

The Winterdyne Ghost

BY ALLENA AUDLEY.

CHAPTER III.

From New York Weekly: He went away after breakfast and she had called him back twice to put her soft arms around his neck...

She wandered restlessly about the house until afternoon, when her Cousin Ralph had brought a message from her friend, Lady Mary Russel, asking her to come and see her.

She had not waited long—only just long enough to change her dress for a walking-dress. She went out through the garden gate, and before she was quite out of sight, Miss Gilroy noiselessly lifted the latch to the little gate, and stole out after her with the same still, white look which she had worn all the morning.

The road to the Russel house, stretched away through a green hollow nearly a mile distant, and then on through a strip of lonesome woodland, and after that crept up among the low hills that lay between the Winterdyne property and the distant town of Cleonery.

Along this road Lady Blanche walked, dimly conscious all the time that Sir Hugh would have been better pleased if she had taken her pony carriage, but wholly unconscious of the quick footsteps that were following her own.

Just before she left the wood the road divided, and there Lady Blanche paused to rest—and there Miss Gilroy overtook her.

"You here, Frank!" Lady Blanche exclaimed, lifting her eyes in surprise to the face overshadowed by some passionate emotion.

But Miss Gilroy made no reply—only stood and gazed at her, until the horror of the moment seemed to steal like a specter between them and the light.

"Do you guess why I have followed you Blanche—Lady Winterdyne?"

"No," said Lady Blanche, slowly, locking her white hands together over her knees.

"It is because," Miss Gilroy said, in calm, even tones, "you have robbed me of all that I held dear in life. Why were you not content with one mans love? Why did you come with your innocent face and shy ways, and steal the heart I coveted?"

"Frank! what can you mean? Surely you are beside yourself, dear."

"No!" with sudden passion rising in her voice, and overmastering her for the moment, "it is you who are crazy, Lady Blanche. You have walked with open eyes to your own destruction! Your Cousin Ralph loves you so dearly, my Lady, that he will peril his good name to win you. He has a carriage here and a trusty driver, and instead of going on to see Lady Russel, who was never in better health than she is to-day, you will go with Ralph to some place where you will be secure from your husband's jealous search. Good-by Lady Blanche! A pleasant journey to you!"

With an alarmed cry Lady Blanche sprang from her seat, only to be seized by her Cousin Ralph's waiting hands, and to be hurried into the carriage that stood under the gloom of a black oak tree!

Then, Miss Gilroy's evil work accomplished, she hastened her backward steps, until she reached the gate of the garden at Winterdyne House.

For a few minutes after her return to the house Miss Gilroy stood still before the glass; then dropping into a chair, she exclaimed:

"It is done now, and I must manage to look as usual before any one comes in. It is really fortunate that I have been so pale of late, for I have no time to get up any color now."

Her wet clothes were put aside, a fresh and becoming dress put on, her hair rearranged, and then, as some one knocked suddenly at her door, a dash of color brightened her cheeks.

She drew her knitted shawl closer about her, sank down on a sofa with a book in her hand, and said, languidly:

"Come in." It was one of the under-servants sent to ask if she knew whether Lady Blanche wished tea served at the usual hour, or if they were to wait until Sir Hugh returned.

He had driven over to a neighboring town on business, directly after breakfast.

"You are to wait until Sir Hugh's return," she said pleasantly. "Lady Blanche went out for a walk, I think and will soon be in."

Ten minutes later she went down stairs.

[To be Continued.]

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