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Author: Arthur Schnitzler

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THE DEAD ARE SILENT

By Arthur Schnitzler

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HE could endure the quiet waiting in the carriage no longer; it was easier to get out and walk up and down. It was now dark; the few scattered lamps in the narrow side street quivered uneasily in the wind. The rain had stopped, the sidewalks were almost dry, but the rough-paved roadway was still moist, and little pools gleamed here and there.

"Strange, isn't it?" thought Franz. "Here we are scarcely a hundred paces from the Prater, and yet it might be a street in some little country town. Well, it's safe enough, at any rate. She won't meet any of the friends she dreads so much here."

He looked at his watch. "Only just seven, and so dark already! It is an early autumn this year... and then this confounded storm I..." He turned his coat-collar up about his neck and quickened his pacing. The glass in the street lamps rattled lightly.

"Half an hour more," he said to himself, "then I can go home. I could almost wish—that that half-hour were over." He stood for a moment on the corner, where he could command a view of both streets. "She'll surely come to-day," his thoughts ran on, while he struggled with his hat, which threatened to blow away. "It's Friday.... Faculty meeting at the University; she needn't hurry home." He heard the clanging of street-car gongs, and the hour chimed from a nearby church tower. The street became more animated. Hurrying figures passed him, clerks of neighboring shops; they hastened onward, fighting against the storm. No one noticed him; a couple of half-grown girls glanced up in idle curiosity as they went by. Suddenly he saw a familiar figure coming toward him. He hastened to meet her.... Could it be she? On foot?

She saw him, and quickened her pace.

"You are walking?" he asked.

"I dismissed the cab in front of the theatre. I think I've had that driver before."

A man passed them, turning to look at the lady. Her companion glared at him, and the other passed on hurriedly. The lady looked after him. "Who was it?" she asked, anxiously.

"Don't know him. We'll see no one we know here, don't worry. But come now, let's get into the cab."

"Is that your carriage?"

"Yes."

"An open one?"

"It was warm and pleasant when I engaged it an hour ago."

They walked to the carriage; the lady stepped in.

"Driver!" called the man.

"Why, where is he?" asked the lady.

Franz looked around. "Well, did you ever? I don't see him anywhere."

"Oh—" her tone was low and timid.

"Wait a moment, child, he must be around here somewhere."

The young man opened the door of a little saloon, and discovered his driver at a table with several others. The man rose hastily. "In a minute, sir," he explained, swallowing his glass of wine.

"What do you mean by this?"

"All right, sir... Be there in a minute." His step was a little unsteady as he hastened to his horses. "Where'll you go, sir?"

"Prater—Summer-house."

Franz entered the carriage. His companion sat back in a corner, crouching fearsomely under the shadow of the cover.

He took both her hands in his. She sat silent. "Won't you say good evening to me?"

"Give me a moment to rest, dear. I'm still out of breath."

He leaned back in his corner. Neither spoke for some minutes. The carriage turned into the Prater Street, passed the Tegethoff Monument, and a few minutes later was rolling swiftly through the broad, dark Prater Avenue.

Emma turned suddenly and flung both arms around her lover's neck. He lifted the veil that still hung about her face, and kissed her.

"I have you again—at last!" she exclaimed.

"Do you know how long it is since we have seen each other?" he asked.

"Since Sunday."

"Yes, and that wasn't good for much."

"Why not? You were in our house."

"Yes—in your house. That's just it. This can't go on. I shall not enter your house again.... What's the matter?"

"A carriage passed us."

"Dear girl, the people who are driving in the Prater at such an hour, and in such weather, aren't noticing much what other people are doing."

"Yes—that's so. But some one might look in here, by chance."

"We couldn't be recognized. It's too dark."

"Yes—but can't we drive somewhere else?"

"Just as you like." He called to the driver, who did not seem to hear. Franz leaned forward and touched the man.

"Turn around again. What are you whipping your horses like that for? We're in no hurry, I tell you. Drive—let me see—yes—drive down the avenue that leads to the Reichs Bridge."

"The Reichsstrasse?"

"Yes. But don't hurry so, there's no need of it."

"All right, sir. But it's the wind that makes the horses so crazy."

Franz sat back again as the carriage turned in the other direction.

"Why didn't I see you yesterday?"

"How could I?"...

"You were invited to my sister's."

"Oh—yes."

"Why weren't you there?"

"Because I can't be with you—like that—with others around. No, I just can't." She shivered. "Where are we now?" she asked, after a moment.

They were passing under the railroad bridge at the entrance to the Reichsstrasse.

"On the way to the Danube," replied Franz. "We're driving toward the Reichs Bridge. We'll certainly not meet any of our friends here," he added, with a touch of mockery.

"The carriage jolts dreadfully."

"We're on cobblestones again."

"But he drives so crooked."

"Oh, you only think so."

He had begun to notice himself that the vehicle was swaying to and fro more than was necessary, even on the rough pavement. But he said nothing, not wishing to alarm her.

"There's a great deal I want to say to you today, Emma."

"You had better begin then; I must be home at nine o'clock."

"A few words may decide everything."

"Oh, goodness, what was that!" she screamed. The wheels had caught in a car-track, and the carriage turned partly over as the driver attempted to free it. Franz caught at the man's coat. "Stop that!" he cried.

"Why, you're drunk, man!"

The driver halted his horses with some difficulty. "Oh, no—sir—"

"Let's get out here, Emma, and walk."

"Where are we?"

"Here's the bridge already. And the wind is not nearly as strong as it was. It will be nicer to walk a little. It's so hard to talk in the carriage."

Emma drew down her veil and followed him. "Don't you call this windy?" she exclaimed as she struggled against the gust that met her at the corner.

He took her arm, and called to the driver to follow them.

They walked on slowly. Neither spoke as they mounted the ascent of the bridge; and they halted where they could hear the flow of the water below them. Heavy darkness surrounded them. The broad stream stretched itself out in gray, indefinite outlines; red lights in the distance, floating above the water, awoke answering gleams from its surface. Trembling stripes of light reached down from the shore they had just left; on the other side of the bridge the river lost itself in the blackness of open fields. Thunder rumbled in the distance; they looked over to where the red lights soared. A train with lighted windows rolled between iron arches that seemed to spring up out of the night for an instant, to sink back into darkness again. The thunder grew fainter and more distant; silence fell again; only the wind moved, in sudden gusts.

Franz spoke at last, after a long silence. "We must go away."

"Of course," Emma answered, softly.

"We must go away," he continued, with more animation. "Go away altogether, I mean—"

"Oh, we can't!"

"Only because we are cowards, Emma."

"And my child?"

"He will let you have the boy, I know."

"But how shall we go?" Her voice was very low. "You mean—to run away—"

"Not at all. You have only to be honest with him; to tell him that you cannot live with him any longer; that you belong to me."

"Franz—are you mad?"

"I will spare you that trial, if you wish. I will tell him myself."

"No, Franz, you will do nothing of the kind."

He endeavored to read her face. But the darkness showed him only that her head was turned toward him.

He was silent a few moments more. Then he spoke quietly: "You need not fear; I shall not do it."

They walked toward the farther shore. "Don't you hear a noise?" she asked. "What is it?"

"Something is coming from the other side," he said.

A slow rumbling came out of the darkness. A little red light gleamed out at them. They could see that it hung from the axle of a clumsy country cart, but they could not see whether the cart was laden or not and whether there were human beings on it. Two other carts followed the first. They could just see the outlines of a man in peasant garb on the last cart, and could see that he was lighting his pipe. The carts passed them slowly. Soon there was nothing to be heard but the low rolling of the wheels as their own carriage followed them. The bridge dropped gently to the farther shore. They saw the street disappear into blackness between rows of trees. Open fields lay before them to the right and to the left; they gazed out into gloom indistinguishable.

There was another long silence before Franz spoke again. "Then it is the last time—"

"What?—" Emma's tone was anxious.

"The last time we are to be together. Stay with him, if you will. I bid you farewell."

"Are you serious?"

"Absolutely."

"There, now you see, it is you who always spoil the few hours we have together?—not I."

"Yes, you're right," said Franz. "Let's drive back to town."

She held his arm closer. "No," she insisted, tenderly, "I don't want to go back. I won't be sent away from you."

She drew his head down to hers, and kissed him tenderly. "Where would we get to if we drove on down there?" she asked.

"That's the road to Prague, dear."

"We won't go quite that far," she smiled, "but I'd like to drive on a little, down there." She pointed into the darkness.

Franz called to the driver. There was no answer; the carriage rumbled on, slowly. Franz ran after it, and saw that the driver was fast asleep. Franz roused him roughly. "We want to drive on down that street. Do you hear me?"

"All right, sir."

Emma entered the carriage first, then Franz. The driver whipped his horses, and they galloped madly over the moist earth of the road-bed. The couple inside the cab held each other closely as they swayed with the motion of the vehicle.

"Isn't this quite nice?" whispered Emma, her lips on his.

In the moment of her words she seemed to feel the cab mounting into the air. She felt herself thrown over violently, readied for some hold, but grasped only the empty air. She seemed to be spinning madly like a top,

her eyes closed, suddenly she found herself lying on the ground, a great silence about her, as if she were alone, far away from all the world. Then noises began to come into her consciousness again; hoofs beat the ground near her; a low moaning came from somewhere; but she could see nothing. Terror seized her; she screamed aloud. Her terror grew stronger, for she could not hear her own voice. Suddenly she knew what had happened; the carriage had hit some object, possibly a mile-stone; had upset, and she had been thrown out. Where is Franz? was her next thought. She called his name. And now she could hear her voice, not distinctly yet, but she could hear it. There was no answer to her call. She tried to get up. After some effort she rose to a sitting, posture, and, reaching out, she felt something, a human body, on the ground beside her. She could now begin to see a little through the dimness. Franz lay beside her, motionless. She put out her hand and touched his face; something warm and wet covered it. Her heart seemed to stop beating—Blood?—Oh, what had happened? Franz was wounded and unconscious. Where was the coachman? She called him, but no answer came. She still sat there on the ground. She did not seem to be injured, although she ached all over. "What shall I do?" she thought; "what shall I do? How can it be that I am not injured? Franz!" she called again. A voice answered from somewhere near her.

"Where are you, lady? And where is the gentleman? Wait a minute, Miss—I'll light the lamps, so we can see. I don't know what's got into the beasts to-day. It ain't my fault, Miss, sure—they ran into a pile of stones."

Emma managed to stand up, although she was bruised all over. The fact that the coachman seemed quite uninjured reassured her somewhat. She heard the man opening the lamp and striking a match. She waited anxiously for the light. She did not dare to touch Franz again. "It's all so much worse when you can't see plainly," she thought. "His eyes may be open now—there won't be anything wrong...."

A tiny ray of light came from one side. She saw the carriage, not completely upset, as she had thought, but leaning over toward the ground, as if one wheel were broken. The horses stood quietly. She saw the milestone, then a heap of loose stones, and beyond them a ditch. Then the light touched Franz's feet, crept up over his body to his face, and rested there. The coachman had set the lamp on the ground beside the head of the unconscious man. Emma dropped to her knees, and her heart seemed to stop beating as she looked into the face before her. It was ghastly white; the eyes were half open, only the white showing. A thin stream of blood trickled down from one temple and ran into his collar. The teeth were fastened into the under lip. "No—no—it isn't possible," Emma spoke, as if to herself.

The driver knelt also and examined the face of the man. Then he took the head in both his hands and raised it. "What are you doing?" screamed Emma, hoarsely, shrinking back at the sight of the head that seemed to be rising of its own volition.

"Please, Miss—I'm afraid—I'm thinking—there's a great misfortune happened—"

"No—no—it's not true!" said Emma. "It can't be true!—You are not hurt? Nor am I—"

The man let the head he held fall back again into the lap of the trembling Emma. "If only some one would come—if the peasants had only passed fifteen minutes later."

"What shall we do?" asked Emma, her lips trembling.

"Why, you see, Miss, if the carriage was all right—but it's no good as it is—we've got to wait till some one comes—" he talked on, but Emma did not hear him. Her brain seemed to awake suddenly, and she knew what was to be done. "How far is it to the nearest house?" she asked.

"Not much further, Miss—there's Franz-Josef's land right there. We'd see the houses if it was lighter—it won't take five minutes to get there."

"Go there, then; I'll stay here—Go and fetch some one."

"I think I'd better stay here with you, Miss. Somebody must come; it's the main road."

"It'll be too late; we need a doctor at once."

The coachman looked down at the quiet face, then he looked at Emma, and shook his head.

"You can't tell," she cried.

"Yes, Miss—but there'll be no doctor in those houses."

"But there'll be somebody to send to the city—"

"Oh, yes, Miss—they'll be having a telephone there, anyway! We'll telephone to the Rescue Society."

"Yes, yes, that's it. Go at once, run—and bring some men back with you. Why do you wait? Go at once. Hurry!"

The man looked down again at the white face in her lap. "There'll be no use here for doctor or Rescue Society, Miss."

"Oh, go!—for God's sake go!"

"I'm going, Miss—but don't get afraid in the darkness here."

He hurried down the street. "'Twasn't my fault," he murmured as he ran. "Such an idea! to drive down this road this time o' night."

Emma was left alone with the unconscious man in the gloomy street.

"What shall I do now?" she thought "It can't be possible—it can't." The thought circled dizzily in her brain—"It can't be possible." Suddenly she seemed to hear a low breathing. She bent to the pale lips—no—not the faintest breath came from them. The blood had dried on temple and cheek. She gazed at the eyes, the half-closed eyes, and shuddered. Why couldn't she believe it?... It must be true—this was Death! A shiver ran through her—she felt but one thing—"This is a corpse. I am here alone with a corpse!—a corpse that rests on my lap!" With trembling hands she pushed the head away, until it rested on the ground. Then a feeling of horrible alone-ness came over her. Why had she sent the coachman away? What should she do here all alone with this dead man in the darkness? If only some one would come—but what was she to do then if anybody did come? How long would she have to wait here? She looked down at the corpse again. "But I'm not alone with him," she thought, "the light is there." And the light seemed to her to become alive, something sweet and friendly, to which she owed gratitude. There was more life in this little flame than in all the wide night

about her. It seemed almost as if this light was a protection for her, a protection against the terrible pale man who lay on the ground beside her. She stared into the light until her eyes wavered and the flame began to dance. Suddenly she felt herself awake—wide awake. She sprang to her feet. Oh, this would not do! It would not do at all—no one must find her here with him. She seemed to be outside of herself, looking at herself standing there on the road, the corpse and the light below her; she saw herself grow into strange, enormous proportions, high up into the darkness. "What am I waiting for?" she asked herself, and her brain reeled. "What am I waiting for? The people who might come? They don't need me. They will come, and they will ask questions—and I—why am I here? They will ask who I am—what shall I answer? I will not answer them—I will not say a word—they cannot compel me to talk."

The sound of voices came from the distance.

"Already?" she thought, listening in terror. The voices came from the bridge. It could not be the men the driver was bringing with him. But whoever it was would see the light—and they must not see it, for then she would be discovered. She overturned the lantern with her foot, and the light went out. She stood in utter darkness. She could see nothing—not even him. The pile of stones shone dimly. The voices came nearer. She trembled from head to foot; they must not find her here. That was the only thing of real importance in all the wide world—that no one should find her here. She would be lost if they knew that this—this corpse—was her lover. She clasps her hands convulsively, praying that the people, whoever they were, might pass by on the farther side of the road, and not see her. She listens breathless. Yes, they are there, on the other side—women, two women, or perhaps three. What are they talking about? They have seen the carriage, they speak of it—she can distinguish words. "A carriage upset—" What else do they say? She cannot understand—they walk on—they have passed her—Ah—thanks—thanks to Heaven!—And now? What now? Oh, why isn't she dead, as he is? He is to be envied; there is no more danger, no more fear for him. But so much—so much for her to tremble for. She shivers at the thought of being found here, of being asked, "Who are you?" She will have to go to the police station, and all the world will know about it—her husband—her child. She cannot understand why she has stood there motionless so long. She need not stay here—she can do no good here—and she is only courting disaster for herself. She makes a step forward—Careful! the ditch is here—she crosses it—how wet it is—two paces more and she is in the middle of the street. She halts a moment, looks straight ahead, and can finally distinguish the gray line of the road leading onward into darkness. There—over there—lies the city. She cannot see it, but she knows the way. She turns once more. It does not seem so dark now. She can see the carriage and the horses quite distinctly—and, looking hard, she seems to see the outline of a human body on the ground. Her eyes open wide. Something seems to clutch at her and hold her here—it is he—she feels his power to keep her with him. With an effort she frees herself. Then she perceives that it was the soft mud of the road that held her. And she walks onward—faster—faster—her pace quickens to a run. Only to be away from here, to be back in the light—in the noise—among men. She runs along the street, raising her skirt high, that her steps may not be hindered. The wind is behind her, and seems to push her along. She does not know what it is she flees from. Is it the pale man back there by the ditch? No, now she knows, she flees the living, not the dead, the living, who will soon be there, and who will look for her. What will they think? Will they follow her? But they cannot catch up with her now, she is so far away, she is nearing the bridge, there is danger. No one can know who she was, no one can possibly imagine who the woman was who drove down through the country road with the dead man. The driver does not know her; he would not recognize her if he should ever see her again. They will not take the trouble to find out who she is. Who cares? It was wise of her not to stay—and it was not cowardly either. Franz himself would say it was wise. She must go home; she has a husband, a child; she would be lost if any one should see her there with her dead lover. There is the bridge; the street seems lighter—she hears the water beneath her. She stands there, where they stood together, arm in arm—when was it? How many hours ago? It cannot be long since then. And yet—perhaps she lay unconscious long, and it is midnight now, or near morning, and they have missed her at home. Oh, no—it is not possible. She knows that she was not unconscious, she remembers everything clearly. She runs across the bridge, shivering at the sound of her own steps. Now she sees a figure coming toward her; she slows her pace. It is a man in uniform. She walks more slowly, she does not want to attract attention. She feels the man's eyes resting on her—suppose he stops her! Now he is quite near; it is a policeman. She walks calmly past him, and hears him stop behind her. With an effort she continues in the same slow pace. She hears the jingle of street-car bells—ah, it cannot be midnight yet. She walks more quickly—hurrying toward the city, the lights of which begin there by the railroad viaduct—the growing noise tells her how near she is. One lonely stretch of street, and then she is safe. Now she hears a shrill whistle coming rapidly nearer—a wagon flies swiftly past her. She stops and looks after it; it is the ambulance of the Rescue Society. She knows where it is going. "How quickly they have come," she thinks; "it is like magic." For a moment she feels that she must call to them, must go back with them. Shame, terrible, overwhelming shame, such as she has never known before, shakes her from head to foot—she knows how vile, how cowardly she is. Then, as the whistle and the rumble of wheels fade away in the distance, a mad joy takes hold of her. She is saved—saved! She hurries on; she meets more people, but she does not fear them—the worst is over. The noise of the city grows louder, the street is lighter, the skyline of the Prater street rises before her, and she knows that she can sink into a flood tide of humanity there and lose herself in it. When she comes to a street lamp she is quite calm enough now to take out her watch and look at it. It is ten minutes to nine. She holds the watch to her ear—it is ticking merrily. And she thinks: "Here I am, alive, unharmed—and he—he—dead. It is Fate." She feels as if all had been forgiven—as if she had never sinned. And what if Fate had willed otherwise? If it were she lying there in the ditch, and he who remained alive? He would not have run away—but then he is a man. She is only a woman, she has a husband, a child—it was her right—her duty—to save herself. She knows that it was not a sense of duty that impelled her to do it. But what she has done was right—she had done right instinctively—as all good people do. If she had stayed she would have been discovered by this time. The doctors would question her. And all the papers would report it next morning; she would have been ruined forever, and yet her ruin could not bring him back to life. Yes, that was the main point, her sacrifice would have been all in vain. She crosses under the railway bridge and hurries on. There is the Tegethoff Column, where so many streets meet. There are but few people in the park on this stormy evening, but to her it seems as if the life of the city was roaring about her. It was so horribly still back

there. She had plenty of time now. She knows that her husband will not be home before ten o'clock. She will have time to change her clothes. And then it occurs to her to look at her gown. She is horrified to see how soiled it is. What shall she say to the maid about it? And next morning the papers will all bring the story of the accident, and they will tell of a woman. Who had been in the carriage, and who had run away. She trembled afresh. One single carelessness and she is lost, even now. But she has her latch-key with her; she can let herself in; no one will hear her come. She jumps into a cab and is about to give her address, then suddenly she remembers that this would not be wise. She gives any number that occurs to her.

As she drives through the Prater street she wishes that she might feel something—grief—horror—but she cannot. She has but one thought, one desire—to be at home, in safety. All else is indifferent to her. When she had decided to leave him alone, dead, by the roadside—in that moment everything seemed to have died within her, everything that would mourn and grieve for him. She has no feeling but that of fear for herself. She is not heartless—she knows that the day will come when her sorrow will be despair—it may kill her even. But she knows nothing now, except the desire to sit quietly at home, at the supper table with her husband and child. She looks out through the cab window. She is driving through the streets of the inner city. It is brilliantly light here, and many people hurry past. Suddenly all that she has experienced in the last few hours seems not to be true, it is like an evil dream; not something real, irreparable. She stops her cab in one of the side streets of the Ring, gets out, turns a corner quickly, and takes another carriage, giving her own address this time. She does not seem able to think of anything any more. "Where is he now?" She closes her eyes and sees him on the litter, in the ambulance. Suddenly she feels that he is here beside her. The cab sways, she feels the terror of being thrown out again, and she screams aloud. The cab halts before the door of her home. She dismounts hastily, hurries with light steps through the house door, unseen by the concierge, runs up the stairs, opens her apartment door very gently, and slips unseen into her own room. She undresses hastily, hiding the mud-stained clothes in her cupboard. To-morrow, when they are dry, she can clean them herself. She washes hands and face, and slips into a loose housegown.

The bell rings. She hears the maid open the door, she hears her husband's voice, and the rattle of his cane on the hat-stand. She feels she must be brave now or it will all have been in vain. She hurries to the dining-room, entering one door as her husband comes in at the other.

"Ah, you're home already?" he asks.

"Why, yes," she replies, "I have been home some time."

"They evidently didn't hear you come in."

She smiles without effort. But it fatigues her horribly to have to smile. He kisses her forehead.

The little boy is already at his place by the table. He has been waiting some time, and has fallen asleep, his head resting on an open book.

She sits down beside him; her husband takes his chair opposite, takes up a paper, and glances carelessly at it. Then he says: "The others are still talking away there."

"What about?" she asks.

And he begins to tell her about the meeting, at length. Emma pretends to listen, and nods now and then. But she does not hear what he is saying, she feels dazed, like one who has escaped terrible danger as by a miracle; she can feel only this: "I am safe; I am at home." And while her husband is talking she pulls her chair nearer the boy's and lifts his head to her shoulder. Fatigue inexpressible comes over her. She can no longer control herself; she feels that her eyes are closing, that she is dropping asleep.

Suddenly another possibility presents itself to her mind, a possibility that she had dismissed the moment she turned to leave the ditch where she had fallen. Suppose he were not dead! Suppose—oh, but it is impossible—his eyes—his—lips—not a breath came from them! But there are trances that are like death, which deceive even practised eyes, and she knows nothing about such things. Suppose he is still alive—suppose he has regained consciousness and found himself alone by the roadside—suppose he calls her by her name? He might think she had been injured; he might tell the doctors that there was a woman with him, and that she must have been thrown to some distance. They will look for her. The coachman will come back with the men he has brought, and will tell them that she was there, unhurt—and Franz will know the truth. Franz knows her so well—he will know that she has run away—and a great anger will come over him. He will tell them her name in revenge. For he is mortally injured, and it will hurt him cruelly that she has left him alone in his last hour. He will say: "That is Mrs. Emma ——. I am her lover. She is cowardly and stupid, too, gentlemen, for she might have known you would not ask her name; you would be discreet; you would have let her go away unmolested. Oh, she might at least have waited until you came. But she is vile—utterly vile—ah! —"

"What is the matter?" asks the Professor, very gravely, rising from his chair.

"What? What?"

"Yes, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing." She presses the boy closer to her breast.

The Professor looks at her for a few minutes steadily.

"Didn't you know that you had fallen asleep, and—"

"Well?— And—"

"And then you screamed out in your sleep."

"Did I?"

"You screamed as if you were having a nightmare. Were you dreaming?"

"I don't know—"

And she sees her face in a mirror opposite, a face tortured into a ghastly smile. She knows it is her own face, and it terrifies her. She sees that it is frozen; that this hideous smile is frozen on it, and will always be there, all her life. She tries to cry out. Two hands are laid on her shoulders, and between her own face and the mirrored one her husband's face pushes its way in; his eyes pierce into hers. She knows that unless she is

strong for this last trial all is lost. And she feels that she is strong; she has regained control of her limbs, but the moment of strength is short. She raises her hands to his, which rest on her shoulders; she draws him down to her, and smiles naturally and tenderly into his eyes.

She feels his lips on her forehead, and she thinks: "It is all a dream—he will never tell—he will never take revenge like that—he is dead—really dead—and the dead are silent—"

"Why did you say that?" she hears her husband's voice suddenly.

She starts. "What did I say?" And it seems to her as if she had told everything, here at the table—aloud before every one—and again she asks, shuddering before his horrified eyes, "What did I say?"

"The dead are silent," her husband repeats very slowly.

"Yes," she answers.

And she reads in his eyes that she can no longer hide anything from him. They look long and silently at each other. "Put the boy to bed," he says at last. "You have something to tell me, have you not?"

"Yes—"

She knows now that within a few moments she will tell this man everything—this man, whom she has deceived for many years.

And while she goes slowly through the door, holding her boy, she feels her husband's eyes still resting on her, and a great peace comes over her, the assurance that now many things would be right again.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DEAD ARE SILENT ***

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