

## FOUL PLAY.

From Vicker's Fireside Companion.

### CHAPTER III. [CONTINUED.]

BY J. H. HESELTINE.

"Thank heaven! we have succeeded!" whispered Sir Tom in my ear, and the next moment we were groping our way towards the spot where the light shone faintly. But before we reached it a new turn was given to the drama, by the sudden, violent ringing of a bell, which resounded through the house.

"That must be Dallinger," said Sir Tom, to me, in his natural voice; "he has just come in time. Let him in, Wilson."

As he spoke, the figure of Grendall reappeared at the secret door, and his uplifted candle threw its light on Warburton's face and mine. Wilson, true to his lifelong habit of obedience, had disappeared to obey Sir Tom's orders.

Grendall's mean face was filled with absolute terror.

"Burglars! Thieves!" he cried, in a quivering voice of fear; and he made an attempt to close the door behind him. But Sir Tom was too quick for him, and in another moment all in darkness, while the two struggled together. The candle had fallen and gone out.

I struggled, with trembling fingers, to find my matches, but was far too excited to strike one until Warburton's voice, cool and authoritative, calmed me a little.

"I have him safe," he said. "For heaven's sake, strike a light and see where Decima is."

I obeyed at once, finding myself, when the match flared up, in a small, musty chamber, not six feet square, which contained nothing but one massive looking oak coffer, which almost filled it. If Miss Caryll's body had been placed in it there was little hope now that she could be alive, and the thought that we had succeeded too late, filled me with a sickening horror. The next moment, it seemed to me, Sir Tom and Dr. Dallinger were standing behind me. I suppose that Grendall had been left in the charge of Wilson, who had just left the brain specialist.

The baronet's hope did not seem yet to have deserted him.

"Open the box quick, for heaven's sake!" he said; and he began to tug madly and vainly at the padlocked lid.

"The key! the key!" he shouted, frantic with hope and fear. "Make Grendall give you the key."

Dallinger laid his hand restrainingly on his arm.

"Why open the box at all?" he asked quietly; and the baronet turned upon him furiously.

"Don't you see that he must have hidden Decima there," he said, hoarsely; and the physician shook his head.

"That is quite impossible, Sir Tom. See, you can tell by the cobwebs that the coffer has not been opened for years." The fact was so apparent that even Warburton realized it.

"And besides," said Gallinger, as quietly as before, "I have another reason for knowing that Miss Caryll is not hidden there."

Sir Tom stared at him, trembling all over, but unable to speak.

"What reason?" I asked for him.

"Because the lady is at present staying with an old nurse of hers in the neighboring village of Brenditch," said Dallinger, and Sir Tom

managed to speak at last.

"Alive?" he asked, trembling more than ever, and Dallinger nodded.

"Alive and well, and anxious to see you," he said, "to ask your forgiveness for having distrusted you. Let us get out of this musty hole, and I can tell you all about it. I suppose that you owe a hundred apologies to Mr. Grendall, although I am afraid that he did ignore the possibility of a trance in his eagerness to inherit the Abbey."

Dallinger's story of the affair, which we heard in the room which still contained Decima's coffin, increased even my faith in his astuteness, and made Sir Tom a devoted admirer of the great doctor for life.

"The idea of Grendall secreting the body seemed to me absurd from the first," he said, "and I had to form some other hypothesis for the disappearance. It was suggested by the letter which, according to Miss Grendall, caused the young lady's trance. In that letter, which Miss Grendall forged in order to separate you, Sir Tom, from your fiancée, you were supposed to inform Miss Grendall that your heart was really hers, but that the patent fact of Miss Caryll's devotion to you had made you conquer your own feelings through pity and self-interest, and you were supposed to beg Miss Grendall's forgiveness, and assure her that only the hopelessness of gaining her love had made you offer your hand but not your heart to the heiress. It was a cunningly devised letter, as was the plan by which the young person made Miss Caryll read it apparently without intending her to do so."

"Since your fiancée never doubted that you had really written it, you can understand the shock it caused her, and the determination which she made when she recovered from her trance to stand no more in the way of your supposed happiness. Better, she said to herself, with noble unselfishness, that everybody should think her dead."

"It was the first thought that occurred to her when she woke to find herself in her coffin. She was very weak, of course, and only Mary Augard heard her cry. It was that faithful young person that fed and clothed her during your absence in the village, and placed the lid on the coffin, in the hopes that nobody would take the trouble to remove it before the funeral. As you said, Mary Augard is devoted to her mistress, and she has a remarkable power of keeping a secret for so young a girl. Although I suspected what had happened, after hearing of the letter, I could not induce her to confess a word of it, and I was obliged to find out from the other servants who was the most likely person to whom Miss Caryll would naturally go, if my suppositions were correct. My guess turned out a right one. She went to an old nurse of hers at Brenditch, at whose house I found her when I left you."

"But why did you not tell me where you were going?" asked Sir Tom, excitedly, and Dallinger smiled his quiet smile.

"I never like to raise false hopes, and you had a clue of your own to follow up. Besides, I thought it possible that a complete stranger might have a greater chance of dispelling the young lady's doubts of your affection. I am glad to say that I have succeeded and Miss

Caryll is anxious to beg your forgiveness. I hurried back immediately, and since there was no further need of caution, rang the bell. To tell the truth, I was rather nervous of the position into which your clue might lead you."

"I am afraid it would have made me kill Grendall," said Sir Tom, with a great sigh of relief, "if he had not been able to produce the key of that coffer. By the way, what is in that coffer?"

Dallinger, who is not omniscient, had to confess his ignorance.

The Caryll heirlooms and other valuables which the coffer contained, were only revealed on Sir Tom's wedding day, and their presence was explained by the paper which Oliver Grendall was reading when we interrupted him in his study.

It was a message from her dead father, who had prepared this surprise as a wedding present to remind her of the parent who had loved her, and whom death was carrying away before she was able to think of his kindness.

"The estate that leave you will have become a matter-of-course to my little girl long before she realizes it as a gift from me," he had written. "I have saved up one present that will come fresh from my hand and make her think of the father who loved her."

It was Oliver Grendall's greed and curiosity, of course, which made him wait only until the household was asleep before finding the secret chamber described in the dead man's message.

Lady Tom's eyes were full of tears when she read it, and again when the coffer was opened, with all its wealth of jewelry and valuable ornaments.

"To think that I have slept in that room so long, and never dreamed of the coffer's existence," she said to her husband. "It contains by far my most valuable wedding present."

"Yes," said Sir Tom; "but the coffer contains nothing so valuable as I thought it did when I saw it first," and he gazed admiringly in to his wife's adoring eyes.

[THE END]

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	AM'T CLAIMED	AM'T ALLOWED
E C Taylor placing vault furniture etc for Co.	\$ 7 00	7 00
W H Caldwell serving subpoena in case State vs J Garred	4 50	4 50
Geo G Barnard blanks for Co.	1 35	1 35
Bong Gee washing for Co jail.	2 75	2 75
Ross E Morris & Co cost bills, inventory etc for coroner	5 00	5 00
A Gittings postage stamps for Co.	5 00	5 00
Chas Anderson board and washing for Joel Howard indigent	99 00	99 00
A Gittings money advanced to pliff's atty for their appearance in U. S. court	6 25	6 25
Mrs Chas Anderson attendance on Mrs Jordan, indigent	20 00	Disallowed
Jasper Davis justice fee Stenger vs Gittings.	15 65	"
Peter Davis constable "	5 20	"
Joe Morris serving summons Stenger vs Gittings.	3 30	"
Joe Drice witness and mileage "	6 00	"
M E Benson "	6 00	"
T A McKinnon 3 days surveying Burns and Silvies road	20 40	Continued
Cal Geer 3 " viewer "	8 40	"
John Worlow 3 " " "	8 40	"
D M McMenamy 3 days " "	8 40	"
Thos Lofton 3 " chain bearer "	8 40	"
Willie McKinnon 3 " " "	8 40	"
Frank Whitworth 4 " marker "	8 40	"
Glass & Prudhomme metallic case for county, building fund	250 00	"
Chas Anderson board for Frank Smith while in Co jail	25 70	25 70
Louis Racine house rent for holding inquest of S H Foreman	20 00	10 00
E O HERALD publishing schedule of expenditures July term and Sept term	41 50	41 50
Frank Jordan witness fee State vs John and Will Jordan	8 00	8 00
Ed Page " " " "	8 00	8 00
Fred Otley " " " "	8 00	8 00

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