, "what is it, what is this nameless thing, that has come between us, that is ruining our happiness? I love you, I love you, and yet your presence chills me, your touch frightens me. I yearn for you, and I am afraid of you—I think I must be going mad! Help me, Louise! Louise!"

He staggered, strong man that he was, and stood clutching a chair, with his bewildered gaze still upon me. I do not know how my face looked. I only know a thousand tons were pressing upon my heart and lungs, and my brain was on fire with hysteria. Any relief was better, any crash, any upheaval, than the hideous agony I had been enduring in the weeks since the night of Yates' strange dream. Should I tell him? Louise, far off in the distance, might forgive me. Perhaps even Yates would mercifully veil that look he was to flash on me, the look that had been before me so long, night and day. I grasped the chance. Then I heard myself speaking in a cold, even voice.

"It is because," I said, with particular pains to speak clearly, "I am not Louise. I am Helen, you know, and it was your Louise who died. I dressed her in my clothes and put on hers. It is very simple."

Then I waited for him to look at me, and I hoped I would drop dead when he

did. But the horror in his eyes was of a new kind, and he was horribly calm. There was deadly fear in his voice and movement. Gently he put me in a chair and tried to quiet me with soothing words. It flashed over me at once—he thought I had gone insane! I struggled, but I could not help it. I laughed, I shrieked.

"My God!" whispered the man beside me, and hurried out of the room for help. I heard him carefully lock the door behind him. I realized then that my sacrifice, my truth-telling, was unavailing; that he would never believe me when I told him I was not Louise; that I was still doomed to see that look on his face, to hear Louise's reproaches, sometime, somewhere.

Perhaps I might endure it when it came, but I knew one thing positively, and that was I was not able to bear thinking about it the rest of my life. There are some trials even the Supreme Being has no right to ask of us weak mortals. And that is why I snatch the little bottle of Indian poison from my bosom, where I have carried it since the night of his dream, and why I sit behind the door Yates locked, waiting for his returning step with the help he has gone for, because he thinks I, his wife, his Louise, have lost my mind.

He would never believe the truth if I reiterated it from now till his death. In a way it is comical.

I have the cork out of the bottle—and there comes Yates and some others up the stairs. They are hurrying—hurrying—Poor Yates!—ugh—this stuff is a bitter streak of fire—

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