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OLD GRIP'S DARLING.

About twenty years ago, in the lowest quarter of the city, there stood an old house which was reported at one time to be haunted, and, as such, was avoided by all; no one would live in it, or have anything to do with it, consequently it stood solitary and lonely—a grim phantom among the living. At last, when the owner of the place was deciding to pull it down and build another on its site, an old man made his appearance and offered to take it on the condition that the rental was low. Of course, the owner jumped at the chance, and Vampire Grip became the tenant of the haunted house.

There was one great peculiarity about his appearance in the tumble-down place—no one saw him come in, no one saw a vestige of household furniture removed, and on the next morning, when his white hair, long beard and hook-nose were seen at the window, one and all decided it was another ghost. However, Grip soon dispelled this thought, for he came down to the door in person to purchase milk for the morning meal, and then the mob saw it was a real flesh and blood man.

Various speculations ran rife in those parts as to what old Grip might be. Some ventured to assert that he was a rich old miser, but the fact of his ordering the daintiest joints of meat from the butcher opposite, refuted this suspicion; others made him out an old fence, but policemen of the district said that he was utterly unknown to them; in short, some said one thing, and some another, but one and all agreed that there was an unaccountable and inscrutable mystery about Vampire Grip which no one could unravel.

Old Grip himself said little or nothing to any one. Always quiet and reserved, he plodded around in his old, peculiar fashion, and the faintest hint at cross-questioning would shut up his lips closer than death. When spoken to about ghosts in his house, he would answer:

"Yah, there was ghosts in my house; but I don't vay want to get rid of them. Oh! nein, nein."

Strange Old Grip! how the neighbors wondered! Still, they did not wish to use violence in discovering his secret, and thus the old man lived on, a tenant of the haunted house, and unmoested by the people who surrounded him so thickly on every hand.

We will introduce the reader to Old Grip as the night begins to fall upon a bright and sunny day. The room in which we find him is very dark, and the evening twilight scarcely penetrates the dim windows into which it is feebly struggling. Grip is sitting with his back to the light, and on the floor before him kneels a young and lovely girl of about sixteen summers—so wondrously fair that the sun seems to have melted its golden beams upon her hair, and left them as a legacy. She is gazing up into the old man's face with a deep expression of love and reverence, while Grip's bony hand nestles in her locks and smooths them back from her white forehead. Presently she speaks:

"Tell me, grandpa; you are sad to-night."

"Yah, my child, I was sad, dat's so; I was thinking of the past."

"But, grandpa, you told me when I came here, that I was to forget the past."

"I told you to forget, Lenore, but I must not forget, dare not."

"Will you never tell me why you keep me here in secret? I am so tired of living here alone."

A shade of sorrow passed over the old man's face as he heard this,

but she did not perceive it in the shadow.

"I want to see the green fields again, grandpa," returned Lenore; "I want to breathe the fresh, pure air of our country home."

"Hush! Lenore, you vas not talk like dat. I am in trouble about you, dear child; all vas be vell one of these days; but you don't vas get impatient; you shall go home soon."

Lenore saw he was confused, and she refrained from asking other questions, but she sat looking wistfully up into his face, half unconscious that the tears were flooding her eyes with tell-tale sorrow.

"Oh, my sweet babe, my child!" said Old Grip, kissing her on the forehead. "Please you vas don't cry. I will tell you all some day very soon."

"I was not really crying, grandpa, dear. I have no sorrow; it is only my thoughtlessness. Pray forgive me."

"Forgive you, Lenore, my pet? I vas love you so much better as the whole world, and I keep you in this foolish old house because it vas very good for you to be here. There, there, you vas trust your old Grandpa Grip, and that happiness will be here very soon right away."

She rose from her kneeling position now, and pillowed her beautiful face on his shoulder, saying as she did so:

"You are a good, kind grandpa, and I am too wicked to deserve your love. I will wait very patiently till you tell me we are to leave this place."

Beautiful picture in the solemn silence and semi-darkness of that room. The old man's long, white beard and frosted silver hair mingling with the bright, golden hands on the head of his only treasure, as he whispered words of love and comfort to her. There was an undefined gloom came over them both as they parted that night, Lenore to her room and Old Grip to his desk, lighted by a simple taper, which only seemed to make the darkness more visible, and the old German sat long over the musty parchments which lay spread before him. As he calculated deeply, and through all so very sadly, till the minutes faded into hours, and the neighboring church sentry boomed out the unchangeable fact that it was twelve o'clock.

Let us for a short time follow the beautiful Lenore to her room in the upper part of the house, where, after going through some old lumber closets, Grip had fixed her sanctuary. It was a small chamber, having oak-paneled walls, and one small, old-fashioned window, looking like a green, half-shut eye, through which could be seen the countless chimney stacks, grim and spectral in the moonlight. On one side of the room stood the bed, and on the opposite wall stood a dim, dusty picture of the Crucifixion.

Lenore entered and closed the door carefully, then she seated herself at the white toilet table, and passing a comb through her long hair once or twice, she gradually fell into a deep reverie; nor did she move from that position till, in the profound silence, she heard a beautiful voice singing the sweet ballad, "Ever of Thee," then she looked up, and the listless expression of her face gave glance to one of strange interest, while the dark blue eyes became fixed on the faded painting which represented the redemption of mankind.

There was a tremulous passion infused into the well-known song, as it swelled and died away. At its conclusion, Lenore started up, and crossed to the picture, looking

back with a hasty, half-guilty glance at the door of the room.

Then the secret of the voice and song was unraveled. In a moment, the picture turned aside upon hinges, an oak panel glided back with a spring, and on the other side stood a handsome young man, about twenty years of age, who folded the beautiful maiden in his arms.

This was Lenore's secret, which Old Grip knew nothing of—a secret within a secret—and the girl felt naturally guilty, although it was the Heavenly gift of pure and holy love. The object of her choice, George Markby, was an Englishman, a stranger in a strange land, who supported himself upon the literary work of his busy pen, and as he possessed a very fine voice, Lenore had very often heard him singing in the night, and, by a strange fascination, had learned to love, even before she had seen his face.

The secret of the panel was a mutual discovery, and it had been a custom with them both to speak together, as upon the night we find them.

How long they talked of love, and of the bright and happy future, when George could go boldly to Grip, and tell him all. How happy the young man was in possessing her love! and a few moments before the parting kiss, we will leave them standing together beneath the blessings of the mournful moonlight.

Tom Hammond was a man whose life had been one of selfish pleasure, into which no ray of truth or pure thought ever penetrated. He was Old Grip's half nephew, and at the death of his mother's second husband, he looked upon the possession of the old man's property as a sure thing; so much so that he had obtained several reversions on his wealth. However, when the will was read, there occurred no mention of his name as an heir; all the money and real estate was unreservedly bequeathed to his half sister, constituting him her guardian till she obtained her eighteenth year.

This was a terrific blow to the young libertine's hopes. He became perfectly furious, nor did he hesitate to show his cruelty, for by words and harsh treatment he caused the child's life to be a misery to her. Old Grip, her uncle, saw this, and saw it with profound sorrow, till at last he determined to take her away, and keep her in hiding, till her scoundrel half-brother should die, or till she became of age, for the old man had heard Tom Hammond give vent to some very suspicious thoughts when he talked about the possibility of Lenore's ever coming into the property, and this explains why we have found old Grip and the girl inmates of the lonely, haunted house, where at least her uncle could protect her.

With these few words of explanation, we will enter a low liquor saloon on a street off the Bowery, and listen to the conversation which is taking place between two men—one, a tall, dark, handsome young fellow, with an expression of bliss vice upon his face, which distorts it, and deprives it of all true beauty, while the other is a representative of the class known as rowdy, bearing upon his low forehead the stamp of an unmitigated black-guard. They are talking together very earnestly now, and the burden of their conversation is as follows:

"Whereabout does she sleep, boss?"

"I am not sure," answered the young man, "but it must be at the top of the house. The old fool

takes great care of his niece. The best way will be to enter from the back and work our way up stairs. If Grip should meet us, you must settle him. I will take care of the girl."

"But say, ain't there any other way to do the business without blood?"

"Bah! you are not a coward. This will not be the first blood you have drawn by several degrees, beside the money I give you will carry you away from the country and keep you for the rest of your life."

"Well, boss, you're a desperate cove, and no mistake, but I like your p'uck, and I'll stick by you to the end."

"Good enough, Jake. You understand, I don't want you to red- den your hands unless it is absolutely necessary. I will do all the killing that's required. Your duty will be to go through the house and seize on anything valuable you can find so that the authorities may be misled as to the motive of our crime."

"Just so boss; and if the old man comes out why—"

Here Jake made an appropriate gesture, signifying that, should old Grip put in an appearance, his life would answer for it.

These two ruffians remained in close conversation for another hour, but as the clock pointed to twelve, they each drank off their whisky, and putting their hats over their eyes, they sallied out into the lonely silence of the night.

The sky above had become overcast, with great boulders of clouds which seemed to be descending upon their very heads. An awful, dead, sullen stillness hung over all things, and the rumbling of distant thunder came up grim and foreboding in its promise of a stormy night.

At length Grip's haunted house is reached just as the tempest develops into a blinding rush of rain and lightning. Quickly they scaled the walls which skirt the back, and climbing by the aid of the closely-grown ivy, they reached the first floor window in a few seconds. Then came out the burglar tools, and Jake, who is a proficient in his art, quickly effects an entrance into the house. The storm howls and whistles at the windows, the thunder peals and rattles, and the electric flame darts hither and thither in its mad fantastic fury, while old Grip sleeps on unconsciously, and the good and beautiful Lenore is reading silently in her own sullen room.

Hush! What is that? A foot-fall on the stair, strange and creeping. Lenore starts up in horror. It is approaching nearer, nearer, and she has no power to speak or move. Her young heart beat furiously with fear, her streaming hair thrown back, and her blue eyes fixed on the door. A moment more and the stranger enters the room. Great heavens! it is he, her half-brother; and as he turns and closes the door, she feels by instinct that his purpose is a deadly one. She shrinks in terror into the farthest corner of her little room, while her hands fold together in involuntary supplication.

"You know why I am here," he murmurs, as he gradually approaches her.

"No Tom; no," she answers wildly. "Go away; please go away."

"When I have finished my work I will, but not before. You have stood between me and wealth long enough. You won't do so much longer."

"Oh! Tom, Tom, what do you mean," she sobs.

"What do I mean? Why, this, Lenore; this."

As he spoke he drew forth a long, cruel, glittering knife and held it before her terrified eyes.

Lenore gave a sudden shriek as she saw the weapon, and retreated to the other side of the centre-table.

"Tom, put it away; you had wicked man, it frightens me," cried the girl.

"Frightens! frightens! ha! ha! I should say it would. Take that."

He flung the gleaming blade straight at her head, but with another scream she avoided it, and knelt cowering in the corner.

As the well-dressed villain stepped forward to secure the knife, a loud knocking occurred upon the wall under the picture, but it was impossible to remove that heavy panel, bolted as it was on the inside of Lenore's room.

Once more Tom Hammond grasped the knife and seizing the girl by her golden hair he forced her, struggling and screaming onto the bed.

The storm outside still raged in all its fury, drowning the fearful noise within.

George Markby heard his darling's screams, and in vain he shook and pounded on the panel.

A sudden thought entered his brain, he flung open the window, and shading his eyes from the blue-forked flash, he looked out. There was a ledge running above his own window which was continued onto the next house, and, with a moment's pause, he caught it, and flung himself out; there he hung forty feet above the ground by his hands, and edging along he quickly gained the window of his love, just in the nick of time, for Lenore lay on the bed, and as the villain's hand was raised to plunge the deadly knife into her young heart, George leaped through the window with a sudden crash, and drawing his pistol, its fearful contents entered Tom Hammond's body just above the heart. At the sound of the pistol shot Jake started away and left the house quickly by the window through which they had both entered, leaving poor old Grip unharmed. In terror he tottered up stairs and, as he reached his child's room he was astonished to see her fainting in the arms of a strange young man, and the body of his grace-half-nephew lying at their feet. A few words explained all. And old Grip mingled his tears with Lenore's, as the police were called in and Tom Hammond's corpse carried away.

What need to tell the sequel of our tale—it is as old as the hills—Lenore Markby has several children now, who are as old as she was when, on that dreadful night she gained a husband with her life between four walls.

EARLY PRINTING.—It is related that Faust, of Meutz, to whom the honor of printing is ascribed, having carried some of his Bibles to Paris, and offered them for sale as manuscripts, the French, after considering the number of the books, and their exact conformity to each other, and that the best book writers could not be so exact, concluded there was witchcraft in the case, and, by either actually indicting him as a conjurer, or threatening to do so, they extorted the secret; hence the origin of the popular story of the devil and Dr. Faust.

A horrible fall happened to a loafer at Salt Lake, recently. He was a large, powerful man, which made the struggle more fearful. He sauntered into a drug store there, recently, and sat down on a recently charged soda siphon. The proprietor slyly turned the cock, and in a moment the loafer was dancing on the top of a water spout, like a ball of cork on the top of a fountain.