

*Miss Jorgensen*  
by Frances Fuller Victor

I AM a plain, elderly, unmarried man, and I board at Mrs. Mason's. A great deal of what I am about to relate came under my own observation; and the remainder was confided to me from time to time by my landlady, with whom I am upon terms of friendship and intimacy, having had a home in her house for a period of seven years.

Mrs. Mason lives in her own tenement, in a quiet part of the city; and besides myself, has usually three or four other boarders, generally teachers, or poor young authors — some person always of the class that, having few other pleasures, makes it a point to secure rooms with a fine view of the Bay. When Miss Jorgensen came to us, we were a quiet, studious, yet harmonious and happy family: so well satisfied with our little community that we did not take kindly to the proposed addition to our circle when Mrs. Mason mentioned it. Neither did our landlady seem to desire any change; but she explained to us that the young person applying had made a strong appeal; that her classes (she was a teacher of French) were principally in our part of the city; and that she would be satisfied with a mere closet for a room. The only privilege for which she stipulated was the use of the common parlor twice a week to receive her company in.

“But I can not agree to give up the parlor any single evening,” Mrs. Mason replied, “because it is used by all the family, every evening. You will be entitled to the same privileges with the others.” After some hesitation this was agreed to, and our new boarder was installed in the upper hall bedroom, which, when it had received the necessary furniture and a saratoga trunk, with numerous boxes and baskets, would scarcely allow space enough to dress in. However, Mrs. Mason reported that the tenant professed real satisfaction with her quarters; and we all were on tiptoe with curiosity to see the new inmate.

“Miss Jorgensen,” said Mrs. Mason, that evening, as she escorted to the dinner-table a small, pale, dark-eyed young person, in deep mourning; and we being severally and separately presented afterward, endeavored to place this little lonely scrap of humanity at ease with ourselves. But in this well-intentioned effort Miss Jorgensen did not see to meet us half-way. On the contrary she repelled us. She was reserved without being diffident; mercilessly critical, and fierily disputatious — all of which we found out in less than a week. She never entered or left a room without somehow disturbing the mental atmosphere of it, and giving the inmates a little shock; so that Mr. Quivey, our dramatic writer, soon took to calling her the “Electrical Eel,” substituting “E. E.” when the person indicated was within ear-shot possibly or probably. In return, as we afterward discovered, Miss Jorgensen told Miss Flower, our other young lady boarder, that she had christened Mr. Quivey “I. I.” — “Incurable Idiot.” How the “E. E.” came to her knowledge was never made plain. Before three months were past, she had quarreled with everyone in the house except Mrs. Mason and myself; though to her credit be it said, she always apologized for her tempers when they were over, with a frankness that disarmed resentment. Nevertheless, she was so frequently in a hostile attitude toward one or another in the family, that the mere mention of Miss Jorgensen's name was sure to arrest attention and excite expectation. Thus, when I only chanced to whisper to Mrs. Mason at breakfast one morning, “Miss Jorgensen keeps late hours,” everyone at the table glanced our way inquiringly, as much as to ask, “What has the little woman done now?” And when she appeared at the close of the meal, with pale face

and swollen eyes, explaining her tardiness by saying she had a headache, no one gave her sympathizing looks except the landlady.

That kind-hearted person confided to me, later in the day, that her new boarder troubled and puzzled her very much. “She will sit up until one or two o’clock every night, writing something or other, and that makes her late to breakfast. She goes out teaching every morning, and comes back tired and late to luncheon; and you see she is never in her place at dinner until the soup is removed, and everyone at the table helped. When I once suggested that she ought not to sit up so long at night, and that her classes should be arranged not to fatigue her so much, with other bits of friendly advice, she gave me to understand, very promptly, that her ways were her own, and not to be interfered with anyone. And directly afterward the tears came into her eyes. I confess I did not understand her at all.”

“What about the young man who calls here twice a week?” I inquired.

“She is engaged to him, she says.”

“What sort of person does he seem to be?”

“He looks well enough—only rather shabby—is very quiet, very attentive to her, and what you might call obedient to her requirements. She often seems displeased with him, but what she says to him at such times is unknown to me, for she does her scolding all in French; and he usually then invites her out to walk, by way of diversion, I suppose.”

“Do you know that he comes every morning and carries her books for her? He certainly can not be employed, or he would not have time for such gallantries.”

“Perhaps he is engaged on one of the morning papers, and so is off duty in the forenoon. I can not think so industrious a person as she would take up with a man both poor and idle. But you never know what a woman will do,” sighed Mrs. Mason, who had known something of heart-troubles in her youth, and could sympathize with other unlucky women. “Excuse me; I must not stand here gossiping.” And the good lady went about her house affairs.

A few moments later I was hurrying down town to my office, when I overtook Miss Jorgensen and Mr. Hurst. As usual she was leaning upon his arm, and he was carrying her books. She was talking excitedly, in French, and I thought her to be crying, though her face was covered with a black veil. The few words I caught before she recognized me reminded me of my conversation with Mrs. Mason.

“You *must* get something to do, Harry,” she was saying. “You know that I work every instant of the time, yet how little I can save if I have to supply you with money. It is a shame to be so idle and helpless, when there is so much to be done before ——”

She perceived me and stopped short. “So,” I thought, “this precious scamp is living off the earnings of the little French teacher, is he? A pretty fellow, truly! I’ll get him his *congé* if I have

to make love to her myself.” Which latter conceit so amused me, that I had forgotten to be indignant with Mr. Hurst before I reached my office and plunged into the business of the day.

But I never made love to Miss Jorgensen. She was not the kind of person even a flirtish man would choose to talk sentiment with, and I was always far enough from being gallant. So our affairs went on in just the usual way at Mrs. Mason’s for three or four months. Miss Jorgensen and Mr. Quivey let fly their arrows of satire at each other; Miss Flower, the assistant high-school teacher, enacted the amiable go-between; our “promising young artist” was wisely neutral; Mrs. Mason and myself were presumed to be old enough to be out of the reach of boarding-house tiffs, and preserved a prudent unconsciousness. Mr. Hurst continued to call twice a week in the evening, and Miss Jorgensen kept on giving French lessons by day, and writing out translations for the press at night. She was growing very thin, very pale, and cried a good deal, as I had reason to know, for her room adjoined mine, and more than a few times I had listened to her sobbing, until I felt almost forced to interfere; but interfered I never had yet.

One foggy July evening, on coming home to dinner, I encountered Miss Jorgensen in the hall. She appeared to be just going out, a circumstance which surprised me somewhat, on account of the hour. I however opened the door for her without comment, when by the fading daylight I perceived that her face was deathly pale, and her black eyes burning. She passed me without remark, and hurried off into the foggy twilight. Nor did she appear at dinner; but came in about eight o’clock and went directly to her own room. When Mrs. Mason knocked at her door to inquire if she was not going to take some refreshments, the only reply that could be elicited was, that she had a headache, and could not be induced to eat or drink—spoken through the closed door.

“She’s been having a row with that sunflower of her’s,” was Mr. Quivey’s comment, when he overheard Mrs. Mason’s report to me, made in an undertone. Truth to tell, Mr. Quivey, from associating so much with theatrical people in the capacity of playwright, had come to be rather stagy in his style at times. “By the way, he was not on escort duty this morning. I saw her proceeding along Powell Street alone, and anxiously peering up and down all the cross streets, evidently on the lookout, but he failed to put in an appearance.”

“Which was very unkind of him, if she expected that he would,” put in Miss Flower, glancing from under her long lashes at the speaker.

“That is so,” returned Quivey; “for in the fellow does nothing else, I do believe, but play lackey to Miss Jorgensen; and if that is his sole occupation, he ought to perform that duty faithfully. I do not see, for my part, how he pays his way.”

“Perhaps it pays him to be a lackey,” I suggested, remembering what I had once overheard between them. Mrs. Mason gave me a cautioning glance, which she need not have done, for I had no intention of making known Miss Jorgensen’s secrets.

“Well,” said Miss Flower, as if she had been debating the question in her mind for some time previous, “I doubt if a woman can love a man who submits to her will as subserviently as Mr. Hurst seems to, to Miss Jorgensen. I know *some women* could not.”

“By which you mean *you* could not,” Mrs. Mason returned, smiling. “I do not see that the case need be very different with men. Subserviency never won anybody’s respect or love either. Neither does willful opposition, any more. Proper self-respect and a fair share of self-love is more sure of winning admiration, from men or women, than too little self-assertion or too much.”

“But where the self-assertion is all on one side, and the self-abasement all on the other—as in the case of Miss Jorgensen and Mr. Hurst—then how would you establish an equilibrium, Mrs. Mason?”

“It establishes itself in that case, I should say,” clipped in Mr. Quivey. “Oil and water do not mix, but each keeps its own place perfectly, and without disturbance.”

I do not know how long this conversation might have gone on in this half-earnest, half facetious style, with Miss Jorgensen for its object, had not something happened just here to bring it abruptly to a close; and that something was the report of a pistol over our very heads.

“Great heaven!” ejaculated Miss Flower, losing all her color and self-possession together.

“E. E., as I live—she has shot herself!” cried Quivey, half doubting, half convinced.

I caught these words as I made a rapid movement toward the staircase. They struck me as so undeniably true, that I never hesitated in making an assault upon her door. It was locked on the inside, and I could hear nothing except a faint moaning sound within. Fearing the worst, I threw my whole weight and strength against it, and it flew open with a crash. There lay Miss Jorgensen upon the floor, in the middle of her little room, uttering low moaning sobs, though apparently not unconscious. I stooped over and lifted her in my arms to lay her upon the bed, and as I did so, a small pocket-pistol fell at my feet, and I discovered blood upon the carpet.

Yes, Miss Jorgensen had certainly shot herself, I told Mrs. Mason, and the rest who crowded after us into the little woman’s room; but whether dangerously or not, I could not say, nor whether purposefully or accidentally. Probably not dangerously, as she was already making signs to me to exclude people from the apartment.

“You had better bring a surgeon,” I said to Quivey, who turned away muttering, followed by Miss Flower.

With Mrs. Mason’s assistance, I soon made out the location of the wound, which was in the flesh of the upper part of the left arm, and consequently not so alarming as it would be painful during treatment.

“Could she have meant to shoot herself through the heart, and failed through agitation?” whispered Mrs. Mason to me, aside.

“No, no; it was an accident,” murmured the victim, whose quick ear had caught the words. “I did not mean to shoot myself.”

“Poor child, I am very sorry for you,” returned Mrs. Mason gently, whose kind heart had always leaned toward the little French teacher, in spite of her singular ways. “It is very unfortunate; but you shall receive careful nursing until you recover. You need not worry about yourself, but try to bear it the best you can.”

“O, I can not bear it—I *must* be well tomorrow. O, what shall I do!” moaned Miss Jorgensen. “O, that this should have happened tonight!” And momentarily, after this thought occurred to her, her restlessness seemed to increase, until the surgeon came and began an examination of the wound.

While this was going on, notwithstanding the sickening pain, the sufferer seemed anxious only about the opinion to be given upon the importance of the wound as interfering with her usual pursuits.

When, in answer to a direct appeal, she was told that it must be some weeks before she could resume going out, a fainting-fit immediately followed, which gave us no little trouble and alarm.

Before taking leave, the doctor accompanied me to my own apartment and proceeded to question me.

“What is the history of the case?” said he. “Is there anything peculiar in the life or habits of Miss Jorgensen, to account for her great anxiety to get well immediately?”

“She fears to lose her classes, I presume; and there may be other engagements which are unknown to us.” I still had a great reluctance to saying what I suspected might be troubling Miss Jorgensen.

“Neither of which accounts for all that I observe in her case,” returned the doctor. “What are her connections?—has she any family ties—any lover, even?”

“I believe she told Mrs. Mason she was engaged to a young man who calls here twice a week.”

“Ah! Do you know where this young man is to be found? It might be best to communicate with him, in the morning. Possibly he may be able to dispel this anxious fear of hers, from whatever cause it arises.”

I promised the doctor to speak to Mrs. Mason about it, and he soon after took leave, having first satisfied himself that the unlucky pistol was incapable of doing further mischief, and safely hidden from Miss Jorgensen.

Naturally, the next morning, the table-talk turned upon the incident of the evening previous.

“She need not tell me that it was an accident,” Mr. Quivey was saying, very decidedly. “She is just the sort of woman for desperate remedies; and she is tired of living, with that vampire friend of hers draining her life-blood!”

I confess I felt startled by the correspondence of Quivey’s opinion with my own; for I had heretofore believed that myself and Mrs. Mason were the only persons who suspected that Hurst was dependent upon Miss Jorgensen for the means of living. In my surprise I said: “You know that he does this?”

“I know that Craycroft paid him yesterday for a long translation done by Miss Jorgensen, and I do not believe he had an order for it other than verbal. Craycroft, seeing them so much together, paid the money, and took a receipt.”

“Perhaps he paid the money to Mr. Hurst by her instructions, for her own use,” suggested Miss Flower. “But then he did not see her last evening, did he? I hope he does not rob Miss Jorgensen. Such a delicate little woman has enough to do to look out for herself, I should think.”

“One thing is certain,” interposed Mrs. Mason — “Miss Jorgensen does what she does, and permits what she permits, intelligently; and our speculations concerning her affairs will not produce a remedy for what we fancy we see wrong in them.” Which hint had the effect of silencing the discussion for that time.

Before I left the house that morning, I had a consultation with Mrs. Mason, who had passed the night in attendance upon Miss Jorgensen, and who informed me that she had been very restless, in spite of the quieting prescription left by the doctor. “I wish you would go up and speak to her,” Mrs. Mason said. “Perhaps you can do something for her which I could not; and I am sure she needs some such service.”

Thus urged, I obeyed an impulse of my own, which had been to do this very thing. When I tapped softly at her door, she said, “Come in!” in a pained and petulant tone, as if any interruption was wearisome to her; but when she saw who it was, her countenance assumed an eager and animated expression, which rewarded me at once for the effort I was making.

“Thank you for coming to see me,” she said, quickly. “I was almost on the point of sending for you.” Pausing for a moment, while her eyes searched my face, she continued: “I am in trouble, which can not be all explained, and which will force you, if you do a service for me, to take me very much upon trust; but I will first assure you that what you may do for me will not involve *you* in any difficulty. More than this I can not now say. Will you do this service for me, and keep your agency in the matter secret? The service is slight, the importance of secrecy great.”

I expressed my willingness to do anything which would not compromise me with myself, and that, I told her, I did not fear her requiring.

She then proceeded, with some embarrassment, to say that she wished a note conveyed to Mr. Hurst; upon which I smiled, and answered, “I had conjectured as much.”

“But you must not conjecture anything,” she replied, with some asperity; “for you are sure to go wide of the truth. You think I have only to send for Mr. Hurst to bring him here; but you are mistaken. He can not come, because he *dare* not. He is in hiding, but I can not tell you why. Only do not betray him; I ask no more. You are not called upon to do any more—to do anything against him, I mean.” Seeing me hesitate, she continued: “I need not tell you that I believe my life is in your hands. I have been living a long time with all my faculties upon a severe strain, so severe that I feel I shall go mad if the pressure is increased. I entreat you not to refuse me.”

“Very well,” I answered, “I will do what you require.”

“It is only to take this”—she pulled a note from beneath her pillow, addressed to “Mr. Harry Hurst,” and handed it to me—“to the address, which you will have no difficulty in finding, though I am sorry to have to send you on a walk so out of your way. And please take this also”—handing me a roll of coin, marked \$100. “No answer is expected. Of course, you will not give these things to anyone but Mr. Hurst. That is all.” And she sunk back wearily upon her pillow, with closed eyes, as if she had no further interest in the affair.

I knew as well as if she had told me that this note was a warning to fly, and this money the means to make flight good. I had promised to deliver them on her simple entreaty and assurance that I should not dishonor myself. But might I not wrong society? Might she not be herself deceived about Hurst? The assertion of Quivey that he had collected money from her employers the day before occurred to me. Did she know it or not? I questioned, while regarding the thin, pale, weary face on the pillow before me. While I hesitated she opened her eyes with a wondering impatient gaze.

“Do you repent?” she asked.

“I deliberate, rather,” I replied. “I chanced to learn yesterday that Mr. Hurst had drawn money from Craycroft & Co., and was thinking that if you knew it, you might not wish to send this also.”

For an instant her black eyes blazed with anger, but whether at me or at Mr. Hurst I could not tell, and she seemed to hesitate, as I had done.

“Yes, take it,” she said, with hopeless sadness in her tone, “he may need it; and for myself, what does it matter now?”

“I shall do as you bid me,” I replied, “but it is under protest; for it is my impression that you are doing yourself an injury and Mr. Hurst no good.”

“You don’t understand,” she returned, sharply. “Now go, please.”

“Very well; I am gone. But I promise you that if you exact services of me, I shall insist on your taking care of your health, by way of return. You are in a fever at this moment, which I warn you will be serious if not checked. Here comes the doctor. Good-morning.”

I pass over the trifling incidents of my visit to the residence of Mr. Hurst. Suffice it to say that Mr. Hurst had departed to parts unknown, and that I had to carry about all day Miss Jorgensen's letter and money. On returning home to dinner that afternoon I found a stranger occupying Miss Jorgensen's place at table. He was a shrewd-looking man of about forty years, talkative, versatile, and what you might call "jolly." Nothing escaped his observation; nothing was uttered that he did not hear, often replying most unexpectedly to what was not intended to him—a practice that would have been annoying but for a certain tact and good humor which disarmed criticism. The whole family, while admitting that our new day-boarder was not exactly congenial, confessed to liking his amusing talk immensely.

"He quite brightens us up; don't you think so, Mr. Quivey?" was Miss Flower's method of indorsing him.

"He does very well just now," replied Quivey, "though I'd lots rather see E. E. back in that place. When one gets used to pickles or pepper, one wants pickles or pepper; honey palls on the appetite."

"I thought you had almost too much pepper sometimes," said Miss Flower, remembering the "I. I."

"It's a healthful stimulant," returned Quivey, ignoring the covert reminder.

"But not always an agreeable one."

I suspected that Miss Flower, who had an intense admiration for dramatic talent, entertained her own reasons for jogging Mr. Quivey's memory; and being willing to give her every opportunity to promote her own views, I took this occasion to make my report to Miss Jorgensen. As might have been expected, she had been feverishly anticipating my visit. I had no sooner entered the room than she uttered her brief interrogation:

"Well?"

I laid the note and the money upon the bed. "You see how it is?" I said.

"He is gone?"

"Yes."

"I am so very glad!" she said, with emphasis, while something like a smile lighted up her countenance. "This gives me a respite, at least. If he is prudent"—she checked herself, and giving me a grateful glance, exclaimed "I am *so* much obliged to you."

"Nobody could be more welcome, I am sure, to so slight a service. I shall hope now to see you getting well."



“O, yes,” she answered, “I must get well; there is so much to do. But my classes and my writing must be dropped for awhile, I presume, unless the doctor will let me take in some of my scholars, for of course I can not go out.”

“Your arm must begin to heal before you can think of teaching, ever so little. I have an idea, Miss Jorgensen, from what you have said of yourself, that this necessity for repose, which is forced upon you, will prove to be an excellent thing. Certainly you were wearing out very fast with your incessant labor.”

“Perhaps so—I mean, perhaps enforced rest will not be bad for me; but, O, there is such need to work! I can so poorly afford to be idle.”

“What you say relieves my mind of a suspicion, which at first I harbored, that the firing of that mischievous pistol was not wholly accidental. I now see you wish to live and work. But why had you such a weapon about you? Are you accustomed to fire-arms?”

“The mischief this one did me shows that I am not; and my having it about me came from fear I had of its doing worse mischief in the hands of Mr. Hurst.”

“Are affairs so desperate with him?”

“Please don’t question me. I can not answer you satisfactorily. Mr. Hurst is in trouble, and the least that is said or known about him is the best. And yet you wonder, no doubt, that I should interest myself about a man who is compelled to act the part of a culprit. Well, I can not tell you why at present; and it would be a great relief to know that you thought nothing more about it.” This last she uttered rather petulantly, which warned me that this conversation was doing her no good.

“Believe, then,” I said, “that I have no interest in your affairs, except the wish to promote your welfare. And I think I may venture to affirm that everybody in the house is equally at your service when you wish to command him or her.”

“Thank you all; but I do not deserve your kindness—I have been so ill-tempered. The truth is, I can not afford to have friends: friends pry into one’s affairs so mercilessly. Mrs. Mason tells me there is a new boarder,” she said, suddenly changing the subject.

I assented, and gave what I intended to be an amusing account of the newcomer’s conversation and manners.

“Was there anything said about me at dinner?” she asked, with a painful consciousness of the opinion I might have of such a question.

“I do not think there was. We were all so taken up with the latest acquisition that we forgot you for the time.”

“May I ask this favor of you, to keep the conversation away from me as much as possible? I am morbidly sensitive, I presume,” she said, with a poor attempt at a smile, “and I can not keep from fancying, while I lie here, what you are saying about me in the dining-room or parlor.”

Of course, I hastened to disavow any disposition on the part of the family to make her a subject of conversation, and even promised to discountenance any reference to her whatever, if thereby she would be made more comfortable; after which I bade her goodnight, having received the assurance that my visit had relieved her mind of several torturing apprehensions.

The more I saw and thought of Miss Jorgensen, the more she interested and puzzled me. I should have inclined to the opinion that she was a little disturbed at times in her intellect, had it not been that there was apparent so much “method in her madness;” this reflection always bringing me back at last to the conclusion that her peculiarities could all be accounted for upon the hypothesis she herself presented — too much work and some great anxiety. The spectacle of this human mite fighting the battle of life, not only for herself but for the strong man who should have been her protector, worked so upon my imagination and my sympathy that I found it difficult to keep the little woman out of my thoughts.

I kept my word to her, discountenancing, as far as I could, the discussion of her affairs, and in this effort Mrs. Mason cooperated with me; but it was practically impossible to prevent the inquiries and remarks of those of the family who were not so well informed concerning her as we were. The new boarder, also, with that quick apprehension he had of every subject, had caught enough to become interested in the patient upstairs, and daily made some inquiry concerning her condition, and, as it appeared to me—grown a little morbid, like Miss Jorgensen—was peculiarly adroit in extracting information.

Three weeks slipped away, and Miss Jorgensen had passed the most painful period of suppuration and healing in her arm, and had promised to come downstairs next day to dine with the family. Mrs. Mason had just communicated the news to us in her cheeriest tones, as if each individual was interested in it, and was proceeding to turn out our coffee, when a servant brought in the letters for the house and laid them beside the tray, directly under the eye of the new boarder, who sat on the landlady’s left.

“Miss Jorgensen,” said he, reading the address of the topmost one. “A very peculiar handwriting.” Then taking up the letter, as if to further examine the writing, I observed that he was studying the postmark as well, which, being offended at his unmannerly curiosity, I sincerely hoped was illegible. But that it was only too fatally plain will soon appear.

With an air of *hauteur* I seldom assumed, I recalled the servant, and ordered the letter to be taken at once to Miss Jorgensen. Before leaving the house I was informed that Miss Jorgensen wished to speak to me.

“Mr. Hurst has done a most imprudent thing!” she exclaimed, the moment I was inside the door. “I ought to have published a ‘personal,’ or done something to let him know I could not go to the post-office, and to account for his not hearing from me.”

“He has returned to the city?”

“Yes!” She fairly ground her teeth with rage at this “stupidity,” as she termed it. “He always does the very thing he ought never to have done, and leaves undone the things most important to do. Of course he can not come here, and I can not go to him without incurring the greatest risk. I really do not know what to do next.”

Tears were now coursing down her pale cheeks—tears, it seemed, as much of anger as of sorrow.

“Let him take care of himself,” I said, rather hotly. “It is not your province to care for him as you do.”

She gave me an indescribably look. “What can you, what can anyone know about it? He may want money: how can he take care of himself in such circumstances without money? I sent for you to contrive some plan by which he can be communicated with. Do tell me at once what to do.”

“How can I tell you, when, as you say, I do not know what is required. You wish to see him, I presume?”

“How can I—O, I dislike so much to ask this of you—but *will* you take a message to him?” She asked this desperately, half expecting me to decline, as decline I did.

“Miss Jorgensen, you are now able to ride. Shall I send a carriage for you?”

“There may be those on the lookout who would instantly suspect my purpose in going out in that way. On the contrary, nobody would suspect you.”

“Still I might be observed, which would not be pleasant, I can imagine, from what you leave me to surmise. No, Miss Jorgensen, much as I should like to serve you personally, you must excuse me from connecting myself in any way with Mr. Hurst; and if I might be allowed to offer advice, I should say that, in justice to yourself, you ought to cut loose from him at once.”

Miss Jorgensen covered her face with one little emaciated hand, and sat silent a few seconds.

“Send me a carriage,” she said, “and I will go.”

“You forgive me?”

“You have been very good,” she said. “I ought not have required more of you. I will go at once; the sooner the better.”

When I had reached the head of the stairs, I turned back again to her door.

“Once more let me counsel you to free yourself from all connection with Mr. Hurst. Why should you ruin your chances of happiness for one so underserving, as I must think he is? Keep away from him; let him shift for himself.”

“You don’t know what you are talking about,” she replied, with a touch of the old fierceness. “I have no chances of happiness to lose. Please go!”

On my way down to the office I ordered a carriage.

What happened afterward I learned from Mrs. Mason and the evening papers. Miss Jorgensen, dressed in deep black, with her face veiled, entered the carriage, directing the driver to take her to the houses of some of her pupils. At the corner of the street, a gentleman, who proved to be our day-boarder, got upon the box with the driver, and remained there while Miss Jorgensen made her calls. Finding him constantly there, and becoming suspicious, she ordered the carriage home, and gave directions to have it return an hour later to take her down town for some shopping. At the time set, the carriage was in attendance, and conveyed her to one of the principal stores in the city. After re-entering the carriage, and giving her directions, our day-boarder once more mounted the box, though unobserved by her, and was conveyed with herself to the hiding-place of Mr. Hurst, contriving, by getting down before the door was opened, to elude her observation.

Another carriage, containing officers of the police, was following in the wake of this one, and drew up when Miss Jorgensen had entered the house where Hurst was concealed. After waiting long enough to make it certain that the person sought was within, the officers entered to search and capture.

At the moment they entered Hurst’s apartment, he was saying with much emotion, “If I can only reach China in safety, a way will be opened for me——”

“Hush!” cried Miss Jorgensen, seeing the door opened, and by whom.

“All is over!” exclaimed Hurst. “I will never be taken to prison!” And , drawing a revolver, he deliberately shot himself through the head.

Miss Jorgensen was brought back to Mrs. Mason’s in a fainting condition, and was ill for weeks afterward. That same evening our day-boarder called, and while settling his board with Mrs. Mason, acknowledged that he belonged to the detective police, and had for months been “working up” the case of a bank-robber and forger who had escaped from one of the eastern cities, and been lost to observation for a year and a half.

And we further learned in the same way, and ultimately from the lady herself, that Miss Jorgensen was a myth, and that the little French teacher was Madame ——, who had suffered, and toiled, and risked everything for her unworthy husband, and who deserved rather to be congratulated than condoled with upon his loss.

It is now a year since all this happened, and it is the common gossip of our boarding-house that Mr. Quivey is devoted to the little dark-eyed widow; and although Miss Flower still refers to “E. E.” and “I. I.,” nobody seems to be in the least disturbed by the allusion. When I say to Quivey,

“Make haste slowly, my dear fellow!” he returns, “Never fear, my friend; I shall know when the time comes to speak.”

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