

Told in Silence

By OTILLIA F. PFEIFFER

Copyright, 1919, by the Western Newspaper Union

"They say it is a fine picture, Florence. Won't you take the children and go?"

"I don't care much for the movies, Etta, but I suppose the little ones will be pleased," answered Florence Trude, resignedly.

There was no affectation in words or manner. Florence looked and acted inexpressibly worried and dull. She was visiting with relatives and her cousin, Mrs. Wilson, married and having three children, had been disappointed from the first in interesting her guest in any enlivening pleasure. She could scarcely connect the sad-eyed Florence of the present with the lively, intensely human Florence of their schooldays. She realized, of course, that there must be a cause for the startling change, but Florence had not seen fit to confide in her and she had not penetrated the cold calm that was ever present with her relative and guest.

Pictures! Alone by herself, Florence's lips tremored and her eyes acquired a pathetic, far-away expression. Alas! there was one picture framed ever in her mind, involving the tragedy of slain love, trust and hope. A glen silvered by the white moonlight—her trysting place with the only man she had ever loved, ever would love; her joyful heartbeats as he advanced, and then his sudden confrontation by a woman young and beautiful like herself. That flashing-eyed beauty had accented Eldon Ware familiarly. For a moment he seemed dazed—almost stunned—the woman came still nearer and threw her arms about his neck. He did not repel her. She kissed him fondly and then slowly, arm in arm, those two disappeared amid the mists and shadows of the glen and apparently out of the broken life of Florence Trude.

She had crept home a blighted soul, incapable of even thought beyond the fact that the man with whom she had pledged troth was a base deceiver. Circumstances immediately ensuing seemed to enforce this fact. Florence heard next day that Ware had left the town on a night train with her apparent rival in his affections. A week went by. Ware did not return and when a letter, mailed from the city, arrived, Florence placed it unopened in another envelope and returned it to his address with the words written across it: "I hope never to see you again."

Then it was a long battle against heart break and threatened illness. Ware had come to her home, but the servants had strict orders to refuse him admittance. Other letters had come. Florence returned the first unopened and burned the rest without seeking to know their contents. What could the same be but some specious explanation of his base treachery? Florence had heard incidentally that Eldon Ware was leading a lonely, uneventful life at the home of a married sister. He was reputed to have been left quite a fortune and engaged in no special business activity. There seemed to be no attachment or complication in his life, but the memory of that meeting with another woman than herself, their brazen-faced departure together, was a source of bitterness and reproach that Florence could not dismiss from her mind or forgive.

Florence accompanied the three children to the moving picture theater, noting only casually that the theme of the scenic presentation was "Misjudged." She anticipated the usual pitiful drama and had no interest in its development. When, however, the story of the play began to unfold a strange insistent attraction to its details began. From casual notice to strict attention, and then to absorbing interest, Florence followed the first film of the photoplay and sat consumed with wonderment.

No character on the screen resembled herself or Eldon Ware, yet the prologue was nothing more nor less than a prototype presentation of the first few months of her engagement to Ware. So faithfully were their incidents depicted that Florence could scarcely believe that she saw aright. There came a perfect reproduction of that memory scene where Eldon Ware and his mysterious woman companion passed out of sight.

And there the story explained that devastating event. It seemed that the lover of the picture had a cousin who resembled him greatly. This cousin had paid some attention to a girl who turned out at heart to be a frivolous adventuress and who finally went insane and was sent to an asylum. That night of the glen scene she came upon the lover of the screen story and mistook him for his cousin. She raved wildly of murder if she was not taken back to his love and care. The cousin, to save his relative, accepted the identity thrust upon him by the mad creature, whom he indulged until he once more got her into custody.

With no other way of explaining all, Eldon Ware had arranged to have the motion picture Florence now viewed publicly displayed. She realized this now, bewildered, repentant, as she left the theater. She turned as some one pressed to her side and a cherished voice asked:

"Do you understand now?"

"Oh! for all time—forgive!" fell pleadingly from lips that quivered with love and hope.

Table with columns: Name, Description, Section, Amt. Lists various land parcels in Township 9 Range 30, Township 10 Range 30, Township 11 Range 30, Township 12 Range 30, Township 13 Range 30, Township 14 Range 30, Township 15 Range 30, Township 16 Range 30, Township 17 Range 30, Township 18 Range 30, Township 19 Range 30, Township 20 Range 30, Township 21 Range 30, Township 22 Range 30, Township 23 Range 30, Township 24 Range 30.

Table with columns: Name, Description, Section, Amt. Lists various land parcels in Township 9 Range 32, Township 10 Range 32, Township 11 Range 32, Township 12 Range 32, Township 13 Range 32, Township 14 Range 32, Township 15 Range 32, Township 16 Range 32, Township 17 Range 32, Township 18 Range 32, Township 19 Range 32, Township 20 Range 32, Township 21 Range 32, Township 22 Range 32, Township 23 Range 32, Township 24 Range 32.

Table with columns: Name, Description, Section, Amt. Lists various land parcels in Township 9 Range 34, Township 10 Range 34, Township 11 Range 34, Township 12 Range 34, Township 13 Range 34, Township 14 Range 34, Township 15 Range 34, Township 16 Range 34, Township 17 Range 34, Township 18 Range 34, Township 19 Range 34, Township 20 Range 34, Township 21 Range 34, Township 22 Range 34, Township 23 Range 34, Township 24 Range 34.