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Hunted Down

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1865

## Hunted down; or, The two lives of Mary Leigh [Transcript]

Dion Boucicault

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**Hunted Down: The Two Lives of Mary Leigh**, A drama in Three Acts by Dion Boucicault, 1866

*December, 1865.*

**CHARACTERS:**

John Leigh, R. A.

Mary, His Wife

Willie and Maud, His Children

Lady Glencarrig, His Sister

Mrs. Bolton Jones, An Acquaintance

Rawdon Scudamore, A broken-down Gambler

Clara, A Model

**ACT I.**

*Scene- London, at the present time.*

*Scene- A Room in Mr. Leigh's House. Door L.H. opens on the Hall and leads to exterior. Very large Door, R.C., leads to Mr. Leigh's Studio, which is seen within. This Door is curtained. Door R.H. leads to the interior of the House. On a table, R.H., a breakfast is laid.*

Enter from the Studio two Porters carrying a wooden case. John Leigh follows them.

JOHN: Gently! Gently! My good man, do have a little feeling, and consider what that case contains.

PORTER: Well, it's a picture, ain't it? One would think by the way you go on about it that it was a baby. *(They bear it out slowly L.H. Door.)*

JOHN: So it is-it is a baby-it is my offspring. My head was big with it for months. I y earned over it, troubled over it, joyed over it, nursed it, slept with it *(returning to door)*, and now it is torn from me by a purchaser. *(Crying after them.)* Take care of that corner. Ah! The brutes.

*(Enter Mary Leigh. She advances behind him.)*

MARY: (*embracing him*) John, dear, has she gone-has she relieved the house of her presence?

JOHN: She? Who?

MARY: My rival in your faithless heart. The image that has filled your mind day and night for the last five months-your picture. (*they advance.*)

JOHN: Ah! Mary, if you could feel as I do, when the child of my brain is taken from me! But you can! Yes; you also are a parent! Think of your own little ones-ours-eh? If two monsters in human shape were to come here with a cart, and pack up our Willie, or our little Maud, and carry one of them away to-to a hanging committed, how would you feel? Well, then, how can I, under similar circumstances, restrain the natural emotions of a man-and a mother?

MARY: I know I am a fool, dear, but I can't endure you should have a thought I do not share.

JOHN: Oh! There! If you could only retain that expression of love until I can catch it, what a study!

MARY: (*turning away pettishly.*) Then you shan't have it-you don't know how to catch it. Do you think that I want my emotions exposed at the Royal Academy? I positively will not sit to you any more; either my face or my figure is sure to be found in every picture you produce. They are all me. I am penetrating your style-one journalist calls me "your method;" another calls me "John Leigh's School."

JOHN: Well, I can't help it. Mary, I love you to my fingers' ends; they think of you as I touch the canvas, and your features will grow under my hand (*embracing her*).

(*Enter servant with tea urn, and a second servant with dishes, which they place on the breakfast table.*)

MARY: Hush! (*Extricating herself*) Speaking of models, Mr. Leigh, I have not seen Clara this morning. It is something unusual that she should be late. (*She makes the tea.*)

JOHN: Yes; my dear, want and sorrow are always punctual.

MARY: Poor girl! How came she to offer herself for a model? Neither her features nor her figure bespeak such an occupation.

JOHN: I took her not for form, but for expression. Suffering had made a mould of her face, it had lain so long there.

MARY: Oh! John, how cruelly you speak. Could your kind and gentle heart make a market of this girl's misery?

JOHN: Bless me! Now you mention it, perhaps it was heartless. I recollect how at that moment I was full of my Virgin Martyr.

MARY: Why, I sat for that figure.

JOHN: Yes, for the beauty of form, my love; but I wanted Clara's face for the resignation. I remember the first time I met her. It was one morning while walking off a fit of fastidiousness-airing my seedy brains. A face passed me- the face I had vainly longed for. I ran after it, and passed it again. Yes, I was not mistaken; there was the loving mouth, the eyes so full of gentle resolution-there was the tint of suffering. She went into a grocer's shop; I followed and as I sat in a dark corner, with what a glow of satisfaction I contemplated my living dream. Never thinking of what a brute I was. (*Rising and walking about.*) But there's the selfishness of artists. Once a man gets inside himself, he has no feeling for any one else. I neglect you for my pictures, and I delight in this poor soul's misery while rendering my canvas woman beautiful with her tears. I'm a monster!

MARY: If you call my husband names I'll throw something at you. Come, sit down and finish your breakfast.

JOHN: Mary, dear, when Clara comes you must speak to her; you can draw from her the cause of her distress, and we may be able to alleviate it.

MARY: And spoil her expression?

JOHN: Who speaks cruelly now?

MARY: I do; for you are the best and gentlest creature in the world. And why don't you speak to Clara?

JOHN: I should break down-hurt her feelings, perhaps- make a mess of it certainly; but you can manage it nicely; you have such a composed air; you know how to resent an affront or bestow a favour with propriety; but I am so wanting in personal dignity, that if any one injures me I want to ask their pardon for it; and when I do a service I feel humiliated by the obligation I confer. I suppose I am a fool.

MARY: Heaven grant that it may run in the family! (*Enter Fanny, the nurse, and the two children, Willie and Maud, dressed for walking.*) Ah! My darlings, going out to walk? Come here, Willie. (*Kneels, and re-arranges the hat and necktie of the boy*) Has he been a good boy, Fanny?

WILL: Yes, Ma.

JOHN: (*who has taken Maud, tries to re-arrange her toilette, and puts it all awry*). They are always good; it is their little natures to be so. Who ever painted a child with a bad expression?

FAN: Well, sir, I don't think you are improving Miss Maud, by no means.

JOHN: I beg your pardon-it don't look right.

FAN: No indeed, sir (*re-arranges Maud's hat*).

*(John crosses to the window.)*

JOHN: I hope it is not going to rain. Fanny, mind, if it rains, get into a cab at once.

FAN: Yes, sir.

WILL: *(aside to Maud)*. Ask Pa for sixpence to buy toffee.

MAUD: No-you ask Ma.

WILL: No-she won't. Pa will. *(runs up to Mrs. Leigh.)* Good bye. *(Plays with Mrs. Leigh to distract her attention while Maud pulls down John and whispers to him. John, looking cautiously to see that he is not observed, gives Maud a piece of money. Maud runs to Fanny.)*

MARY: Stay, miss. What has your papa given you? Let me see it. *(Maud opens her hand.)* Half-a-crown! John, I am ashamed of you.

JOHN: Ahem! How are they to pay for the cab, dear, in case it rains?

MARY: Was that what you wanted it for, Maud?

MAUD: No.

WILL: It was to buy toffee. And it wasn't Maud's fault, I told her to ask for it.

MAUD: I don't want it, Ma, if you don't wish me to have it.

MARY: No. Keep it-but let me see that you know how to spend it. There, now, run along.

JOHN: And take care of the crossings.

*(Exeunt, the children running out, Fanny following.)*

JOHN: Gently! Oh, my gracious! Can't they walk down stairs! They'll break their little necks. Oh dear! *(runs to the window.)* There they go.

MARY: John, we are very, very happy in our children. Everybody loves them.

JOHN: How could they help it? They take after you, and everybody loves you.

*(Enter Servant, with coat and hat.)*

SERV: It is eleven o'clock, sir.

MARY: Eleven! And you have an appointment at the Palace at a quarter past.

JOHN: Dear me! *(pulls off his dressing-gown and puts on his coat)* and they are so dreadfully punctual themselves! If I am a minute late, I shall feel as if I was going to be committed to the Tower. There, that will do.

MARY: Have you got your handkerchief? *(Feels in his pockets.)* Yes, there it is. And your purse? -you always forget that. Where's your watch?

JOHN: (*feels for it, and finds it in his trousers pocket.*) There, now I am all right.

MARY: Stop! Where are your gloves? Oh, what a man it is!

SERV: They are on the hall table, ma'am.

MARY: Send for a cab immediately.

(*Exit Servant.*)

MARY: (*brushing him and looking him over*). Pull down your wristbands.

JOHN: (*pulling them down*). There, can I go now? I have barely time, and (*taking out his watch*) I would not keep her Royal Highness waiting for-oh! (*falls on a chair*) it is half-past six!

MARY: Half-past six! Nonsense. I forgot to wind your watch last night.

JOHN: It gave me such a turn.

MARY: Never mind. There! (*settles his cravat and gives him a kiss.*)

JOHN: Good-bye, darling. Now I'm off.

MARY: Stop! –your collar is up behind. (*She pulls it down and brushes him off.*) Good-bye, dear! Bless you for the dearest, simplest of hearts. (*She kisses her hand to him from the window. Advancing.*) Best of husbands! Best of children! Oh, my happy, happy home! –the casket of those jewels I wear upon my heart. Every object here is the witness of my joys; and so each and all of them are precious to me.

(*Enter Servant*)

SERV: Miss Clara, madam, came in just as master went out. (*Goes to remove the breakfast.*)

MARY: He has left a message for her. Say that I will see her.

(*Exit Servant*)

MARY: Poor child! What kind of home is hers? I was like her once-long ago, before I met John, when I was poor.

(*Enter Clara.*)

CLARA: (*curtsying*). You desired to see me, Mrs. Leigh.

MARY: Come near me, Clara.

CLARA: (*approaching*). Thank you, ma'am.

MARY: I wish to serve you. Will you return the kindness I feel by telling me how to accomplish my desires?

CLARA: I am very grateful to you, ma'am-indeed I am.

MARY: Then let me be grateful to Providence for this opportunity. We have for some time regarded you with sincere interest. Your appearance denoted much and long suffering-your reserved and gentle manners have won our tender and sincere regard. I feel that you are above our pity; but I hope you are not indifferent to our sympathy. So, Clara, I do not stoop to you, for I was once as poor, and perhaps as unhappy, as you are now. Look on me, then, as a woman with a woman's heart, yearning to comfort and console a suffering sister. And this is a woman's hand held out to help her.

CLARA: God bless you, Mrs. Leigh. (*kissing her hand*), but you can do nothing for me (*turns away*).

MARY: Do not say so-your tears belie your words. I can wipe them away.

CLARA: But not the cause of them.

MARY: Perhaps you have parents who may be ill and in want.

CLARA: I am an orphan, I thank Heaven.

MARY: You have a child sick, it may be.

CLARA: Oh that I had! –oh that I had! Something that would let me love it; a little thing that could not know its own misery-something too young to be false, too weak to be cruel.

MARY: Ah! You speak of a husband-this is your sorrow-you have loved-poor girl, has he forsaken you?

CLARA: No. He-he has returned.

MARY: He has been absent, then-he left you.

CLARA: He-lived abroad, in France, for many years: he-could not return.

MARY: Why did you not follow him?

CLARA: He would not let me, and so I was alone. Oh! Those years of solitude-that long, long gloom!

MARY: Which his return has not dispelled; is it not so? You are silent (*taking her hand*). Clara, are you a married woman? (*Clara withdraws her hand and retreats.*) Pardon me. I ought not to ask the question-for if you are, it is an offence, and if you are not, it may be a reproach.

CLARA: Whatever I am-think of me, madam, as one beyond the reach of help-whose heart is the prey to a lingering but mortal disease, that leaves it capable of but one feeling-resignation (*going, returns hastily*). Yes!-and gratitude. (*Kisses her hand.*) God bless you, Mrs. Leigh. (*She goes into the studio.*)

MARY: When a woman loves a bad man, as her passion is without reason, her devotion is incurable. Poor helpless Clara, you are right. Money cannot comfort you, and sympathy would irritate, not console you.

*(Enter Servant.)*

SERV: Lady Glencarrig, ma'am, and Mrs. Bolton Jones.

MARY: *(aside)*. Lady Glencarrig at half-past eleven o'clock!

*(Enter Lady Glencarrig and Mrs. B. Johns.)*

MARY: *(meeting them)*. This is an unusual hour to see my grand sister-in-law abroad.

LADY G: I must rely on this lady to justify an untimely intrusion.

MARY: -Intrusion! You are my husband's sister, Amelia; the place I occupy here was once yours, but I hope you do not cease to regard this house as your second home. Pray be seated. I regret that Mr. Leigh is not at home.

MRS. B: Hush! My dear, it is quite as well he should be out of the way. Are we alone? Pardon my discretion. *(Goes softly to L.H. door, opens it, looks out, closes it.)* There are some subjects that require tiling. *(Goes to C.D., looks into Studio.)* There is a young person in there; will you allow me to make her safe? *(Exit into Studio.)*

MARY: For Heaven's sake, Amelia, what does she mean?

LADY G: This woman, who has vainly manoeuvred to obtain a footing in our society, has discovered circumstances connected with your past life, by aid of which she hopes to force an entrance into my drawing-room by the back stairs.

MARY: Circumstances connected with-my-past life! *(sits.)*

LADY G: Yes; antecedent to your marriage with my brother. She called on me this morning, and introduced the subject in a manner so offensively familiar, that she led me to presume you were in her power. Look into your former life, Mary, and tell me have you any disclosure to fear? *(Mrs. Leigh hazes into Lady Glencarrig's face and is unable to speak.)* Hush!- your pale face and trembling lips answer me! Sit down! -speak as little as you can! -and leave me to guard you in the first moment of weakness, when you might betray more than she can otherwise discover.

*(Re-enter Mrs. B. Jones preceded by Clara, who goes off at L.H.D.)*

MRS. B: The young person will wait in the hall. *(Looks out at door R.H., then closes it)* So now we are secure. *(Aside, after looking at Mrs. Leigh.)* She has been put upon her guard. Ahem!

LADY G: My sister is a surprised spectator of your mysterious manoeuvres, and we await their explanation with equal curiosity.



MRS. B: I hope, my love, you feel assured that you are in the presence of two sincere friends.

LADY G: Who, being incapable of playing cat and mouse with your feelings, and having no impertinent curiosity to satisfy-

MRS. B: Charmingly expressed on my behalf, dear Lady G. I could not have made my motives so clear.

LADY G: You do yourself injustice, dear madam; any one can see through them.

MRS. B: (*aside*) One for me.

LADY G: So we come to the point.

MRS. B: At once. This morning I received the visit of a gentleman calling himself the Count de Willidoff. I presume you know the person?

MARY: I-I never heard the name before.

LADY G: She never heard of such a person.

MRS. B: Indeed! I think, my dear, you will remember him presently. He stated that he had lately returned to England after an absence of many years, and had been at great trouble in discovering a lady in whom he was deeply interested. He at length succeeded in tracing her into my family, where some years ago she was received as governess to my children. He then described your appearance.

LADY G: I am at a loss to conceive why you did not give him my sister's address.

MRS. B: Your ladyship shall hear why. To confirm the identity, he produced a packet of letters, and selecting one of them, he asked me if I recognized the handwriting; it was undoubtedly yours, my dear, but signed with the initials M. S. Now, as your name was Hollister, and that name does not begin with an S, I naturally glanced my eye over the contents of the note; it was full of such reproaches as left no doubt concerning the relations subsisting between the writer and her faithless correspondent.

LADY G: I presume you returned the letter to him, with the assurance that you were not acquainted with any lady in such a position?

MRS. B: Yes-that is-thank you-ahem!-words to that effect. But he did not seem to share my conviction, although I added that Miss Hollister, my governess, now occupied a very distinguished standing in society as the wife of an eminent and wealthy artist. To this piece of information he replied with a singular ejaculation: it was a prolonged but significant whistle-a vulgar apostrophe which obliged me to bring the interview to a close.

LADY G: Is that all?

MRS. B: Well, yes; I may say it is (*so to speak*) all. (*Aside.*) This woman disconcerts me excessively.

LADY G: I really cannot see how this concerns Mrs. Leigh.

MRS. B: I feared-that is, I thought-

LADY G: What?

MRS. B: I felt-as it were-a-upset; indeed almost as distressed as poor Mary seems to be now.

LADY G: Then pardon me for assuming to speak for her, for in her astonishment under such an imputation she could not be trusted to temper her disdain.

MRS. B: I hope she will appreciate the anxiety which prompted me to-to-

LADY G: Precisely; but while indulging your kind solicitude to protect her against some indefinite scandal, you forget that you give it entertainment and credit.

MRS. B: Me, my dear Lady G! Me injure the darling precious dove!

LADY G: You are incapable of it; so let us speak of it no more. There are subjects which no woman of refinement can discuss without offence to the dignity of her sex and to the delicacy of her own mind.

MRS. B: Quite so.

LADY G: If this extraordinary person you have alluded to should trouble you again, do not hesitate to give him my sister's address.

MRS. B: Oh, you think-

LADY G: Certainly-refer him to Mr. Leigh; and now let us take leave of my sweet Mary. You will pardon us, my love, for this irruption on your seclusion. I am sure we owe you a thousand apologies. There-don't say a word more; we understand your feelings; their expression would only distress us both-would it not?

MRS. B: Oh, immeasurably. (*Aside.*) Her ladyship entertains her own suspicions, nevertheless. I will wait and have a talk with Mary alone.

(*Lady G. rings the bell.*)

LADY G: My carriage will leave you at home.

MRS. B: My dear Lady G.! I must protest-

LADY G: However mistaken in your apprehensions, I cannot acknowledge your zealous interest in our family concerns, which is so manifest in all of this.

MRS. B: You are too good-but if you would-

(*Enter Servant.*)

LADY G: Pardon me. You must allow me to show you this mark of my esteem. (*To the Servant.*) My carriage for Mrs. Bolton Jones. Good morning.

MRS. B: I could not deprive your ladyship-

LADY G: On the contrary, you confer on me the pleasure of testifying my regard. Farewell!

MRS. B: Your ladyship overwhelms me.

LADY G: Good morning.

*(Lady G. conveys her out of the room, followed by Servant. Mary, who has maintained an affected composure, now falls, with a groan, with her face on the table. Lady Glencarrig reappears and closes the door. She is pale, and has lost her composure.)*

LADY G: You may speak now, madam. The woman of whom this Count is in search is yourself?

MARY: Yes.

LADY G: And these letters were written by you?

MARY: I-I-yes---

*(A pause.)*

LADY G: I decline to believe it. Imposture cannot counterfeit virtue as you have done.

MARY: *(rising)* Lady Glencarrig, I was married, ten years ago, when barely sixteen years of age, to a gentleman named Rawdon Scudamore. He was on the turf. Having won a large sum from my poor father, I offered my fortune—a few thousand pounds inherited from my mother—to discharge the debt; but the money being settled on me was only accessible to a husband. On the day of our marriage, even in the vestry, when I had signed the register, the man deserted me.

LADY G: Rawdon Scudamore! —where have I seen that name?

MARY: In connection with a forgery committed by him, after he had squandered my fortune. He was arrested in Paris; the officers were returning with him to London, when, while crossing the Channel, he leaped overboard at midnight and perished. I was mourning for my father when the news reached me that I was a widow. Penniless, and with a name so infamous that I was requested to quit my lodging to preserve the character of the house, I went out to seek my bread in the streets of London, with none to take me by the hand but One, and He led me to your brother. That is all.

LADY G: Did my brother know these antecedents when he married you?

MARY: That I was a widow—Yes—but no more.

LADY G: Why did you conceal the rest?

MARY: I was about to tell him, when, seeing the pain these memories inspired, he said, "It is not for me to make you remember your sorrow, but to make you forget it."

LADY G: You should have told him, nevertheless.

MARY: I had not the courage to do it.

LADY G: Then you must do so now (*a pause*). Who is this Count who seems to be in possession of your letters?

MARY: His name is unknown to me, but my husband had many associates whose hands my letters may have fallen.

LADY G: This man then relies on your present position and my brother's untainted name to make a market of your past.

MARY: No! I have wiped that stain away; for years I hoarded every shilling I earned, every pound that John gave me, until I had bought up and destroyed the forged paper; no proof remains of that wretched business.

LADY G: None but the indelible infamy. You cannot buy up that, nor drown it in the sea, nor hide it under another name. This Count must be dealt with.

MARY: His object is to sell the letters.

LADY G: But ours is not to buy them. He will find you out. Give him an interview. I shall take care to provide that the proper authorities shall be present yonder in the Studio. Those letters are your property, and any transaction, under threats, he may propose, must render him amenable to the law. Leave it to me. The letters shall be restored, and this man's mouth more effectually closed than if you filled it with bribery.

*(Re-enter John Leigh, followed by Clara, who passes into the Studio.)*

JOHN: Mary, my darling, congratulate me! Amelia, my dear, give me joy! This has been a lucky day; I can scarcely contain myself! As I returned from the Palace I was buttonholed by Tom Grant, the picture dealer. What do you think he offered me for my "Death of Jane Shore?"—five thousand pounds. I told him he was mad. He said that was his business. I said I could not take advantage of his temporary aberration of mind, but he absolutely dragged me into his banker's, and wrote a cheque for five thousand pounds, and made them cash it, and here's the money. I can't believe my eyes. *(He exhibits the crown of his hat full of bank notes.)* Here, let me lay it all on the floor and look at it.

LADY G: Ah! You great, simple child.

JOHN: Look at Mary. She is so confounded that she cannot throw her arms around my neck and wish me joy. *(Mr. Leigh embraces her.)* Ah! Here is my gold mine! Amelia, it was her five thousand graces that gave the thing its value and made these five thousand pounds. Here, my darling, take a handful, buy yourself something to remind you of the occasion. I say you shall. How obstinate she is! There! *(He stuffs them into her work-*

*table. She embraces him.*) What's this, eh! She's crying precious tears of joy over my fortune! Here! Give me every one of them. (*Kisses her face.*)

LADY G: (*Aside.*) Poor girl! It is a hard trial for her, but it must be done. (*Aloud.*) Well, John, dear (*rings the bell*), I must leave you, and I think Mary has something to tell you. I presume my carriage has returned.

JOHN: Good bye, dear.

LADY G: (*Crossing to Mary, and stooping as if to kiss her.*) Good bye. (*Aside.*) Tell him all, and at once.

(*Enter Servant.*)

MARY: Yes.

JOHN: Allow me. (*Offers his arm to conduct her to the carriage.*) Oh, by the way, Amelia, I am painting a fresco for the House of Commons. Subject-Queen Eleanor and Fair Rosamond. I want an Eleanor; something lovely, full blow, and resolute; would you mind giving me a sitting? You have a sensation face for the very occasion I depict. It is at the moment when Rosa-

LADY G: Will you take me to my carriage, or will you not?

JOHN: (*striding off with her*). This woman has no enthusiasm.

(*The Servant follows them out.*)

MARY: Tell him all-and at once. Yes! If he must know it-it is better he should learn this shame from my lips. I have deceived him, and this is my expiation. It must be done, for the truth's sake, and he must suffer for my wrong. What can I plead? My love! -no-for I have had no faith in his! Oh! Had I loved him with all my heart, he would have found my sorrow in it long ago.

(*Enter John Leigh.*)

JOHN: She is off-and now you want to tell me something, eh? Well, stay until I have put these things away. I shall not be a minute. (*Takes up his hat and is going off R.H.*) Oh, there's a poor devil down stairs-he looks like a broken-down tradesman. I found him hovering about the hall door. He asked to see you; so I told Robert to show him up; and if he is distressed, recollect, my darling, how good Heaven has been to us-send him away happy. (*Exit.*)

MARY: This poor creature needs your compassion less than I do. He is not poorer than I am, John! And when I come, a beggar to your heart, will it be closed to me? No-no-you will take me into its shelter and cover me with a great love-the more tender because I feel I am unworthy of you.

(*Enter the Servant, followed by Rawdon Scudamore. The Servant looks at him suspiciously and exits. Rawdon, after a moment, looks after him and closes the door.*)

This is the person John spoke of. (*She averts her head, while she wipes away tears and composes her face.*)

RAWD: Mary! (*She starts up*) –Mary! (*She turns, and utters a suppressed cry.*)

MARY: Rawd-Rawdon! (*She tries to support herself by a chair, but sinks beside it; it reverses, and she falls at full length in a swoon.*)

RAWD: (*raising her up.*) She has fainted-devil take it. This is not what I wanted.

(*Enter Clara from the studio.*)

CLARA: I heard a cry, and what seemed-Oh, sir, what is the matter with Mrs. Leigh?

RAWD: Clara!

CLARA: Rawdon! How came you here?

RAWD: What's that to you? Mind your own business. Is there not water in the room.

CLARA: Yes-in the studio. (*going up.*) Shall I not ring for assistance?

RAWD: No, I tell you. Do as you are told-bring me a glass of water. (*Exit Clara.*) She is recovering. (*Places her in a chair.*) She will be all right again in a minute. Egad! I bowled her over, though, didn't I? (*Clara returns with a tumbler of water.*) There-give it to me. What brings you here?

CLARA: I am Mr. Leigh's model.

RAWD: Oh, are you? (*Sprinkles Mrs. Leigh's face.*) It is well you are good for something. Take yourself off home.

CLARA: But I-

RAWD: And no words about it either-out! I'll tell you about this another time.

CLARA: Shall I send up the servant?

RAWD: You had better not. Do as I tell you, d'ye hear?-and quickly, or you know what'll happen. (*Gives Mrs. Leigh a drink.*)

CLARA: I'm going, Rawdon.

RAWD: Well, then, be off.

CLARA: Heaven help me! (*Exit L.H. door.*)

RAWD: There-she'll do now. She will recover better without me. (*Retires up a little.*) I'm too much for her nervous system just at present. (*He walks about watching her. After some sobbing breaths, Mary weeps convulsively.*) So, there she is; well, I should have passed her in the street, and never recognized in this lovely woman the pale and lanky school-girl I married ten years ago for the sake of her three thousand in Bank-Stock. How I growled over it-over the girl. I mean, not the Stock-that was all right; just as soon

as the ceremony was over, and I had collared the certificate, I returned the female I had borrowed for the occasion to the paternal nursery and embraces. Is it possible that this noble-looking creature is my wife? (*Walks about, looking about the room—at last arrives opposite of her.*) Well-

MARY: Rawdon, Rawdon Scudamore!

RAWD: Your husband; do not flinch at the word, and do not think that I come to disturb you. No. You may consider me dead, as dead as you like. But I dare say you would like to know what I mean by being alive. I'll tell you. While the police were conveying me to London, some watchful associates of mine planned my escape; they hired a fishing-smack at Boulogne; and when I took my header in the mid channel I took their signal for my plunge, favoured the darkness of the night, reached their boat and escaped, and a few weeks afterwards I turned up in Lyons as the Count Willidoff. But, although dead, I could not keep quiet: I soon got into a fresh scrape and caught it that time. His Majesty, the emperor, found me in board, lodging, and clothing for seven years. Then my pluck gave way, and I should have gone all to the bad, but for one woman who stood by me like a trump: she sent me every sixpence she could earn, and crept over twice a year to my prison to see me. At least, I was set free, but there was a tick against my name in France, and the existence of that forgery hung over my head there; that kept me dead until I discovered, to me joy, that some benevolent friend had paid off my little impediment.

MARY: I-I paid it.

RAWD: You did not suspect that this proceeding would bring me back to life.

MARY: Had I foreseen this result I should have paid it all the same.

RAWD: Oh! If I had as much luck in cards as I have in women!

MARY: Merciful heaven! What am I to do?

RAWD: Be calm, to begin with, and consider yourself quite secure. Our secret belongs to you and me alone. I don't suppose you will blow it, and I'm sure I sha'n't.

MARY: I do not understand you.

RAWD: Of course not; you are bothered still: unable to see where you are.

MARY: I am, as you say, stunned. I-I cannot think-

RAWD: Naturally enough; then let me think for you. Now, see here, rely on me. I ask no better than to leave you alone; but the fact is, on arriving to England three months ago I found myself broke; then I thought of you; not that I expected to get anything out of you; so at first I took little interest in the pursuit, but as I was baffled or recovering the scent it became quite an exciting chase; you were never in sight, but I felt like a hound on your track. I persevered, and here we are.

MARY: Hunted down, hunted down.

RAWD: This Mr. Leigh is rich. A few hundred pounds will be a fortune to me; nothing to you.

MARY: (*Starting up.*) Nothing to me! You propose, then, to sell me to this man, and this is nothing to you! But to me, oh, to me it is horrible! Ah, I forgot; you said you felt like a hound. You cannot understand me.

RAWD: No. I'll be hanged if I can.

MARY: Do you think I can share this man's home now, when every day becomes an imposture and every hour a crime? Do you think that, to insure myself against partaking of your infamy, I will consummate my own?

RAWD: By Jove! I did not think you would look at it in this way. I did not know you.

MARY: How should you? You deserted the child that you had married: you left her at the altar, and when I became the wife of another, I felt that the only thing I had to thank you for was your contempt.

RAWD: And you are resolved, then to relinquish your position here?

MARY: I am resolved to acquaint Mr. Leigh with every circumstance attending it.

RAWD: Are you mad or a fool?

MARY: A fool, in your sense-I am an honest woman.

RAWD: I see your motive. This is your revenge on me.

MARY: No! It is my love for him. The confession is no insult to you-it is no degradation to me.

RAWD: You will think better of this. You will reflect before you take this suicidal step, for it is suicide.

MARY: Be it so. Let me die at once, and not by inches, as you would have me do. I will leave his house, where I have been a blessing. I will not remain in it when my presence is a curse. I have been your victim: I will not be your accomplice.

(*Enter Fanny with Willie and Maud; the children run to Mrs. Leigh.*)

MAUD: Oh, mamma; dear mamma!

WILL: Who is that gentleman?

MARY: Take the children away, Fanny.

RAWD: No. I beg you to leave them here a little while. I must insist.

MARY: Go, then: go, Fanny. I will ring for you. (*Exit Fanny.*)

RAWD: I don't think you have quite decided on leaving this house. Have you taken everything into consideration? (*Points to Willie and Maud.*)



MARY: My children!

RAWD: What will become of them?

MARY: I will-relinquish them to-to him, and for their sakes he will pardon their mother the desolation she has brought upon his home. In their love he-he may be happy-without being guilty.

WILL: Oh, mamma, why do you cry?

MAUD: Dear mamma.

RAWD: You are mistaken in our little arrangement: you dispose of those children as if their destiny were not in my hands.

MARY: What do you mean?

RAWD: I mean that they are mine.

MARY: Yours?

RAWD: Mine. The law gives me power over you and your offspring; and both you and they abide my will. Since you are resolved, so am I. They go with me.

MARY: Never! I would sooner kill them than entrust their lives to your keeping.

RAWD: Then let me remain the stranger I have ever been to you and to them. I ask no better than to leave you free for life. Make your choice, and quickly.

MARY: There, don't cry, Willie; don't cry, Maud. There! (*She hastily dries their tears and her own.*) If I am guilty, it is for their sakes-not for my own-God knows, not for my own. (*She goes rapidly to the drawer, and taking the money left there by John Leigh, she throws it on the table before Scudamore.*) There, sir, is my price. Take it, and begone. He has bought me of you. (*She embraces her children.*)

(*Scudamore takes the money and he goes out as the curtain falls.*)

*End of Act I.*

**ACT II. SCENE I-** *Scudamore's Lodgings. A Fashionable Apartment. Rawdon is seated at breakfast, R.H. Folding doors, R.H. in F. Door, L.H.in F. Clara looks in at folding doors.*

CLARA: May I come in?

RAW: Is that you? Yes, come along!

CLARA: I was tidying up your bedroom-and see what I found on the mantle-piece-this heap of gold and notes. How can you be so careless?

RAW: My run of luck for the last three months has been stupendous. I broke the bank at Gully's last night-and there's the plunder.

CLARA: Where shall I put it? (*puts them on mantelpiece.*)

RAW: Anywhere! In the slopbasin-or keep it if you like. What time did I come home?

CLARA: A little before six.

RAW: Pretty drunk, wasn't I?

CLARA: Yes; a policeman brought you to the door.

RAW: I have not the smallest recollection of leaving the gaming-table, but I must have been full of money-and as I was surrounded by my friends, I suppose I had the instinct to give myself in charge.

CLARA: What a life! What friends!

RAW: Hollo! What have you to complain of? Don't you share my luck?

CLARA: I would rather share your life. I did so when we were poor.

RAW: So you do not I have introduced you to all my swell friends.

CLARA: How am I regarded by them? Their manner and conversation show that they do not respect me.

RAW: You are a prude.

CLARA: No. I am your wife-but your friends do not believe it, or they would not behave in my presence as they do.

RAW: I can't help that. The fact is, my dear, you married above your station. You were born in a back shop and reared on a doorstep. I picked you from behind a counter, where you had imbibed no tastes above tea and shrimps, nor any ideas of life beyond a Sunday out. I suppose that my friends perceive you are not the figure for my wife. Then you confirm their suspicions by being so spoony on me-that don't look right.

CLARA: I can't help showing that I love you.

RAW: Then don't blame fellows for drawing unfavorable conclusions! Why don't you keep in the background?

CLARA: I want to be with you, dear; (*going to him,*) ah, Rawdon, you loved me once.

RAW: Don't be a fool, Clara, you know I love you now!

CLARA: Yes-as the dog at your feet, but not as the woman in your heart.

RAW: Have I not been kinder to you during the last two months than ever?

CLARA: You have been studiously kind-but there was more pity than love in your caress. Oh, I had rather you slapped my face and meant it, than kissed me and didn't.

RAW: Why did I not mean it?

CLARA: Because you are in love with another woman.

RAW: What put that in your head?

CLARA: The instinct of a hungry heart; for two months past you have had a secret from me-something you are afraid to tell me.

RAW: Afraid!

CLARA: Yes; it is connect with Mrs. Leigh-with that secret of her past life, which she paid you to preserve.

RAW: And which I could not reveal to you without breaking faith with her.

CLARA: That is true.

RAW: Are you satisfied?

CLARA: No.

RAW: Why?

CLARA: You are too anxious that I should be. Six months ago, had I asked your secret, you would have told me to mind my own business! Had I doubted your word, you would have thrown that teapot at my head. There's something wrong (to herself) with you, Rawdon-and there's a woman at the bottom of it! (*Exit, L. door*)

RAW: She is right. I am in love-ay, like a fool. The money I received from Mary Leigh brought me luck at the gaming table and on the turf. She became associated with my good fortune, until I found myself looking for the face of my victim in the park and at the opera. I craved to see her. I went to her house-the knocker was muffled, and the street was littered down! I was not surprise when they told me she was dying of brain fever, but I felt sick-and then I knew I loved her. Night after night I hung round that house while she recovered slowly. Then this woman took possession of me. I was her master; but at last she obtained a mastery over me-even though I knew she loathed me. I wrote to her. She refused to see me. I wrote again insisting. She left town. I have written to her address in the country-for see her I must, come what may.

(*Re-enter Clara, R. door.*)

CLARA: Your room is ready now.

RAW: There were no letters for me this morning?

CLARA: Yes-there was one-did I not give it to you? Oh, here it is, amongst these notes.

(*He tears open the letter-discards the envelope and reads.*)

CLARA: What's the matter? Any bad news?

RAW: Nothing that concerns you. (*Goes to a desk on table L.h. and locks up the letter in it.*) Is my valise packed?

CLARA: Yes. Are you going out of town?

RAW: For a day only. I am going down to Newmarket on some turf business. I shall be just in time to catch the 4.5 train. (*Exit, R.*)

CLARA: He is deceiving me. (*She picks up the envelope.*) That is the handwriting of a woman. Here is the postmark! "Mount Audley"-where is that?

(*Enter a Servant.*)

SERV: If you please, ma'am, a lady desired me to give you this card.

CLARA: A lady! (*reads the card.*) Mrs. Bolton Jones. Show the lady in.

(*Enter Mrs. Bolton Jones.*)

MRS. B: I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Madame de Willidoff?

(*Exit Servant.*)

MRS. B: I have taken the great liberty of-excuse me, but are we quite alone? The matter I come upon is of the greatest delicacy. It involves the happiness of a most charming family, whose welfare has, I fear, been sadly compromised by a foolish and very weak woman.

CLARA: In what way am I connected with this business?

MRS. B: You are not aware of a certain-ahem-relation subsisting between your husband and Mrs. Leigh.

CLARA: Pardon me, I am aware of it, madam; and Mrs. Leigh may rely on my husband's word to keep her secret.

MRS. B: I do not presume that he would publish the matter-but you seem strangely indifferent to his conduct.

CLARA: Indeed I am not. I cannot defend it.

MRS. B: You astonish me.

CLARA: I know that my husband received a sum of money from the lady.

MRS. B: A sum of money! Has it come to that? So then this establishment is maintained at poor John's expense! Oh, the fool; why did he not take one of my girls? It serves him right! But dear, dear, what a scandal!

CLARA: Explain yourself.

MRS. B: Impossible-to you! A woman who can live as you confessedly do on the dishonor of a worthy family cannot comprehend the language or the feelings of a lady. (*Crosses to L. corner.*)

CLARA: Who can live as I do!

MRS. B: Yes, on the salary paid by a guilty wife to your husband.

CLARA: Oh, my God-(*staggers back*)-what do you mean?

MRS. B: Since you state that he receives a stipend from Mrs. Leigh, I presume you just know that he was her lover many years ago-before her marriage. His relations with her have been renewed with the last three months, and this unhappy woman has become estranged from her family; she avoids the companionship of her husband-shuns the sight of her dear children-and maintains a correspondence with this-person.

CLARA: Is that lady in London now? (*rises, and to R. table.*)

MRS. B: No; she is at Lady Glencarrig's country seat.

CLARA: Where is that?

MRS. B: At Mount Audley-in Sussex.

CLARA: Mount Audley! (*presenting the envelope.*) Do you know that handwriting?

MRS. B: Certainly-it is hers. I ought to know it. She was governess in my house for two years.

CLARA: Hush-here he is.

MRS. B: He must not recognize me.

(*Enter Rawdon in traveling dress. Mrs. B. Jones draws down her veil.*)

RAW: (*speaking as he enters.*) Get me a Hansom cab and take that valise down stairs- (*sees Mrs. B. Jones*). Oh, I beg pardon. I was not aware-

CLARA: (*presenting him*). The Count de Willidoff! (*Clara crosses down L.*)

MRS. B: I came to inquire after the character of a servant. I fear my visit is not opportune.

RAW: Now at all, if you will excuse me. By-bye, Clara-there is the cab. I shall barely be in time-good morning, madame. (*Exit, L. door.*)

MRS. B: He did not recognize me! (*Crosses to L. corner.*)

CLARA: (*advancing to the window and lifting it.*) He said he was going to Newmarket. Hush! I would hear what direction he gives the driver. (*A pause.*) Victoria Station, Brighton line! Ah! He is going to see her! (*She sits down overcome, L. of table.*)

MRS. B: The wretch has deceived this poor girl! I beg your pardon, my dear, for misunderstanding your character.

CLARA: You were quite justified in thinking me a fit companion for-oh! (*covers her face with her hands and bursts into tears.*)

MRS. B: Poor dear! This is very distressing. Oh, what abominable wretches these men are! Why were the things ever brought into the world? Thank Heaven I have nothing but daughters!

CLARA: (*starting up*) 'Tis she is to blame! She, with the happy home, the fond husband, the dear children-she had all! I had but this one thing to love-worthless, perhaps, but it was mine-and she has taken it from me. (*Crosses to R. and to L.*)

MRS. B: I have no proofs yet. Do not let us precipitate.

CLARA: Proofs! The letter contained in this envelope is in that desk. (*Takes the knife from the breakfast table.*) I saw him lock it up there, after reading it.

MRS. B: My dear! What would you do? You are not going to break open your husband's desk? What will he say when he finds out?

CLARA: He will say nothing. Perhaps he will kill me. (*Forces open the desk.*) So much the better. Here-here it is. (*Reads.*) "I cannot see you. You have made me the most wretched of women. I cannot endure this life. I turn away with a sick heart from the loving face of my husband. The kisses of my innocent children are reproaches to me-but if you come I will bear this life no longer. I have told you my resolve. I shall leave my home.

MRS. B: That is pretty plain. The infatuated woman is going to elope! What is to be done?

CLARA: I will go to Mount Audley. (*Exit R. door.*)

MRS. B: I shall accompany this young woman (*a bell is heard to ring violently.*) She must be mitigated. A little sympathy will induce her to confide in me. She is violent. (*Looks into the desk.*) Very violent. Has she overlooked any other inflammable matter? Here is the very bundle of letters the wretch showed me three months ago. Good! I secure those also. There is nothing else-no-nothing. (*She examines the desk furtively.*) There is my entrée to the circle into which I do so long to be received! There is my open sesame to Mount Audley! A family secret, well preserved, is a latch-key to any society. I don't think my Lady Glencarrig will be able to pooh-pooh me out of her house after this! She won't be able to courtesy this down! No amount of style, no width of crinoline can cover this in! I shall restore these letters to our poor, weak, deluded Mary-and keep a copy of them. (*Crosses to L. corner and to R.*)

(*Enter Clara dressed in her bonnet and shawl, tying her bonnet, she puts her head on her hand on mantelpiece.*)

CLARA: Will they never bring that cab?-(*goes to door.*)(*Calls*) Jane! I forgot she has gone for it-(*walks about and then sits down and cries*).

MRS. B: Ah, poor dear-I can feel for you. This is what we have all to go through with husbands. They will retain their single blessedness on the sly. I've had my troubles. Jones was a bachelor for five years after we were married, and I never knew it.

(*Enter Servant.*)

JANE: The cab is at the door, ma'am. (*Exit.*)

MRS. B: Take my arm. Don't fret-but consider the hold this discovery will give you in future over the wretch.

CLARA: Oh, madam, I love him! (*Exit.*)

MRS. B: Ah, there I had the advantage over you. I never loved Jones. (*Exit.*)

## **SCENE II.-** *The Garden at Mount Audley.*

(*Enter John Leigh with Maud and Willie.*)

JOHN: There, my darlings, we can play here, and then your little voices will not disturb mamma! (*He carries a box containing a game of soldiers.*) There is your box of soldiers-now let us spread the field of battle. (*He sits, R.H. and opens the box.*)

WILL: (*Pulling out a toy.*) What's this?

JOHN: That? Well, my dear, let me see! I think that is a whistle. (*Blows into it.*) It produces no sound; but probably it was constructed to render it innocent in the hands of children.

MAUD: Why, papa, it is a cannon!

JOHN: Bless me! So it is! It is a cannon! I never should have guessed it-what an imagination the child must have!

WILL: There's the castle! And here's a general!

JOHN: Ah! That's a general-is it? Why so?

WILL: Because he's the biggest. (*They set the game on the ground, R.H.*)

(*Enter Lady Glencarrig, L.H.*)

LADY G: (*aside*) There he is playing nursemaid as usual to his children.

JOHN: (*Holding up a toy.*) Now, what is this instrument of torture? A blunder buss!

MAUD: That's a trumpet.

JOHN: Oh! A trumpet! Very well, you shall be the trumpeter, and you shall blow the signal for the battle to begin. (*Gives her the penny trumpet.*)

LADY G: John, have you seen Mary to-day?

JOHN: Yes. She kisses her hand to me from her window.

LADY G: She is so much stronger that I have prevailed upon her to join our dinner party this evening.

JOHN: (*looking up*). Perhaps then I had better not appear. You know that my presence affects her nervous and susceptible condition. When I approach her she trembles, and the most trifling caress seems to cause her pain.

LADY G: The brain fever has shaken her system very severely.

JOHN: Her mind is so weak and tender that she cannot endure the presence of her children.

WILL: Now the battle is ready-blow away, Maud-come, papa (*they play*).

LADY G: John, you must be aware of the cause which led to this disorder?

JOHN: How should I, Amelia?

LADY G: If you are deceiving me, let me tell you that your reserve is needless. I am aware of that unhappy business.

JOHN: What unhappy business?

LADY G: (*aside*) She has not confessed to him? –what can be the motive of her silence?

WILLIE: Bang! (*Shoots cannon*). Oh, what a miss! –now, papa, it is your turn.

LADY G: You recollect, John, on the day you sold your picture, when I left you alone with Mary, I told you she had something to communicate to you.

JOHN: Yes; but when I returned to find her, she had retired to her bedroom with a bad headache, and on the same evening the fever declared itself.

LADY G: And since then she has made no disclosure of the painful circumstances she revealed to me?

JOHN: How like her it is! She has reserved a sorrow all to herself! (*To Maud.*) Ah! My darling, I hope you will grow up like your mother.

LADY G: My dear brother, I fear that Mary's present state of mind is caused by her irresolution. She has not the courage to avow to you a secret connected with her past life.

JOHN: Then why should I know it?



LADY G: Because it concerns her reputation. She confessed it to me-why has she concealed it from you?

JOHN: She has a good reason for her silence, and will speak at her own time.

LADY G: It is my duty to tell you, John.

JOHN: Pardon me, Amelia, I cannot listen to anything affecting my wife, except from her own lips.

LADY G: You are right, dear, as you always are. I should speak to her, and shall do so at once.

*(Enter a Servant with a salver, on which is a card.)*

LADY G: *(Takes it and reads aside)* –“Mrs. Bolton Jones and Madame de Willidoff.” Where are these ladies?

SERV: They are waiting houtside in the fly, my lady, as brought them from the station. I told ‘em I didn’t know as her ladyship were at home.

LADY G: Beg them to walk in. *(Aside.)* Madame de Willidorff! What can this visit portend?

*(Exit followed by Servant.)*

WILL: I say, papa, I know what made mama ill: it was that gentleman who called. You recollect, Maud?

MAUD: Yes; but he wasn’t a gentleman, Willie, ‘cause he made mamma cry.

JOHN: Made mamma cry?

WILLIE: Yes; and she gave him money to go away. Bang! *(shoots.)* Oh, there’s a good shot! I’ve knocked over your castle, papa!

JOHN: Who could that gentleman have been? Oh, I remember,-it was that poor tradesman who was seeking charity. To be sure; I told mamma to give him some money. I suppose he told her some piteous story about his sufferings and touched her susceptible heart. *(he plays)*.

WILL: Oh no; he told her that Maud and I were his children; and he wanted to take us away-didn’t he Maud?

MAUD: Oh, Willie!-you know that Fanny said mamma would be very angry if you spoke of that gentleman.

WILL: Oh, it don’t matter speaking to papa, does it? Bang! *(shoots.)* Ah! I hit you that time.

JOHN: My dear, you must be very careful how you chatter. You take up things all wrong; and you might make great trouble. Fanny was right when she said you should be-silent.

WILL: Oh, papa! How pale you are.

*(Re-enter Lady Glencarrig.)*

LADY G: John, you must send away the children. I-I must speak with you. There, run along, Willie. Take your toys into the summer-house yonder. That's a good boy.

MAUD: *(pointing off)* Who are those ladies?

LADY G: Never mind, dear. There-away with you.

*(Exeunt Willie and Maud with toys.)*

JOHN: Well, Amelia?

LADY G: *(L.)* Oh, my dear brother, a fearful disclosure awaits you-for Heaven's sake summon all your fortitude to sustain this calamity, the heaviest a man can suffer.

JOHN: *(R.)* It concerns my wife, then?

LADY G: Yes; an accusation has been made which must be answered.

*(Enter Clara and Mrs. Bolton Jones.)*

JOHN: Clara! I am glad to see you.

CLARA: *(L. C.)* I fear that you will not say so, Mr. Leigh, when you learn the motive of my visit.

MRS. B: *(R. C.)* Good evening! -what a perfectly charming place you have here-delightful!

LADY G: Thank you. *(Aside.)* She has the insensible cheerfulness of a surgeon in the presence of agony.

CLARA: Mr. Leigh, I am here in the hope to rescue from utter ruin one very dear to you. Not for her sake, I confess it, but for yours and for the sake of your dear children.

JOHN: *(R.)* What do you mean, Clara?

CLARA: Read that letter. *(Crosses to him.)*

JOHN: *(reads the letter addressed by Mary to Scudamore).* I-I do not understand it.

CLARA: On receiving it this morning he left our home, and I believe he is now in the neighborhood.

JOHN: *(bewildered).* But-who-who is he? What does he seek?

MRS. B: He seeks your dishonor, Mr. Leigh. The infatuated lady whom you married has discovered in the Count de Willidoff a former lover, with whom she has established clandestine relations, and whom she has supplied with sums of money.

JOHN: It is false-it is-(*He remembers the story told by his child and stands speechless.*)

CLARA: It is too true, Mr. Leigh.

JOHN: (*recovering himself, and with assurance.*) It is false.

MRS. B: Look there, John Leigh. Do you refuse to believe your own senses?

JOHN: No; for they tell me that this woman has lived face to face and heart to heart with me for ten years. That life now rises up before me, and looking with its honest happy eyes into mine, it says as you do. Look there, John Leigh, do you refuse to believe your own senses?

CLARA: How he loves her! Oh! How he loves her!

JOHN: Stay! I forgive you that you should doubt her. I-I do not reproach you that she has not inspired you with my faith in her. You say she gave your husband money! It may be so! She has been mad of late. This letter is of her writing. If it is coherent then-it is the cunning of a distempered brain. Her reason is unfix'd.

MRS. B: Was she mad ten years ago, when she wrote this bundle of letters to this same person? -(*produces the letters.*)

CLARA: (*intercepting.*) Oh, madam, if you can entertain no admiration for this man's noble faith in the woman he loves, have you no pity?

MRS. B: I have the highest regard for Mr. Leigh-but what are we here for? If our dear Mary be subject to fits of periodical insanity, in which her malady takes this peculiar turn, I am sure no one will lend more implicit belief to that theory than I shall, and no one will work harder to put that version of it into circulation.

LADY G: (*taking the letters.*) This, then, is the correspondence submitted to you three months ago-you have read it, I presume?

MRS. B: I only dipped into it. I had not time to-

LADY G: Will you be kind enough to leave me with my brother? I will join you in the drawing-room.

MRS. B: Come, my dear. (*Exit Clara, Mrs. B. J. returns*) A charming young person; but I have elicited from her that her name is not Willidoff; and, altogether, she is so reserved, that I doubt if she is the fellow's wife at all. I mention this, that if your ladyship should extend your hospitality to me, it would be as well not to-you understand-she does not expect it-she can go back in the fly. (*Exit.*)

LADY G: John, these letters were written by your wife many years ago, and are said to contain proofs of her unworthiness; take them, brother, and place them before her.

JOHN: What for?

LADY G: For her sake you must. It is not enough that your wife is innocent-she must appear so.

JOHN: You are right, my sister, as you always are. I will go to her.

LADY G: I cannot reconcile the story she told me with her subsequence conduct. Yet-can she be false-and base?

JOHN: Do not degrade your mind with such thoughts. They insult me. Go, sister! I will join you presently. (*Exit Lady Glencarrig.*)

JOHN: How shall I unfold this to her? –Heaven inspire me! Oh, if she should suspect for a moment that I doubt her-our hearts can never be one again! –never. (*Exit.*)

SCENE 3<sup>rd</sup>.-Another part of the garden near the house. Night. Mary and Fanny are discovered. A garden seat L.H. in the R.H.- a clump of bushes-a laurel shrubbery.

FAN: (*from R.U.*) Oh, my dear mistress, why do you torture yourself in this manner? Misfortune is no shame.

MARY: Then why do I cower before it? In the ravings of my fever I betrayed to you the fatal secret of my past life.

FAN: And I know it is very wrong, ma'am, that I should stand as I do between husband and wife crying a secret that belongs to him and not to me. Oh, tell him, mistress, do tell him.

MARY: I have tried, and I-I cannot! No-I cannot bring my tongue to utter these words. Our happiness has been a crime-innocent hitherto, henceforth our love is guilt-your children are my shame.

FAN: All that you could not help, ma'am; but deceiving your husband is what you can help.

MARY: I know it; he is my dupe, for if he knew the truth he would not consent to lead this life. I cannot consent never to see him again, never again. And our little ones! Oh! Merciful Heaven! What is to become of me-of me, and my innocent children?

FAN: You cannot conceal your position much longer. That man will hunt you down, and master will learn the truth from his lips, which should have come from yours.

MARY: I will tell him. The words will part us! Heaven inspire me how I utter them.

(*Enter John Leigh.*)

MARY: Ah!

MARY: John!

*(Exit Fanny.)*

JOHN: How long it is since we have been along together!-how very long!

MARY: Yes.

JOHN: You do not know what life is to me without you?

MARY: You have had the children with you.

JOHN: In them I love you and know how much I love you. By their years I count the debt of happiness I owe you, and by their growth I see its increase.

MARY: *(aside)*. Courage, I must break it to him.

JOHN: *(aside)*. Now must I tell her! How shall I do it. *(Aloud.)* Mary, if-if you heard-if they told you that many years ago I had loved another woman-

MARY: I should not believe it.

JOHN: But if you-you saw-the proofs *(holds the letters behind him)*.

MARY: Proofs! I do see them. I have them. They are in my arms.

JOHN: And if I confessed-

MARY: Confessed!

JOHN: Ay! If I said, that I still maintained that love in secret-that I had deceived you-

MARY: I should think you were false only in saying so.

JOHN: Could nothing shake your faith in me?

MARY: Nothing, John! Nothing!

JOHN: *(concealing the letters)*. Nor mine in you, nor mine in you! *(Embracing her)*-my own Mary-my blessing!

*(Rawdon Scudamore appears in the shrubbery R.H. in the bright moonlight, while John and Mary are in the shadow of the tree R. He looks around. Mary recognizes him and utters a faint cry. Rawdon perceiving John Leigh disappears. Mary, recoiling towards L.H., falls on the garden seat.)*

MARY: There! There!

JOHN: *(Supporting her.)* Mary, for Heaven's sake, be calm! You are killing yourself. *(Enter Fanny L.H.)* Quick, Fanny, she has fainted. I fear that a relapse has occurred. Remain with her, I will send my sister to you. Get her quickly to her room, I will ride over to Crawley for the doctor. *(Exit.)*

*(Rawdon reappears and advances.)*

RAW: I could not resist the attraction of your presence.

FAN: Sir, do you not see that she is insensible?

RAW: No; she recovers! Do you hear me, Mary, 'tis I, Rawdon.

FAN: Ah! *—(retreats a step.)*

RAW: You know, then, the relation I bear to this lady?

FAN: Yes.

RAW: Then leave us?

FAN: No; I know enough to remain.

RAW: Mary *(taking her hands passionately)*, think what you will of me, regard me with hate as you must, I cannot resist your charm you have exercised over my heart. I cannot forego the rights you have given me over life. *(Enter Lady Glencarrig.)* Yes, I am jealous of this man who calls you his. You are mine, for I love you passionately.

LADY G: Release that lady, sir.

FAN: Lady Glencarrig.

LADY G: *(To Fanny)*. Go! I will see to your mistress. *(Exit Fanny.)* You are the Count de Willidoff, I presume?

RAW: I was unaware that I was known to your ladyship.

LADY G: Too well known, sir. I decline to permit my house to be used for your clandestine meetings. Yonder is the gate!

FAW: You are not perhaps aware-

LADY G: Sir, your absence will be more grateful to me than your excuses.

RAW: As you please. *(Bows and exits.)*

LADY G: *(regarding Mary, who has been gradually recovering her senses.)* Her guilt is beyond all doubt, and that servant was her accomplice. *(Walks up and down while Mary revives, and looks at her with a vacant gaze of half consciousness.)* Are you sufficiently recovered to attend to what I say?

MARY: To what you say? Yes-what?

LADY G: I trust you will consider it unnecessary to practice further on my credulity, when I inform you that I was fully aware how deeply you had deceived your husband, before I became witness of your perfidy.

MARY: *(Half conscious.)* Yes.

LADY G: It is well you have the grace at last to confess it. You have brought desolation and shame to your own home, but you shall not bring disgrace to mine.

MARY: Yes. (*answering mechanically.*)

LADY G: You will find some pretext to excuse yourself from joining my table this evening.

MARY: Very-well-

LADY G: I presume that you feel the necessity of leaving my house?

MARY: Yes; I-I am going-I am going away.

(*She goes up with wavering steps, as one who is dazed, leaning on a tree for a moment. She utters a low, wailing cry, and passes on towards the house.*)

*End of Act*

**ACT III. SCENE I.**-*The same Evening Mrs. Leigh's room. A large window at the back overlooking the garden. Mary is seated at a table R. of C. writing, a shaded lamp before her. A pause. She writes.*

(*Enter Fanny L.H. door, which she locks behind her.*)

MARY: Well?

FAN: Mr. Leigh is in Lady Glencarrig's room. I gave him your message.

MARY: that I begged not to be disturbed this evening?

FAN: Yes.

MARY: What did he reply?

FAN: Nothing, ma'am, his head was bent over a bundle of letters which he appeared to have just opened, with the intention of reading them.

MARY: My letters written years ago to Rawdon! They contain the sad history of that other life. Well-their perusal will spare me a bitter confession. (*She resumes her writing.*)

FAN: I hope the children have not disturbed you while I have been away?

MARY: No-they have been very good! Have you locked that door?

FAN: Yes, ma'am. (*Exit R.H. door. A pause, during which Mary writes. Then she reads.*)

MARY: "I am now going away from you, and we shall never meet again. Never! Because I shall always love you, and my love has now become a sin. I should like to see the

children sometimes; but perhaps it is better they should be taught to believe that I am dead, and live in ignorance of their disgrace. If so, I beg you to send them once a month to attend the service at old Hampstead Church. There I may watch them unseen, and mingle my prayers with those of their innocent young hearts. I shall resume my teaching. And now, and once for all, farewell! God bless, watch over, and help you! I must remember, my own dearest one, that it is to preserve our love pure and worthy of the past we part now and fore ever. "Your most unhappy Mary."

*(She takes off her wedding-ring.)* My wedding-ring *(kisses it)*. I have no right to wear it now. *(Writes.)* I send you back my wedding-ring, but in memory of the love I have borne you, I beseech you give it to me again, that I may wear it upon my heart, if I have not the right to wear it upon my hand. *(She folds it in the letter, and then lays down her head upon it, and weeps.)* *(Rising.)* Fanny!

*(Enter Fanny R.H. Door.)*

FAN: Yes, ma'am.

MARY: Are the children asleep?

FAN: No, ma'am. I have not undressed them yet.

MARY: At what hour does the mail-train pass to-night?

FAN: To London?

MARY: Yes.

FAN: At about quarter-past ten, I believe, ma'am.

MARY: Take this letter to Mr. Leigh. *(Fanny unlocks door L.H. and is going.)* Stay, Fanny, here is the key of my jewelcase. This opens my wardrobe at home; give them to your master to-morrow. You have been a faithful and good girl, Fanny, I wish I could reward you with more than my gratitude.

FAN: Ah, ma'am, I spend my wages, but I can never spend the grateful looks that you and master have paid me for my service to your children.

MARY: You have my address?

FAN: Yes.

MARY: You will write to me every week, and on the first of each month you will come and see me. Mr. Leigh will not forbid you, I am sure.

FAN: *(weeping.)* Yes, ma'am.

MARY: Then there is nothing else but-to-to-say, goodbye. *(She presses her hand.)* Good-bye!



*(Fanny goes out rapidly, unable to repress her sorrow but unwilling to exhibit her tears. Mrs. Leigh puts on a shawl and bonnet.)* A quarter-past ten. It is now half-past eight, and I have five miles to walk to the station. There is no time to be lost *(goes to the window and opens it, C.)* By this balcony I can reach the lawn, and find my way to the road through the shrubbery-gate. I must lock this door. *(Locks L.H. Door. Goes to R.H. Door).* Willie, dear-Maud-come-come here.

*(Enter the Children Willie and Maud.)*

MARY: I am going away, and I shall not see you again for a very long time; so you will be very good children, will you not?

BOTH: Yes, mamma.

WILL: Is papa going too?

MARY: No; that is, I hope not. I hope he will not send you away from him. Poor papa has had a great misfortune. He is very sad; and when you see the tears in his eyes you must love him very much. That I am sure you will. Good-bye, Maud, darling *(kisses her)*. Dear me, how your hair does grow! It wants cutting again. This lock is very tedious *(reaches a scissors from the workbox, and cuts a lock of the child's hair off)*. There, that is better *(she places the lock of hair in an envelope, and then in her bosom.)*

WILL: But why must you go away, mamma?

MARY: You will soon be going to school, Willie, and you must be so good, and work so hard, that papa will be proud-no-he will never be pr-proud of you-but he-he will feel you are not a trouble to him.

WILL: Indeed I will work very hard. See, here is the sum I did to-day *(takes a slate from a table)*. There, Fanny says there is not one mistake in it. *(Maud goes up and fetches her copy-book.)*

MARY: May your life be as faultless, my child!

MAUD: Look at my copy, mamma.

MARY: *(reads.)* "Honour thy father and thy mother."

MAUD: And there's no blot-see!

MARY: No blot! No blot! *(she covers her face.)*

WILL: Dear mamma, what is the matter?

*(Rawdon appears at the window and enters.)*

MARY: It is nothing, dear-nothing. There, kiss me, Willie-again! Come, Maud, to my heart. Good-bye-good-bye! I must be gone. *(She sees Rawdon.)*

RAW: Mary!

MARY: You there!

RAW: You were going.

*(Clara appears at window.)*

MAR: Yes; I told you what I would do if you persecuted me. Well, you have come, and I am keeping my word.

RAW: Good. I will accompany you.

MARY: It is useless. I have no money now; I shall never have any.

RAW: I do not come for money.

MARY: Return to your room, my dear; go in there. Fanny will come to you presently. *(She leads them into room, R.H. and closes the door.)* Now, what do you want?

RAW: What do I want?

MARY: Yes; what have you come for?

RAW: That is a strange question from a woman to her husband.

MARY: Say her creditor.

RAW: There is the money I took from you. *(Throws some notes on the table.)* It was my poverty urged me to a deed for which I merit your contempt.

MARY: I do not ask your motives for the past. What do you want here?

RAW: I want to share my fortune with you.

MARY: Thank you, sir, I can accept nothing from you, not even your name.

RAW: You can accept your children.

MARY: What can you want with them, unless you want to sell them to their father as you sold me?

RAW: They are his on one condition, that you are mine.

MARY: What do you mean?

RAW: I am resolved to leave this house and I am resolved you shall with me, your husband.

MARY: Ah! *(recoils from him.)*

RAW: For the first time in my life I resisted a passion-and for the first time felt its power and my weakness. Mary, I come to claim you!

MARY: Me-me!

RAW: You are my wife!

MARY: Never! (*a knocking at L.H. door. John Leigh outside calling "Mary! Mary!"*)  
Ah! (*She runs to it and throws it open. Clara disappears. Enter John.*) Defend me  
against that man! (*She falls at his feet.*)

(*Enter Fanny, Lady Glencarrig, Mrs. Bolton Jones, and Guests.*)

JOHN: Not there, Mary-no, rise up and stand beside me, (*he raises her.*) I have read  
these letters-written to that man many years ago. Look in my face, my own one-my  
unhappy one. I pity, I love you more.

RAW: Since you know so much-(*Enter Fanny, with Willie and Maud*)-you know my  
authority. She is my lawful wife-and these (*advancing to Fanny*)-

JOHN: Lay but a finger on them, or on her, and by the Heaven you insult I will make her  
your widow! (*Lady Glencarrig and the party hold John back.*) This woman is mine! –  
was given into my hands by Him who made her. These are her children. Are my flesh  
and blood. The law cannot unmake them, and shall it tear them from me.

RAW: To-morrow I shall come furnished with legal powers to enforce those claims you  
set at nought; then we shall see which of you can test my right. (*Exit.*)

LADY G: I have done you, Mary, your unhappy story fills us all with pity. Forgive me.  
My house is your home so long as you will make it so.

JOHN: Don't weep so bitterly. Don't tremble my bird, there is no danger now.

MARY: Yes, yes, I am still in his power. He will return to claim his.

(*Shot. A pistol shot is heard.*)

JOHN: What is that? A pistol shot so near to the house.

MRS. B: It came from the garden.

(*Enter Fanny R.*)

FAN: Oh Lord, something terrible has happened. I saw it all from the window that  
overlooks the lawn.

(*Clara appears at window C.*)

CLARA: You are free Mrs. Leigh. He was my husband, not yours. He deceived you. He  
would have left me. Oh Rawdon. My love, my love.