

# The Return of Peter Grimm eBook

## The Return of Peter Grimm by David Belasco

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# Page 1

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## THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM

[Illustration: *David Belasco*]

## DAVID BELASCO

(Born, San Francisco, July 25, 1853)

The present Editor has had many opportunities of studying the theatre side of David Belasco. He has been privileged to hear expressed, by this Edison of our stage, diverse opinions about plays and players of the past, and about insurgent experiments of the immediate hour. He has always found a man quickly responsive to the best memories of the past, an artist naively childlike in his love of the theatre, shaped by old conventions and modified by new inventions. Belasco is the one individual manager to-day who has a workshop of his own; he is pre-eminently a creator, whereas his contemporaries, like Charles Frohman, were emphatically manufacturers of goods in the amusement line.

Such a man is entitled to deep respect, for the "carry-on" spirit with which he holds aloft the banner used by Boucicault, Wallack, Palmer, and Daly. It is wrong to credit him with deafness to innovation, with blindness to new combinations. He is neither of these. It is difficult to find a manager more willing to take infinite pains for effect, with no heed to the cost; it is impossible to place above him a director more successful in creating atmosphere and in procuring unity of cooperation from his staff. No one, unless it be Winthrop Ames, gives more personal care to a production than David Belasco. Considering that he was reared in the commercial theatre, his position is unique and distinctive.

In the years to come, when students enter the Columbia University Dramatic Museum, founded by Professor Brander Matthews, they will be able to judge, from the model of the stage set for "Peter Grimm," exactly how far David Belasco's much-talked-of realism went; they will rightly regard it as the high point in accomplishment before the advent of the "new" scenery, whose philosophy Belasco understands, but whose artistic spirit he cannot accept. Maybe, by that time, there will be preserved for close examination the manuscripts of Belasco's plays—models of thoroughness, of managerial foresight. The present Editor had occasion once to go through these typewritten copies; and there remains impressed on the memory the detailed exposition in "The Darling of the Gods." Here was not only indicated every shade of lighting, but the minute stage business for acting, revealing how wholly the manager gave himself over to the creation of atmosphere. I examined a mass of data—"boot plots," "light plots," "costume designs." Were the play ever published in this form, while it might confuse the general reader, it

would enlighten the specialist. It would be a key to realistic stage management, in which Belasco excels. Whether it be his own play, or that of some outsider, with whom, in the final product, Belasco always collaborates, the manuscripts, constituting his producing library, are evidence of his instinctive eye for stage effect.

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The details in the career of David Belasco are easily accessible. It is most unfortunate that the stupendous record of his life's accomplishment thus far, which, in two voluminous books, constituted the final labour of the late William Winter, is not more truly reflective of the man and his work. It fails to reproduce the flavour of the dramatic periods through which Belasco passed, in his association with Dion Boucicault as private secretary, in his work with James A. Herne at Baldwin's Theatre, in San Francisco, in his pioneer realism at the old New York Madison Square Theatre, when the Mallory Brothers were managers, Steele Mackaye was one of the stock dramatists, Henry DeMille was getting ready for collaboration with Belasco, Daniel Frohman was house-manager and Charles Frohman was out on the road, trying his abilities as advance-man for Wallack and Madison Square successes. Winter's life is orderly and matter-of-fact; Belasco's real life has always been melodramatic and colourful.

His early struggles in San Francisco, his initial attempts at playwriting, his intercourse with all the big actors of the golden period of the '60's—Mr. Belasco has written about them in a series of magazine reminiscences, which, if they are lacking in exact sequence, are measure of his type of mind, of his vivid memory, of his personal opinions.

Belasco has reached his position through independence which, in the '90's, brought down upon him the relentless antagonism of the Theatrical Trust—a combine of managers that feared the advent of so individualistic a playwright and manager. They feared his ability to do so many things well, and they disliked the way the public supported him. This struggle, tempestuous and prolonged, is in the records.

A man who has any supreme, absorbing interest at all is one who thrives on vagaries. Whatever Belasco has touched since his days of apprenticeship in San Francisco, he has succeeded in imposing upon it what is popularly called "the Belasco atmosphere." Though he had done a staggering amount of work before coming to New York, and though, when he went to the Lyceum Theatre, he and Henry DeMille won reputation by collaborating in "The Wife," "Lord Chumley," "The Charity Ball," and "Men and Women," he was probably first individualized in the minds of present-day theatregoers when Mrs. Leslie Carter made a sensational swing across stage, holding on to the clapper of a bell in "The Heart of Maryland." Even thus early, he was displaying characteristics for which, in later days, he remained unexcelled. He was helping Bronson Howard to touch up "Baron Rudolph," "The Banker's Daughter" and "The Young Mrs. Winthrop;" he was succeeding with a dramatization of H. Rider Haggard's "She," where William Gillette had failed in the attempt.

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“The Heart of Maryland” established both Belasco and Mrs. Carter. Then he started on that extravagant period of spectacular drama, which gave to the stage such memorable pictures as “Du Barry,” with Mrs. Carter, and “The Darling of the Gods,” with Blanche Bates. In such pieces he literally threw away the possibilities of profit, in order to gratify his decorative sense. Out of that time came two distinctive pieces—one, the exquisitely poignant “Madame Butterfly” and the other, “The Girl of the Golden West”—both giving inspiration to the composer, Puccini, who discovered that a Belasco play was better suited for the purposes of colourful Italian opera than any other American dramas he examined.

Counting his western vicissitudes as one period, and the early New York days as a second, one might say that in the third period David Belasco exhibited those excellences and limitations which were thereafter to mark him and shape all his work. There is an Oriental love of colour and effect in all he does; but there is no monotony about it. “The Darling of the Gods” was different from “The Girl of the Golden West,” and both were distinct from “The Rose of the Rancho.” It is this scenic decorativeness which has enriched many a slim piece, accepted by him for presentation, and such a play has always been given that care and attention which has turned it eventually into a Belasco “offering.” None of his collaborators will gainsay this genius of his. John Luther Long’s novel was unerringly dramatized; Richard Walton Tully, when he left the Belasco fold, imitated the Belasco manner, in “The Bird of Paradise” and “Omar, the Tentmaker.” And that same ability Belasco possesses to dissect the heart of a romantic piece was carried by him into war drama, and into parlour comedies, and plays of business condition. I doubt whether “The Auctioneer” would read well, or, for the matter of that, “The Music Master;” Charles Klein has written more coherent dialogue than is to be found in these early pieces. But they are vivid in mind because of Belasco’s management, and because he saw them fitted to the unique figure of David Warfield.

But a Belasco success is furthered by the tremendous public curiosity that follows him in all he does. There is a wizardry about him which fascinates, and makes excellent reading in the press. Long before I saw the three-winged screen upon which it is his custom to sort out and pin up his random notes for a play, it was featured in the press. So were pictures of his “collection,” in rooms adjoining his studio—especially his Napoleonic treasures which are a by-product of his Du Barry days. No man of the theatre is more constantly on the job than he. It is said that old John Dee, the famous astrologer whom Queen Elizabeth so often consulted, produced plays when he was a student at Cambridge University, with stage effects which only one gifted in the secrets of magic could have consummated. Belasco paints

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with an electric switchboard, until the emotion of his play is unmistakably impressed upon the eye. At a moment's notice he will root out his proscenium arch, and build a "frame" which obliterates the footlights; at another time he will build an "apron" to his stage, not for its historical significance, but merely to give depth and mellowness to such an ecclesiastical picture as Knoblauch's "Marie-Odile." He has spent whole nights alone in the theatre auditorium with his electrician, "feeling" for the "siesta" somnolence which carried his audience instantly into the Spanish heat of old California, in "The Rose of the Rancho;" and the moving scenery which took the onlooker from the foot-hills of the Sierras to the cabin of "The Girl of the Golden West" was a "trick" well worth the experiment.

Thus, no manager is more ingenious, more resourceful than David Belasco. But his care for detail is often a danger; he does not know fully the value of elimination; the eye of the observer is often worried by the multiplicity of detail, where reticence would have been more quickly effective. This is the Oriental in Belasco. His is a strange blend of realism and decorativeness.

"A young man came to me once," he said to me, "with the manuscript of a new play, which had possibilities in it. But after I had talked with him awhile, I found him preaching the doctrines of the 'new' art. So I said to him, 'My dear sir, here is your manuscript. The first scene calls for a tenement-house set. How would you mount it?'"

He smiled, maybe at the recollection of Gordon Craig's statements that "actuality, accuracy of detail, are useless on the stage," and that "all is a matter of proportion and nothing to do with actuality."

"I felt," Mr. Belasco continued, "that the young man would find difficulty in reconciling the nebulous perspectives of Mr. Craig with the squalor of a city block. I said to him, 'I have been producing for many years, and I have mounted various plays calling for differing atmospheres. I don't want to destroy your ideals regarding the 'new art', but I want you to realize that a manager has to conform his taste to the material he has in hand. I consider that one of the most truthful sets I have ever had on the stage was the one for the second act of Eugene Walter's 'The Easiest Way'. A boarding-house room on the top floor cannot be treated in any other way than as a boarding-house room. And should I take liberties with what we know for a fact exists in New York, on Seventh Avenue, just off Broadway, then I am a bad producer and do not know my business. I do not say there is no suggestion in realism; it is unwise to clutter the stage with needless detail. But we cannot idealize a little sordid ice-box where a working girl keeps her miserable supper; we cannot symbolize a broken jug standing in a wash-basin of loud design. Those are the necessary evils of a boarding-house, and I must be true to them'."

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One will have to give Mr. Belasco this credit, that whatever he is, he is *it* to the bent of his powers. Had he lived in Elizabeth's day, he would have been an Elizabethan heart and soul. But his habit is formed as a producer, and he conforms the "new" art to this habit as completely as Reinhardt Reinhardtized the morality play, "Everyman," or Von Hofmannsthal Teutonized "Elektra."

"The Return of Peter Grimm" has been chosen for the present collection. It represents a Belasco interest and conviction greater than are to be found in any of his other plays. While there are no specific claims made for the fact that *Peter materializes after his death, it is written with plausibility and great care. The psychic phenomena are treated as though real, and our sympathy for Peter when he returns is a human sympathy for the inability of a spirit to get his message across. The theme is not etherealized; one does not see through a mist dimly. There was not even an attempt, in the stage production of the piece, which occurred at the Belasco Theatre, New York, on October 17, 1911, to use the "trick" of gauze and queer lights; there was only one supreme thing done—to make the audience feel that Peter was on a plane far removed from the physical, by the ease and naturalness with which he slipped past objects, looked through people, and was unheeded by those whom he most wanted to influence. The remarkable unity of idea sustained by Mr. Belasco as manager, and by Mr. Warfield as actor, was largely instrumental in making the play a triumph. The playwright did not attempt to create supernatural mood; he did not resort to natural tricks such as Maeterlinck used in "L'Intruse," or as Mansfield employed in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." He reduced what to us seems, at the present moment, a complicated explanation of a psychic condition to its simple terms, and there was nothing strange to the eye or unusual in the situation. One cannot approach the theme of the psychic without a personal concern. Sardou's "Spiritisme" was the culmination of years of investigation; the subject was one with which Belasco likewise has had much to do during the past years.*

It is a privilege to be able to publish "Peter Grimm." Thus far not many of the Belasco plays are available in reading form. "May Blossom" and "Madame Butterfly" are the only ones. "Peter Grimm" has been novelized—in the day, now fortunately past, when a play was novelized in preference to perpetuating its legitimate form. And excerpts from the dialogue have been used. But this is the first time the complete text has appeared and it has been carefully edited by the author himself. In addition to which Mr. Belasco has written the following account of "Peter's" evolution, to be used in this edition.

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The play, “The Return of Peter Grimm,” is an expression in dramatic form of my ideas on a subject which I have pondered over since boyhood: “Can the dead come back?” *Peter Grimm* did come back. At the same time, I inserted a note in my program to say that I advanced no positive opinion; that the treatment of the play allowed the audience to believe that it had actually seen *Peter*, or that he had not been seen but existed merely in the minds of the characters on the stage. Spiritualists from all over the country flocked to see “The Return of Peter Grimm,” and I have heard that it gave comfort to many. It was a difficult theme, and more than once I was tempted to give it up. But since it has given relief to those who have loved and lost, it was not written in vain. Victorian Sardou dealt with the same subject, but he did not show the return of the dead; instead, he delivered a spirit message by means of knocking on a table. His play was not a success, and I was warned by my friends to let the subject alone; but it is a subject that I never can or never have let alone; yet I never went to a medium in my life—could not bring myself to do it. My dead must come to me, and have come to me—or so I believe.

The return of the dead is the eternal riddle of the living. Although mediums have been exposed since the beginning of time, and so-called “spiritualism” has fallen into disrepute over and over again, it emerges triumphantly in spite of charlatans, and once more becomes the theme of the hour.

The subject first interested me when, as a boy, I read a story in which the dead “foretold dangers to loved ones.” My mother had “premonitions” which were very remarkable, and I was convinced, at the time, that the dead gave these messages to her. She personally could not account for them. I probably owe my life to one of my mother’s premonitions. I was going on a steamboat excursion with my school friends, when my mother had a strong presentiment of danger, and begged me not to go. She gave in to my entreaties, however, much against her will. Just as the boat was about to leave the pier, a vision of her pale face and tear-filled eyes came to me. I heard her voice repeating, “I wish you would not go, Davy.” The influence was so strong that I dashed down the gang-plank as it was being pulled in. The boat met with disaster, and many of the children were killed or wounded. These premonitions have also come to me, but I do not believe as I did when a boy that they are warnings from the dead, although I cannot explain them, and they are never wrong; the message is always very clear.

My mother convinced me that the dead come back by coming to me at the time of her death—or so I believe. One night, after a long, hard rehearsal, I went to bed, worn out, and fell into a deep sleep. I was awakened by my mother, who stood in my bedroom and called to me. She seemed to be clothed in white. She repeated my name over and over—the name she called me in my boyhood: “Davy! Davy!” She told me not to grieve—that she was dying; that she *had* to see me. I distinctly saw her and heard her speak.



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She was in San Francisco at the time—I, in New York. After she passed out of the room, I roused my family and told what I had heard and seen. I said: “My mother is dead. I know she is dead;” but I could not convince my family that I had not been dreaming. I was very restless—could not sleep again. The next day (we were rehearsing “Zaza”) I went out for luncheon during the recess with a member of my company. He was a very absent-minded man, and at the table he took a telegram from his pocket which he said he had forgotten to give me: it announced the death of my mother at the time I had seen her in my room. I am aware that this could be explained as thought transference, accompanied by a dream in which my mother appeared so life-like as to make me believe the dream real. This explanation, however, does not satisfy me. I am sure that I did see her. Other experiences of a kindred nature served to strengthen my belief in the naturalness of what we call the supernatural. I decided to write a play dealing with the return of the dead: so it followed that when I was in need of a new play for David Warfield, I chose this subject. Slight of figure, unworldly, simple in all his ways, Warfield was the very man to bring a message back from the other world. Warfield has always appeared to me as a character out of one of Grimm’s Fairy Tales. He was, to my mind, the one man to impersonate a spirit and make it seem real. So my desire to write a play of the dead, and my belief in Warfield’s artistry culminated in “The Return of Peter Grimm.” The subject was very difficult, and the greatest problem confronting me was to preserve the illusion of a spirit while actually using a living person. The apparition of the ghost in “Hamlet” and in “Macbeth,” the spirits who return to haunt *Richard III*, and other ghosts of the theatre convinced me that green lights and dark stages with spot-lights would not give the illusion necessary to this play. All other spirits have been visible to someone on the stage, but *Peter was visible to none, save the dog (who wagged his tail as his master returned from the next world) and to Frederik*, the nephew, who was to see him but for a second. *Peter was to be in the same room with the members of the household, and to come into close contact with them. They were to feel his influence without seeing him. He was to move among them, even appear to touch them, but they were to look past him or above him—never into his face. He must, of course, be visible to the audience. My problem, then, was to reveal a dead man worrying about his earthly home, trying to enlist the aid of anybody—everybody—to take his message. Certainly no writer ever chose a more difficult task; I must say that I was often very much discouraged, but something held me to the work in spite of myself. The choice of an occupation for my leading character was very limited. I gave Peter various trades and professions, none of which seemed to suit the part, until I made him a quaint old Dutchman, a nursery-man who loved his garden and perennials—the flowers that pass away and return season after season. This gave a clue to his character; gave him the right to found his belief in immortality on the lessons learned in his garden.*



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“God does not send us strange flowers every year, When the warm winds blow o’er the pleasant places, The same fair flowers lift up the same fair faces. The violet is here ... It all comes back, the odour, grace and hue, ... it IS the THING WE KNEW. So after the death winter it shall be,” *etc.*

Against a background of budding trees, I placed the action of the play in the month of April; April with its swift transitions from bright sunlight to the darkness of passing clouds and showers. April weather furnished a natural reason for raising and lowering the lights—that the dead could come and go at will, seen or unseen. The passing rain-storms blended with the tears of those weeping for their loved ones. A man who comes back must not have a commonplace name—a name suggestive of comedy—and I think I must have read over every Dutch name that ever came out of Holland before I selected the name of “*Peter Grimm.*” It was chosen because it suggested (to me) a stubborn old man with a sense of justice—whose spirit *would* return to right a wrong and adjust his household affairs.

The stage setting was evolved after extreme care and thought. It was a mingling of the past and present. It was *Peter’s* sitting-room, with a mixture of furniture and family portraits and knick-knacks, each with an association of its own. It was such a room as would be dear to all old-fashioned, home-loving people—unlike a room of the present, from which every memento of parents and grand-parents would be banished in favour of strictly modern or antique formal furniture. In this room, the things of *Peter’s* father mingled with those of *Peter’s* boyhood and young manhood. This was done in order that the influence of his familiar belongings might be felt by the people of the play. When his niece stood with her hand on his chair; when she saw the lilies he loved; when she touched his pipe, or any of the familiar objects dear to her because of their associations, \_ PETER was brought vividly back to her mind, although she could not see him.

*Peter’s* clothing was selected with unusual care so that it would not catch the reflection from the lights. Months of preparation and weeks of rehearsal were necessary.

One detail that was especially absorbing was the matter of lighting; catching the high lights and shadows. This was the first time the “bridge of lights” was used on any stage. Lighting has always been to me more than mere illumination. It is a revelation of the heart and soul of the story. It points the way. Lights should be to the play what the musical accompaniment is to the singer. A wordless story could be told by lights. Lights should be mixed as a painter mixes his colours—a bit of pink here, of blue there; a touch of red, a lavender or a deep purple, with shadows intervening to give the desired effect. Instead of throwing a mysterious light upon the figure of *Peter*, I decided to reverse the process and put no lights on him. The light was on the other people—the people still in life, with just enough amber to give them colour.

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The play was cut and cut until there was not a superfluous line in it. Every word was necessary, although it might not have seemed so when read. It was only after the play was recalled as a whole, that the necessity for everything could be seen. The coming of the circus with the clown singing "Uncle Rat has come to town," and the noise of the drums, are instances of this. It seemed like halting the action to bring in a country circus procession, but its necessity is shown in the final scene when the little boy, *William*, passes away. It is always cruel to see a child die on the stage. The purpose of the coming of the circus was to provide a pleasant memory for the child to recall as his mind wandered away from earth, and to have his death a happy one. This was made more effective when Peter took up the refrain of the song as though he knew what was passing in the dying boy's mind, showing that the dead have their own world and their own understanding.

No company of players ever had situations so fraught with danger of failure. They were very nervous. Mr. Warfield appeared in the part for several weeks before he felt at ease as the living man who returns as his own spirit.

There is one memory associated with the play which will remain in my heart as long as it beats. This piece was written during the last year-and-a-half of my daughter Augusta's life. For some reason, which I could not understand then, but which was clear to me later, the subject fascinated her. She showed the greatest interest in it. The dear child was preparing to leave the world, but we did not know it. When the manuscript was finished, she kept it by her side, and, notwithstanding her illness, saw the dress rehearsal. During the writing of the play, she often said, "Yes, father, it is all true. I believe every word of it." It was as though the thought embodied in the play gave her comfort. When we discovered how ill she was, I took her to Asheville, North Carolina, thinking the climate would help her. She grew worse. Still hoping, we went to Colorado, and there I lost her.

It has seemed to me since that the inspiration compelling me to go on with "Peter Grimm," in spite of its difficulties, came from this daughter who died.

I cannot close this reminiscence of "The Return of Peter Grimm" without acknowledging the help and inspiration received from David Warfield, without whose genius and personality the play would not have been possible.

I doubt whether Mr. Belasco has ever infused so much imaginative ingenuity into the structure and picture of a play. Even in the reading, its quaint charm is instantly revealed. We quite agree with Winter in saying that the effectiveness of the role of *PETER lies in its simplicity. This was the triumph of Warfield's interpretation. It may have been difficult to attain the desired effects, but once reached, technical skill did the rest. It will be noted on the program that credit is given for an idea to Mr. Cecil DeMille, son of Mr. Belasco's former collaborator. "The Return of Peter Grimm" was scheduled*

*for production in London by Sir Herbert Tree, but plans were cut short by that actor's sudden death, July 2, 1917.*

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Mr. Belasco's interest in the psychic and the supernatural has been seen in other plays, notably in "The Case of Becky," by Edward Locke, and in Henry Bernstein's "The Secret"—example of Belasco's most skilled adaptation from the French, though we remember the excellence of his version of Berton and Simon's "Zaza." That he thought Warfield admirably suited to this type of play was one of the chief incentives which prompted him to write "Van Der Decken" (produced on the road, December 12, 1915), a play whose theme is "The Flying Dutchman"—and not thus far given in New York.[A]

[Footnote A: Some of Mr. Belasco's recent opinions regarding the stage have been published in book form, under the title, "The Theatre through its Stage Door" (Harper).]

[Illustration: BELASCO THEATRE

FORTY FOURTH STREET near BROADWAY  
Under the Sole Management of DAVID BELASCO

BEGINNING TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 17, 1911.  
Matinees Thursday and Saturday.

DAVID BELASCO  
Presents  
DAVID WARFIELD  
-IN-  
THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM

A PLAY, IN THREE ACTS.

By DAVID BELASCO.

"Only one thing really counts—only one thing—love. It is the only thing that tells in the long run; nothing else endures to the end."

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

PETER GRIMM.....	DAVID WARFIELD
FREDERIK, his nephew.....	JOHN SAINPOLIS
JAMES HARTMAN.....	THOMAS MEIGHAN
ANDREW MacPHERSON.....	JOSEPH BRENNAN
REV. HENRY BATHOLOMMEY.....	WILLIAM BOAG
COLONEL TOM LAWTON.....	JOHN F. WEBBER
WILLEM.....	PERCY HELTON
KATHRIEN.....	JANET DUNBAR
MRS. BATHOLOMMEY.....	MARIE BATES



MARTA.....MARIE REICHARDT  
THE CLOWN.....TONY BEVAN

**PROGRAM CONTINUED ON SECOND PAGE  
FOLLOWING**

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PROGRAM CONTINUED.

SYNOPSIS.

The scene of the play is laid in the living room of Peter Grimm's home at Grimm Manor, a small town in New York State, founded by early settlers from Holland.

The first act takes place at eleven o'clock in the morning, on a fine spring day.

The second act passes ten days later, towards the close of a rainy afternoon.

The third act takes place at twenty minutes to twelve on the same night.

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FOLLOWING**

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PROGRAM CONTINUED.



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NOTE—Mr. Belasco does not intend to advance any theory as to the probability of the return of the main character of this play. For the many, it may be said that he could exist only in the minds of the characters grouped about him—in their subconscious memories. For *the few*, his presence will embody the theory of the survival of persistent personal energy. This character has, so far as possible, been treated to accord with either thought. The initial idea of the play was first suggested as a dramatic possibility by Mr. Cecil DeMille, to whom Mr. Belasco acknowledges his indebtedness. A conversation with Professor James, of Harvard, and the works of Professor Hyslop of the American branch of the London Society of Psychical Research have also aided Mr. Belasco.

The play produced under the personal supervision of Mr. Belasco.

Stage Director.....William J. Dean

Stage Manager.....William Boag

Scene by Ernest Gros.

Scenery built by Charles J. Canon

Electrical effects by Louis Hartman.]

## THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM

*A PLAY IN THREE ACTS*

By DAVID BELASCO

1915

[The Editor wishes to thank Mr. David Belasco for his courtesy in granting permission to include "The Return of Peter Grimm" in the present Collection. All its rights are fully secured, and proceedings will immediately be taken against any one attempting to infringe them.]

### ACT I.

*The scene shows a comfortable living-room in an old house. The furniture was brought to America by PETER GRIMM'S\_ ancestors. The GRIMMS were, for the most part, frugal people, but two or three fine paintings have been inherited by PETER.*



*A small, old-fashioned piano stands near the open window, a few comfortable chairs, a desk with a hanging lamp above it, and an arm-chair in front of it, a quaint old fireplace, a Dutch wall clock with weights, a sofa, a hat-rack, and mahogany flower-pot holders, are set about the room; but the most treasured possession is a large family Bible lying on a table. A door leads to a small office occupied by PETER'S\_ secretary.\_*

*Stairs lead to the sleeping-rooms above. Through the window, hothouses, beds of tulips, and other flowers, shrubs and trees are seen. "Peter Grimm's Botanic Gardens" supply seeds, plants, shrubbery and trees to the wholesale, as well as retail trade, and the view suggests the importance of the industry. An old Dutch windmill, erected by a Colonial ancestor, gives a quaint touch, to the picture. Although PETER GRIMM\_ is a very wealthy man, he lives as simply as his ancestors.\_*



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*As the curtain is raised, the room is empty; but CATHERINE\_ is heard singing in the dining-room. JAMES HARTMAN, PETER'S secretary, opens his door to listen, a small bundle of letters in his hand. He is a well set up young man, rather blunt in his manner, and a trifle careless in his dress. After a pause, he goes back into the office, leaving the door ajar. Presently CATHERINE enters. In spite of her youth and girlish appearance, she is a good, thrifty housekeeper. She wears a simple summer gown, and carries a bunch of gay tulips and an old silver pitcher, from which she presently pours water into the Harlequin Delft vase on PETER GRIMM'S desk. She peeps into the office, retreating, with a smile on her lips, as JAMES appears.\_*

CATHERINE. Did I disturb you, James?

JAMES. [*On the threshold.*] No indeed.

CATHERINE. Do you like your new work?

JAMES. Anything to get back to the gardens, Catherine. I've always done outside work and I prefer it; but I would shovel dirt rather than work for any one else.

CATHERINE. [*Amused.*] James!

JAMES. It's true. When the train reached the Junction, and a boy presented the passengers with the usual flower and the "compliments of Peter Grimm"—it took me back to the time when that was my job; and when I saw the old sign, "Grimm's Botanic Gardens and Nurseries"—I wanted to jump off the train and run through the grounds. It seemed as though every tulip called "hello" to me.

CATHERINE. Too bad you left college! You had only one more year.

JAMES. Poor father! He's very much disappointed. Father has worked in the dirt in overalls—a gardener—all his life; and, of course, he over-estimates an education. He's far more intelligent than most of our college professors.

CATHERINE. I understand why you came back. You simply must live where things grow, mustn't you, James? So must I. Have you seen our orchids?

JAMES. Orchids are pretty; but they're doing wonderful things with potatoes these days. I'd rather improve the breed of a squash than to have an orchid named after me. Wonderful discovery of Luther Burbank's— creating an edible cactus. Sometimes I feel bitter thinking what I might have done with vegetables, when I was wasting time studying Greek.

CATHERINE. [*Changing suddenly.*] James: why don't you try to please Uncle Peter Grimm?



JAMES. I do; but he is always asking my opinion, and when I give it, he blows up.

CATHERINE. [*Coaxingly.*] Don't be quite so blunt. Try to be like one of the family.

JAMES. I'm afraid I shall never be like one of *this* family.

CATHERINE. Why not? I'm no relation at all; and yet—

JAMES. [*Making a resolution.*] I'll do my best to agree with him. [*Offering his hand.*] It's a promise. [*They shake hands.*]



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CATHERINE. Thank you, James.

JAMES. [*Still holding her hand.*] It's good to be back, Catherine. It's good to see you again.

*He is still holding her hand when FREDERIK GRIMM\_ enters. He is the son of PETER'S dead sister, and has been educated by\_ PETER to carry on his work. He is a graduate of Amsterdam College, Holland, and, in appearance and manner, suggests the foreign student. He has managed to pull through college creditably, making a specialty of botany. PETER has given him the usual trip through Europe, and FREDERIK has come to his rich uncle to settle down and learn his business. He has been an inmate of the household for a few months. He poses as a most industrious young man, but is, at heart, a shirker.*

FREDERIK. Where's Uncle?

JAMES. Good-morning, Frederik. Your uncle's watching father spray the plum trees. The black knot's after them again.

FREDERIK. I can hardly keep my eyes open. Uncle wakes me up every morning at five—creaking down the old stairs. [*Eyeing CATHERINE admiringly.*] You're looking uncommonly pretty this morning, Kitty. [*CATHERINE edges away and runs upstairs to her room.*

FREDERIK. Hartman!

JAMES. Yes?

FREDERIK. Miss Catherine and you and I are no longer children—our positions are altered—please remember that. I'm no longer a student home for the holidays from Amsterdam College. I'm here to learn the business which I am expected to carry on. Miss Catherine is a young lady now, and my uncle looks upon her as his daughter. You are here as my uncle's secretary. That's how we three stand in this house. Don't call me "Frederik," and hereafter be good enough to say, "Miss Grimm."

JAMES. [*Amiably.*] Very well.

FREDERIK. James: there's a good opportunity for a young man like you in our Florida house. I think that if I spoke for you—

JAMES. Why do you wish to ship me off to Florida?

FREDERIK. I don't understand you, Hartman. I don't wish to ship you off. I am merely thinking of your future. You seem to have changed since—



JAMES. We've all grown up, as you just said. [JAMES *has laid some mail on the desk, and is about to leave the room, when FREDERIK speaks again, but in a more friendly manner.*

FREDERIK. The old man's aging; do you notice it?

JAMES. Your uncle's mellowing, yes; but that's only to be expected. He's changing foliage with the years.

FREDERIK. He's growing as old-fashioned as his hats. In my opinion, this would be the time to sell.

JAMES. [*Astonished.*] Sell? Sell a business that has been in his family for—why, it's his religion!

FREDERIK. It's at the height of its prosperity. It would sell like that! [*Snapping his fingers.*] What was the last offer the old man refused from Hicks, of Rochester, Jim?



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JAMES. [*Noticing the sudden friendliness—looking at FREDERIK, half-amused, half-disgusted.*] Can't repeat correspondence, Mr. Grimm. [*Amazed.*] Good heavens! You surprise me! Would you sell your great, great grandfather? I learned to read by studying his obituary out in the peach orchard: "Johann Grimm, of Holland, an upright settler." There isn't a day your uncle doesn't tell me that you are to carry on the work.

FREDERIK. So I am, but it's not *my* religion. [*Sarcastically.*] Every man can't be blessed like you with the soul of a market gardener—a peddler of turnips.

JAMES. [*Thinking—ignoring FREDERIK.*] He's a great old man—your uncle. It's a big name—Grimm—Peter Grimm. The old man knows his business—he certainly knows his business. [*Changing.*] God! It's an awful thought that a man must die and carry all that knowledge of orchids to the grave! I wonder if it doesn't all count somewhere.... I must attend to the mail.

PETER GRIMM *enters from the gardens. He is a well-preserved man of sixty, very simple and plain in his ways. He has not changed his style of dress in the past thirty years. His clothing, collar, tie, hat and shoes are all old-fashioned. He is an estimable man, scrupulously honest, gentle and sympathetic; but occasionally he shows a flash of Dutch stubbornness.*

FREDERIK. I ran over from the office, Uncle Peter, to make a suggestion.

PETER. Yes?

FREDERIK. I suggest that we insert a full-page cut of your new tulip in our mid-summer floral almanac.

PETER. [*Who has hung up his hat on his own particular peg, affably assenting.*] A good idea!

FREDERIK. The public is expecting it.

PETER. You think so, my boy?

FREDERIK. Why, Uncle, you've no idea of the stir this tulip has created. People stop me in the street to speak of it.

PETER. Well, well, you surprise me. I didn't think it so extraordinary.

FREDERIK. I've had a busy morning, sir, in the packing house.

PETER. That's good. I'm glad to see you taking hold of things, Fritz. [*Humourously, touching FREDERIK affectionately on the shoulder.*] We mustn't waste time; for that's the stuff life's made of. [*Seriously.*] It's a great comfort to me, Frederik, to know that



when I'm in my little private room with James, or when I've slipped out to the hothouses, —you are representing me in the offices—*young* Mr. Grimm.... James, are you ready for me?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. I'll attend to the mail in a moment. [*Missing CATHERINE, he calls according to the household signal.*] Ou—oo! [*He is answered by CATHERINE, who immediately appears from her room, and comes running downstairs.*] Catherine, I have news for you. I've named the new rose after you: "Katie—a hardy bloomer." It's as red as the ribbon in your hair.



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CATHERINE. Thank you, Uncle Peter, thank you very much. And now you must have your cup of coffee.

PETER. What a fine little housewife! A busy girl about the house, eh, Fritz? Is there anything you need to-day, Katie?

CATHERINE. No, Uncle Peter, I have everything I need, thank you.

PETER. Not everything,—not everything, my dear. [*Smiling at FREDERIK. JAMES, ignored, is standing in the background.*] Wait! Wait till I give you a husband. I have my plans. [*Looking from FREDERIK to CATHERINE.*] People don't always know what I'm doing, but I'm a great man for planning. Come, Katie, tell me, on this fine spring morning, what sort of husband would you prefer?

CATHERINE. [*Annoyed,—with girlish impatience.*] You're always speaking of weddings, Uncle Peter. I don't know what's come over you of late.

PETER. It's nesting time, ... spring weddings are in the air; besides, my grandmother's linen-chest upstairs must be used again for you [*Impulsively drawing CATHERINE to him.*], my house fairy. [*Kisses her.*] There, I mustn't tease her. But I leave it to Fritz if I don't owe her a fine husband—this girl of mine. Look what she has done for *me!*

CATHERINE. Done for you? I do you the great favour to let *you* do everything for *me*.

PETER. Ah, but who lays out my linen? Who puts flowers on my desk every day? Who gets up at dawn to eat breakfast with me? Who sees that I have my second cup of coffee? But better than all that—who brings youth into my old house?

CATHERINE. That's not much—youth.

PETER. No? We'll leave it to Fritz. [*FREDERIK, amused, listens in silence.*] What should I be now—a rough old fellow—a bachelor—without youth in my house, eh? God knows! Katie has softened me towards all the ladies—er—mellowed me as time has mellowed my old pictures. [*Points to pictures.*] And I was growing hard—hard and fussy.

CATHERINE. [*Laughing.*] Ah, Uncle Peter, have I made you take a liking to all the rest of the ladies?

PETER. Yes. It's just as it is when you have a pet: you like all that breed. You can only see *your* kind of kitten.

JAMES. [*Coming down a step, impressed by PETER'S remark—speaking earnestly.*] That's so, sir. [*The others are surprised.*] I hadn't thought of it in that way, but it's true. You study a girl for the first time, and presently you notice the same little traits in every one of them. It makes you feel differently towards all the rest.



PETER. [*Amused.*] Why, James, what do you know about girls? “Bachelor” is stamped all over you—you’re positively labelled.

JAMES. [*Good-naturedly.*] Perhaps. [*Goes back to the office.*]

PETER. Poor James! What a life before him! When a bachelor wants to order a three-rib roast, who’s to eat it? I never had a proper roast until Katie and Frederik came to make up my family; [*Rubbing his hands.*] but the roasts are not big enough. [*Giving FREDERIK a knowing look.*] We must find a husband.



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CATHERINE. You promised not to—

PETER. I want to see a long, long table with plenty of young people.

CATHERINE. I'll leave the room, Uncle.

PETER. With myself at the head, carving, carving, carving, watching the plates come back, and back, and back. [*As she is about to go.*] There, there, not another word of this to-day.

*The 'phone rings. JAMES re-enters and answers it.*

JAMES. Hello! [*Turns.*] Rochester asks for Mr. Peter Grimm to the 'phone. Another message from Hicks' greenhouses.

PETER. Ask them to excuse me.

JAMES. [*Bluntly.*] You'll have to excuse him. [*Listens.*] No, no, the gardens are not in the market. You're only wasting your time.

PETER. Tc! Tc! James! Can't you say it politely? [*JAMES listens at 'phone.*

FREDERIK. [*Aside to PETER.*] James is so painfully blunt. [*Then changing.*] Is it—er—a good offer? Is Hicks willing to make it worth while? [*Catching his uncle's astonished eye—apologetically.*] Of course, I know you wouldn't think of—

CATHERINE. I should say not! My home? An offer? *Our* gardens? I should say not!

FREDERIK. Mere curiosity on my part, that's all.

PETER. Of course, I understand. Sell out? No indeed. We are thinking of the next generation.

FREDERIK. Certainly, sir.

PETER. We're the last of the family. The business—that's Peter Grimm. It will soon be Frederik Grimm. The love for the old gardens is in our blood.

FREDERIK. It is, sir. [*Lays a fond hand on PETER'S shoulder.*

PETER. [*Struck.*] I have an idea. We'll print the family history in our new floral almanac.

FREDERIK. [*Suppressing a yawn.*] Yes, yes, a very good idea.

PETER. Katie, read it to us and let us hear how it sounds.



CATHERINE. *[Reads.]* “In the spring of 1709 there settled on Quassick Creek, New York State, Johann Grimm, aged twenty-two, husbandman and vine-dresser, also Johanna, his wife.”

PETER. Very interesting.

FREDERIK. Very interesting, indeed.

CATHERINE. “To him Queen Anne furnished one square, one rule, one compass, two whipping saws and several small pieces. To him was born—”

PETER. *[Interrupting.]* You left out two augurs.

CATHERINE. *[Reads.]* Oh, yes—“and two augurs. To him was born a son—”

PETER. *[Who knows the history by heart, has listened, his eyes almost suffused—repeating each word to himself, as she reads. He has lived over each generation down to the present and nods in approval as she reaches this point.]* The foundation of our house. And here we are prosperous and flourishing—after seven generations. We’ll print it, eh, Fritz?

FREDERIK. Certainly, sir. By all means let us print it.



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PETER. And now we are depending upon you, Frederik, for the next line in the book. [To CATHERINE —slyly—as she closes the book.] If my sister could see Frederik, what a proud mother she would be!

JAMES. [Turning from the 'phone to PETER.] Old man Hicks himself has come to the 'phone. Says he *must* speak to Mr. Peter Grimm.

FREDERIK. I'd make short work of him, Uncle.

PETER. [At the 'phone.] How are you, my old friend?... How are your plum trees? [Listens.] Bad, eh? Well, we can only pray and use Bordeaux Mixture.... No.... Nonsense! This business has been in my family for seven generations. Why sell? I'll see that it stays in the family seven generations longer! [Echoing.] Do I propose to live that long? N—no; but my plans will. [Looks towards FREDERIK and CATHERINE.] How? Never mind. Good-morning. [Hangs up the receiver.

JAMES. Sorry to disturb you, sir, but some of these letters are—

FREDERIK. I'm off.

PETER. [Who has lifted a pot of tulips to set it in the sun—standing with the pot in his hands.] And remember the saying: [A twinkle in his upraised eyes.] "Thou, O God, sellest all good things at the price of labour." [Smells the tulips and sets them down.

FREDERIK. [Goes briskly towards the door.] That's true, sir. I want to speak to you later, Uncle—[Turning, looking at JAMES.] on a private matter. [He goes off looking at his watch, as though he had a hard day's work before him.

PETER. [Looking after FREDERIK.] Very capable young fellow, Frederik. I was a happy man, James, when I heard that he had won the prize for botany at Amsterdam College. I had to find out the little I know by experience.

JAMES. [Impulsively.] Yes, and I'll wager you've forgotten more than— [Catching a warning glance from CATHERINE, he pauses.

PETER. What?

JAMES. Nothing, sir. I—

CATHERINE. [Tugging at PETER'S coat—speaking to him apart, as JAMES busies himself at the desk.] Uncle Peter, I think you're unfair to James. We used to have him to dinner very often before he went away. Now that he's back, you treat him like a stranger.



PETER. [*Surprised.*] Eh? I didn't know that I—[*Petting* CATHERINE.] A good, unselfish girl. She thinks of everybody. [*Aloud.*] James, will you have dinner with us to-day?

JAMES. [*Pleased and surprised.*] Thank you, sir—yes, sir.

PETER. It's a roast goose—cooked sweet, James. [*Smacks his lips.*] Fresh green herbs in the dressing and a Figaro pudding. Marta brought over that pudding receipt from Holland.

MARTA, *an old family servant, has entered with the air of having forgotten to wind the clock. She smiles happily at PETER'S allusion to her puddings, attends to the old clock, and passes of with CATHERINE. PETER sits at the desk, glancing over the mail.*



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PETER. Katie's blossoming like a rose. Have you noticed how she's coming out lately, James?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. You've noticed it, too? [*Picks up another letter, looking over it.*]

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. [*Pausing, taking off his eye-glasses and holding them on his thumb. Philosophically.*] How prettily Nature accomplishes her will— making a girl doubly beautiful that a young man may yield his freedom the more easily. Wonderful! [*During the following, he glances over letters.*] A young girl is like a violet sheltered under a bush, James; and that is as it should be, isn't it?

JAMES. No, sir, I don't think so.

PETER. [*Surprised.*] What?

JAMES. I believe people should think for themselves—not be....

PETER. Go on.

JAMES. —er—

PETER. Well?

JAMES. [*Remembering his promise to CATHERINE.*] Nothing.

PETER. Go on, James.

JAMES. I mean swallowed up.

PETER. Swallowed up? Explain yourself, James.

JAMES. I shouldn't have mentioned it.

PETER. Certainly, certainly. Don't be afraid to express an honest opinion.

JAMES. I only meant that you can't shape another's life. We are all free beings and—

PETER. Free? Of course Katie's free—to a certain extent. Do you mean to tell me that any young girl should be freer? Nonsense! She should be happy that *I* am here to think for her—!*I* We must think for people who can't think for themselves; and a young girl can't. [*Signing an answer to a letter after hastily glancing over it.*] You have extraordinary ideas, James.



JAMES. Excuse me, sir; you asked my opinion. I only meant that we can't think for others—any more than we can eat or sleep for them.

PETER. [*As though accepting the explanation.*] Oh ... I see what you mean.

JAMES. Of course, every happy being is bound by its nature to lead its own life—that it may be a free being. Evidently I didn't make my meaning clear. [*Giving PETER another letter to sign.*]

PETER. Free? Happy? James, you talk like an anarchist! You surprise me, sir. Where do you get these extraordinary ideas?

JAMES. By reading modern books and magazines, sir, and of course—

PETER. I thought so. [*Pointing to his books.*] Read Heine. Cultivate sentiment. [*Signing the letter.*] Happy? Has it ever occurred to you that Katie is not happy?

JAMES. No, sir, I can't truthfully say that it has.

PETER. I imagine not. These are the happiest hours of her life. Young ... in love ... soon to be married.

JAMES. [*After a long pause.*] Is it settled, sir?

PETER. No, but I'll soon settle it. Anyone can see how she feels towards Frederik.



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JAMES. [*After a shorter pause.*] Isn't she very young to marry, sir?

PETER. Not when she marries into the family; not when *I* am in the house—[*Touching his chest.*] to guard her—to watch over her. Leave it to *me*. [*Enthusiastically.*] Sit here, James. Take one of Frederik's cigars. [JAMES *politely thanks him, but doesn't take one.*] It's a pleasure to talk to some one who's interested; and you *are* interested, James?

JAMES. Yes, sir, I'm much more interested than you might think.

PETER. Good. We'll take up the mail in a minute. Now, in order to carry out my plans

---

CATHERINE. [*Sticking her head in the door.*] Ready for coffee?

PETER. Er—a little later. Close the door, dear. [*She disappears, closing the door.*] In order to carry out my plans, I have had to use great diplomacy. I made up my mind to keep Katie in the family; being a rich man—everybody knows it—I've had to guard against fortune-hunters. However, I think I've done away with them, for the whole town understands that Katie hasn't a penny—doesn't it, James?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. Yes, I think I've made that very clear. My dream was to bring Catherine up to keep her in the family, and it has been fulfilled. My plans have turned out beautifully, for she is satisfied and happy.

JAMES. But did you want her to be happy simply because *you* are happy, sir? Don't you want her to be happy because *she* is happy?

PETER. If she's happy, why should I care? [*Picks up the last letter.*]

JAMES. *If she's happy.*

PETER. [*Losing his temper.*] What do you mean? That's the second time you've said that. Why do you harp on—

JAMES. [*Rising.*] Excuse me, sir.

PETER. [*Angrily.*] Sit down. What do you know?

JAMES. Nothing, sir....

PETER. You must know something to speak in this manner.



JAMES. No, I don't. You're a great expert in your line, Mr. Grimm, and I have the greatest respect for your opinion; but you can't mate people as you'd graft tulips. And more than once, I've—I've caught her crying and I've thought perhaps ...

PETER. [*Pooh-poohing.*] Crying? Of course! Was there ever a girl who didn't cry?... You amuse me ... with your ideas of life.... Ha! Haven't I asked her why she was crying, —and hasn't she always said: "I don't know why—it's nothing." They love to cry. [*Signs the last letter.*] But that's what they all cry over—nothing. James, do you know how I happened to meet Katie? She was prescribed for me by Doctor MacPherson.

JAMES. [*Taking the letter.*] Prescribed?

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PETER. As an antidote. I was growing to be a fussy bachelor, with queer notions. You are young, but see that you don't need the Doctor, James. Do you know how I was cured? I'll tell you. One day, when I had business in the city, the Doctor went with me, and before I knew what he was at—he had marched me into a home for babies.... Katie was nearest the door—the first one. Pinned over her crib was her name: "Catherine Staats, aged three months." She held out her little arms ... so friendless—so pitiful—so alone—and I was done for. We brought her back home, the Doctor, a nurse and I. The first time I carried her up those stairs—all my fine bachelor's ideas went out of my head. I knew then that my theories were all humbug. I had missed the child in the house who was to teach me everything. I had missed many children in my house. From that day, I watched over her life. [*Rising, pointing towards the head of the stairs.*] James, I was born in this house—in the little room where I sleep; and her children shall one day play in the room in which I was born.... That's very pretty, eh? [*Wipes his eyes, sentimentally.*] I've always seen it that way.

JAMES. [*Coolly.*] Yes; it's very pretty if it turns out well.

PETER. How can it turn out otherwise?

JAMES. To me, sir, it's not a question of sentiment—of where her children shall play, so long as they play happily.

PETER. What? Her children can play anywhere—in China if they want to! Are you in your senses? A fine reward for giving a child all your affection—to live to see her children playing in China. No, sir! I propose to keep my household together, by your leave. [*Banging his clenched fist on the desk.*] It's my plan. [*Cleans his pipe, looking at JAMES from time to time. JAMES posts the letters in a mail-box outside the door. PETER goes to the window, calling off.*] Otto! Run to the office and tell Mr. Frederik he may come in now. [*The voice of a gruff Dutchman: "Het is pastoor's dag." (It is the pastor's day.)*] Ah, yes; I had forgotten. It's William's day to take flowers to the Pastor. [*A knock is heard and, as PETER calls "Come in," WILLIAM, a delicate child of eight, stands timidly in the doorway of the dining-room, hat in hand.*] How are you to-day, William? [*Pats WILLIAM on the shoulder.*]

WILLIAM. The Doctor says I'm well now.

PETER. Good! Then you shall take flowers to the church. [*Calls off.*] A big armful, Otto!

MARTA *has entered with a neatly folded, clean handkerchief which she tucks into WILLIAM'S breast pocket.*

PETER. [*In a low voice, to JAMES.*] There's your example of freedom! William's mother, old Marta's spoiled child, was free. You remember Annamarie, James?—let to come and go as she pleased. God knows where she is now ... and here is William with

the poor old grandmother.... Run along with the flowers, William. [*Gives WILLIAM some pennies as he goes.*] How he shoots up, eh, Marta?



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MARTA. [*With the hopeless sorrow of the old, as she passes off.*] Poor child ... poor child.

PETER. Give Katie more freedom, eh? Oh, no! I shall guard her as I would guard my own, for she is as dear to me as though she were mine, and, by marriage, please God, she shall be a Grimm in *name*.

JAMES. Mr. Grimm, I—I wish you would transfer me to your branch house in Florida.

PETER. What? You who were so glad to come back! James, you need a holiday. Close your desk. Go out and busy yourself with those pet vegetables of yours. Change your ideas; then come back sane and sensible, and attend to your work. [*Giving a last shot at JAMES as he passes into the office and FREDERIK re-enters.*] You don't know what you want!

FREDERIK. [*Looking after JAMES.*] Uncle Peter, when I came in this morning, I made up my mind to speak to you of James.

PETER. James?

FREDERIK. Yes, I've wondered lately if ... it seems to me that James is interested in Catherine.

PETER. James? Impossible.

FREDERIK. I'm not so sure.

PETER. [*Good-naturedly.*] James? James Hartman?

FREDERIK. When I look back and remember him as a barefoot boy living in a shack behind our hot-houses—and see him now—in here with you—

PETER. All the more credit, Frederik.

FREDERIK. Yes; but these are the sort of fellows who dream of getting into the firm. And there are more ways than one.

PETER. Do you mean to say—He wouldn't presume to think of such a thing.

FREDERIK. Oh, wouldn't he! The class to which he belongs presumes to think of anything. I believe he has been making love to Catherine.

PETER. [*After a slight pause, goes to the dining-room door and calls.*] Katie! Katie!



FREDERIK. [*Hastily.*] Don't say that I mentioned it. [CATHERINE *enters.*

PETER. Katie, I wish to ask you a question. I—[*He laughs.*]  
Oh, it's absurd. No, no, never mind.

CATHERINE. What is it?

PETER. I can't ask you. It's really too absurd.

CATHERINE. [*Her curiosity aroused.*] What is it, Uncle?... Tell me ... tell me....

PETER. Has James ever—

CATHERINE. [*Taken back and rather frightened—quickly.*] No....

PETER. What?... How did you know what I ... [FREDERIK *gives her a shrewd glance; but* PETER, *suspecting nothing, continues.*] I meant ... has James shown any special interest in you?

CATHERINE. [*As though accepting the explanation.*] Oh ... [*Flurried.*] Why, Uncle Peter!... Uncle Peter!... whatever put this notion into your head?

PETER. It's all nonsense, of course, but—

CATHERINE. I've always known James.... We went to school together.... James has shown no interest he ought not to have shown, Uncle Peter,—if that's what you mean. He has always been very respectful in a perfectly friendly way.



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PETER. [*Convinced.*] Respectful in a perfectly friendly way. [*To FREDERIK.*] You can't ask more than that. Thank you, dear, that's all I wanted. Run along. [*Glad to escape, CATHERINE leaves the room.*] He was only respectful in a perfectly friendly way. [*Slaps FREDERIK on the back.*] You're satisfied now, I hope?

FREDERIK. No, I am not. If *she* hasn't noticed what he has in mind, *I* have. When I came into this room a few moments ago,—it was as plain as day. He's trying to make love to her under our very eyes. I saw him. I wish you would ask him to stay in his office and attend to his own business. [*JAMES now re-enters on his way to the gardens.*]

PETER. James, it has just occurred to me—that—[*James pauses.*] What was your reason for wanting to give up your position? Had it anything to do with my little girl?

JAMES. Yes, sir.

PETER. You mean that—you—you love her?

JAMES. [*In a low voice.*] Yes, sir.

PETER. O-ho! [*FREDERIK gives PETER a glance as though to say, "Now, do you believe it?"*]

JAMES. But she doesn't know it, of course; she never would have known it. I never meant to say a word to her. I understand, sir.

PETER. James! Come here ... here!... [*Bringing JAMES up before him at the desk.*] Get your money at the office. You may have that position in Florida. Good-bye, James.

JAMES. I'm very sorry that ... Good-bye, sir.

FREDERIK. You are not to tell her that you're going. You're not to bid her good-bye.

PETER. [*To FREDERIK.*] Sh! Let me attend to—

JAMES. [*Ignoring FREDERIK.*] I'm sorry, Mr. Grimm, that—  
[*His voice falters.*]

PETER. [*Rising.*] James, I'm sorry, too. You've grown up here and—Tc! Tc! Good fortune to you—James. Get this notion out of your head, and perhaps one day you'll come back to us. We shall see. [*Shakes hands with JAMES, who leaves the room too much overcome to speak.*]



DR. MACPHERSON. [*Who has entered, saying carelessly to JAMES as he passes him.*] Hy're you, Jim? Glad Jim's back. One of the finest lads I ever brought into this world.

*The DOCTOR is a man of about PETER'S age, but more powerfully built. He has the bent shoulders of the student and his face is exceedingly intellectual. He is the rare type of doctor who forgets to make out his bills. He has a grizzled grey beard, and his hair is touched with grey. He wears silver-rimmed spectacles. His substantial but unpressed clothing is made by the village tailor.*

PETER. Good-morning, Andrew.

FREDERIK. Good-morning, Doctor.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Casts a quick, professional glance at PETER.*] Peter, I've come over to have a serious word with you. Been on my mind all night. [*Brings down a chair and sits opposite PETER.*] I—er—Frederik ... [*FREDERIK, who is not a favourite of the DOCTOR'S, takes the hint and leaves the room.*] Peter, have you provided for everybody in this house?



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PETER. What? Have I—

DR. MACPHERSON. You're a terrible man for planning, Peter; but what have you done? [*Casually.*] Were you to die,—say to-morrow,—how would it be with—[*Making a gesture to include the household.*]—the rest of them?

PETER. What do you mean? If I were to die to-morrow ...

DR. MACPHERSON. You won't. Don't worry. Good for a long time yet, but every one must come to it—sooner or later. I mean—what would Katie's position be in this house? I know you've set your heart upon her marrying Frederik, and all that sort of nonsense, but will it work? I've always thought 'twas a pity Frederik wasn't James and James wasn't Frederik.

PETER. What!

DR. MACPHERSON. Oh, it's all very well if she wants Frederik, but supposing she does not. Peter, if you mean to do something for her—do it *now*.

PETER. Now? You mean that I—You mean that I might ... die?

DR. MACPHERSON. All can and do.

PETER. [*Studying the DOCTOR'S face.*] You think ...

DR. MACPHERSON. The machinery is wearing out, Peter. Thought I should tell you. No cause for apprehension, but—

PETER. Then why tell me?

DR. MACPHERSON. When I cured you of that cold—wet flowerbeds—two days ago, I made a discovery. [*Seeing CATHERINE enter, he pauses. She is followed by MARTA, carrying a tray containing coffee and a plate of waffles.*] Coffee! I told you not to touch coffee, Peter. It's rank poison.

CATHERINE. Wouldn't you like a cup, Doctor?

PETER. Yes he'll take a cup. He won't prescribe it, but he'll drink it.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Horried.*] And hot waffles between meals!

PETER. Yes, he'll take hot waffles, too. [*MARTA goes to get another plate and more waffles, and CATHERINE follows her.*] Now, Andrew, you can't tell me that I'm sick. I won't have it. Every day we hear of some old boy one hundred years of age who was given up by the doctors at twenty. No, sir! I'm going to live to see children in my house,



—Katie’s babies creeping on my old floor; playing with my old watch-dog, Toby. I’ve promised myself a long line of rosy Grimms.

DR. MACPHERSON. My God, Peter! That dog is fifteen years old now. Do you expect nothing to change in your house? Man, you’re a home worshipper. However, I—I see no reason why—*[Lying.]*you shouldn’t reach a ripe old age. *[Markedly, though feigning to treat the subject lightly.]* Er— Peter, I should like to make a compact with you ... that whoever *does* go first—and you’re quite likely to outlive me,—is to come back and let the other fellow know ... and settle the question. Splendid test between old neighbours—real contribution to science.

PETER. Make a compact to—stuff and nonsense!

DR. MACPHERSON. Don’t be too sure of that.



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PETER. No, Andrew, no, positively, no. I refuse. Don't count upon me for any assistance in your spook tests.

DR. MACPHERSON. And how many times do you think *you've* been a spook yourself? You can't tell me that man is perfect; that he doesn't live more than one life; that the soul doesn't go on and on. Pshaw! The persistent personal energy must continue, or what *is* God? [CATHERINE *has re-entered with another cup, saucer and plate which she sets on the table, and pours out the coffee.*

CATHERINE. [*Interested.*] Were you speaking of—of ghosts, Doctor?

PETER. Yes, he has begun again. [*To CATHERINE.*] You're just in time to hear it. [*To DR. MACPHERSON.*] Andrew, I'll stay behind, contented in *this* life; knowing what I have here on earth, and you shall die and return with your—ha!—persistent personal whatever-it-is, and keep the spook compact. Every time a knock sounds, or a chair squeaks, or the door bangs, I shall say, "Sh! There's the Doctor!"

CATHERINE. [*Noticing a book which the DOCTOR has taken from his pocket, and reading the title.*] "Are the Dead Alive?"

DR. MACPHERSON. I'm in earnest, Peter. *I'll* promise and I want you to promise, too. Understand that I am not a so-called spiritist. I am merely a seeker after truth. [*Puts more sugar in his coffee.*

PETER. That's what they *all* are—seekers after truth. Rubbish! Do you really believe such stuff?

DR. MACPHERSON. I know that the dead are alive. They're here—here—near us—close at hand. [PETER, *in derision, lifts the table-cloth and peeps under the table—then, taking the lid off the sugar-bowl, peers into it.*] Some of the great scientists of the day are of the same opinion.

PETER. Bah! Dreamers! They accomplish nothing in the world. They waste their lives dreaming of the world to come.

DR. MACPHERSON. You can't call Sir Charles Crookes, the inventor of Crookes Tubes,—a waster? Nor Sir Oliver Lodge, the great biologist; nor Curie, the discoverer of radium; nor Doctor Lombroso, the founder of Science of Criminology; nor Doctors Maxwell, deVesme, Richet, Professor James, of Harvard, and our own Professor Hyslop. Instead of laughing at ghosts, the scientific men of to-day are trying to lay hold of them. The frauds and cheats are being crowded from the field. Science is only just peeping through the half-opened door which was shut until a few years ago.

PETER. If ever I see a ghost, I shall lay violent hands upon it and take it to the police station. That's the proper place for frauds.



DR. MACPHERSON. I'm sorry, Peter, very sorry, to see that you, like too many others, make a jest of the most important thing in life. Hyslop is right: man will spend millions to discover the North Pole, but not a penny to discover his immortal destiny.

PETER. [*Stubbornly.*] I don't believe in spook mediums and never shall believe in them.

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DR. MACPHERSON. Probably most professional mediums cheat—perhaps every one of them; but some of them are capable of real demonstrations at times.

PETER. Once a swindler, always a swindler. Besides, why can't my old friends come straight back to me and say, "Peter Grimm, here I am!" When they do—if they do—I shall be the first man to take off my hat to them and hold out my hand in welcome.

DR. MACPHERSON. You ask me why? Why can't a telegram travel on a fence instead of on a wire? Your friends could come back to you if you could put yourself in a receptive condition; but if you cannot, you must depend upon a medium—a sensitive.

PETER. A what? [*To CATHERINE.*] Something new, eh? He has all the names for them. Yesterday it was "apports"—flowers that fell down from nowhere and hit you on the nose. He talks like a medium's parrot. He has only to close his eyes and along comes the parade. Spooks! Spooky spooks! And now he wants me to settle my worldly affairs and join in the procession.

CATHERINE. [*Puzzled.*] Settle your worldly affairs? What do you mean, Uncle Peter?

PETER. [*Evasively.*] Just some more of his nonsense. Doctor, you've seen a good many cross to the other world; tell me—did you ever see one of them come back—one?

DR. MACPHERSON. No.

PETER. [*Sipping his coffee.*] Never have, eh? And never will. Take another cup of poison, Andrew.

*The DOCTOR gives his cup to CATHERINE, who fills it. PETER passes the waffles to the DOCTOR, at the same time winking at CATHERINE as the DOCTOR takes another.*

DR. MACPHERSON. There was not perhaps the intimate bond between doctor and patients to bring them back. But in my own family, I have known of a case.

PETER. [*Apart to CATHERINE.*] He's off again.

CATHERINE. [*Eager to listen.*] Please don't interrupt, Uncle. I love to hear him tell of—

DR. MACPHERSON. I have known of a return such as you mention. A distant cousin died in London and she was seen almost instantly in New York.

PETER. She must have travelled on a biplane, Andrew.

DR. MACPHERSON. If my voice can be heard from San Francisco over the telephone, why cannot a soul with a God-given force behind it dart over the entire universe? Is Thomas Edison greater than God?



CATHERINE. [*Shocked.*] Doctor!

DR. MACPHERSON. And they can't tuck it *all* on telepathy. Telepathy cannot explain the case of a spirit-message giving the contents of a sealed letter known only to the person that died. Here's another interesting case.

PETER. This is better than "Puss in Boots," isn't it, Katie? More—er— flibbertigibberty. Katie always loved fairy stories.

CATHERINE. [*Listening eagerly.*] Uncle, please.

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DR. MACPHERSON. [*Ignoring PETER, speaking directly to CATHERINE, who is all attention.*] An officer on the Polar vessel, the *Jeannette*, sent to the Artic regions by the New York *Herald*, appeared at his wife's bedside. She was in Brooklyn—he was on the Polar sea. He said to her, "Count." She distinctly heard a ship's bell and the word "Count" again. She had counted six when her husband's voice said, "Six bells—and the *Jeanette* is lost." The ship was really lost at the time she saw the vision.

PETER. A bad dream. "Six bells and the"—Ha! Ha! Spirit messages! Suet pudding has brought me messages from the North Pole, and I receive messages from Kingdom Come after I've eaten a piece of mince pie.

DR. MACPHERSON. There have been seventeen thousand other cases found to be worth investigation by the London Society of Psychical Research.

PETER. [*Changing.*] Supposing, Andrew, that I did "cross over"—I believe that's what you call dying,—that I *did* want to come back to see how you and the little Katie and Frederik were getting on, how do you think I could manage to do it?

DR. MACPHERSON. When we hypnotize subjects, Peter, our thoughts take possession of them. As we enter their bodies, we take the place of a something that leaves them—a shadow-self. This self can be sent out of the room—even to a long distance. This self leaves us entirely after death on the first, second or third day, or so I believe. This is the force which you would employ to come back to earth—the astral envelope.

PETER. Yes, but what proof have you, Doctor, that I've got an—an astral envelope.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Easily.*] De Rochas has actually photographed it by radio-photography.

PETER. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho!

DR. MACPHERSON. Mind you—they couldn't see it when they photographed it.

PETER. I imagine not. See it? Ho! Ho!

DR. MACPHERSON. It stood a few feet away from the sleeper, and was located by striking at the air and watching for the corresponding portion of the sleeper's body to recoil. By pricking a certain part of this shadow-self with a pin, the cheek of the patient could be made to bleed. The camera was focussed on this part of the shadow-self for fifteen minutes. The result was the profile of a head.

PETER. [*After a pause.*] ... You believe that?



DR. MACPHERSON. The experiment has been repeated again and again. Nobody acquainted with the subject denies it now.

PETER. Spook pictures taken by professional mediums! [*Turning away from the table as though he had heard enough.*]

DR. MACPHERSON. De Rochas, who took the pictures of which I speak, is a lawyer of standing; and the room was full of scientists who saw the pictures taken.

PETER. Hypnotized—all of them. Humbug, Andrew!



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DR. MACPHERSON. Under these conditions, it is quite impossible to hypnotize a room full of people. Perhaps you think the camera was hypnotized? In similar circumstances, says Lombroso, an unnatural current of cold air went through the room and lowered the thermometer several degrees. Can you hypnotize a thermometer?

CATHERINE. [*Impressed.*] That's wonderful, Doctor!

PETER. Yes, it's a very pretty fairy story; but it would sound better set to shivery music. [*Sings.*] Tol! Dol! Dol! Dol! [*Rising to get his pipe and tobacco.*] No, sir! I refuse to agree to your compact. You cannot pick the lock of heaven's gate. We don't come back. God did enough for us when he gave us life and strength to work and the work to do. He owes us no explanations. I believe in the old-fashioned paradise with a locked gate. [*He fills his pipe and lights it.*] No bogies for me.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Rising.*] Peter, I console myself with the thought that men have scoffed at the laws of gravitation, at vaccination, magnetism, daguerreotypes, steamboats, cars, telephones, wireless telegraphy and lighting by gas. [*Showing feeling.*] I'm very much disappointed that you refuse my request.

PETER. [*Laying down his pipe on the table.*] Since you take it so seriously—here— [*Offers his hand.*] I'll agree. I know you're an old fool—and I'm another. Now then— [*Shakes hands.*] it's settled. Whichever one shall go first— [*He bursts into laughter— then controlling himself.*] If I do come back, I'll apologize, Andrew.

DR. MACPHERSON. Do you mean it?

PETER. I'll apologize. Wait [*Taking the keys from the sideboard.*], let us seal the compact in a glass of my famous plum brandy.

DR. MACPHERSON. Good!

PETER. [*As he passes off.*] We'll drink to spooks.

CATHERINE. You really do believe, Doctor, that the dead can come back, don't you?

DR. MACPHERSON. Of course I do, and why not?

CATHERINE. Do you believe that you could come back here into this room and I could see you?

DR. MACPHERSON. You might not see me; but I could come back to this room.

CATHERINE. Could you talk to me?

DR. MACPHERSON. Yes.



CATHERINE. And could I hear you?

DR. MACPHERSON. I believe so. That's what we're trying to make possible.  
[CATHERINE, *still wondering, passes off with the tray. From the cellar, PETER can be heard singing lustily.*

PETER. "If you want a bite that's good to eat,  
(Tra, la, ritte, ra, la, la, la!)  
Try out a goose that's fat and sweet,  
(Tra, la, ritte, ra, la, la, la!)"

*During the song, MRS. BATHOLOMMEY has given a quick tap on the door and entered. She is about forty years of age. Her faded brown hair is streaked with grey. She wears a plain black alpaca costume.*



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MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Agitated.*] Good-morning, Doctor. Fortunate that I found you alone.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Dryly.*] Hy're you, Mrs. Batholommeey?

*The REV. HENRY BATHOLOMMEY now enters. He is a man of about forty-five, wearing the frock coat, high waistcoat and square topped hat of a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church.*

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Hy're, Henry?

*The REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY bows. WILLIAM has returned from his errand and entered the room,—a picture-book under his arm. He sits up by the window, absorbed in the pictures—unnoticed by the others.*

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Closing the door left open by PETER, shutting out the sound of his voice.*] Well, Doctor ... [*She pauses for a moment to catch her breath and wipe her eyes.*] I suppose you've told him he's got to die.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Eyeing MRS. BATHOLOMMEY with disfavour.*] Who's got to die?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Why, Mr. Grimm, of course.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Amazed.*] Does the whole damned town know it?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Oh!

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Easy, Doctor. You consulted Mr. Grimm's lawyer and *his* wife told *my* wife.

DR. MACPHERSON. He gabbed, eh? Hang the professional man who tells things to his wife.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Doctor!

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*With solicitude.*] I greatly grieve to hear that Mr. Grimm has an incurable malady. His heart, I understand. [*Shakes his head.*

DR. MACPHERSON. He's not to be told. Is that clear? He may die in twenty minutes—may outlive us all—probably will.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Pointing to REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY.*] It seems to me, Doctor, that if *you* can't do any more, it's *his* turn. It's a wonder you Doctors don't baptize the babies.



REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. At the last minute, he'll want to make a will—and you know he hasn't made one. He'll want to remember the church and his charities and his friends; and if he dies before he can carry out his intentions, the minister will be blamed as usual. It's not fair.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Sh! Sh! My dear! These private matters—

DR. MACPHERSON. I'll trouble you, Mistress Batholommey, to attend to your own affairs. Did you never hear the story of the lady who flattened her nose—sticking it into other people's business?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Doctor! Doctor! I can't have that!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Let him talk, Henry. No one in this town pays any attention to Dr. MacPherson since he took up with spiritualism.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose! [*He motions to her to be silent, as PETER, coming up the stairs from the cellar, is heard singing.*]

PETER. “Drop in the fat some apples red,  
(Tra, la, ritte, ra, la, la, la!)  
Then spread it on a piece of bread,  
(Tra, la, ritte, ra, la, la, la!)”



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*[He opens the door, carrying a big bottle in his hand; hailing the BATHOLOMMEYS cheerfully.]* Good-morning, good people. *[He puts the jug on the sideboard and hangs up the key. The BATHOLOMMEYS look sadly at PETER. MRS. BATHOLOMMEY in the fore-ground tries to smile pleasantly, but can only assume the peculiarly pained expression of a person about to break terrible news.]*

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. *[Rising to the occasion—warmly grasping PETER'S hand.]* Ah, my dear friend! Many thanks for the flowers William brought us, and the noble cheque you sent me. We're still enjoying the vegetables you generously provided. I *did* relish the squash.

PETER. *[Catching a glimpse of MRS. BATHOLOMMEY'S gloomy expression.]* Anything distressing you this morning, Mrs. Batholommeey?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. No, no.... I hope *you're* feeling well—er—I don't mean that—I

---

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. *[Cheerily.]* Of course, she does; and why not, why not, dear friend?

PETER. Will you have a glass of my plum brandy?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. *[Stiffly.]* No, thank you. As you know, I belong to the W.C.T.U.

PETER. Pastor?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. *[Tolerantly.]* No, thank you. I am also opposed to er—

PETER. We're going to drink to spooks—the Doctor and I.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. *[With a startled cry.]* Oh! *[Lifts her handkerchief to her eyes.]* How can you! And at a time like this. The very idea—you of all people!

PETER. *[Coming down with two glasses—handing one to the DOCTOR.]* You seem greatly upset, Mrs. Batholommeey. Something must have happened.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Nothing, nothing, I assure you. My wife is a trifle nervous to-day. We must all keep up our spirits, Mr. Grimm.

PETER. Of course. Why not? *[Looking at MRS. BATHOLOMMEY—struck.]* I know why you're crying. You've been to a church wedding. *[To the DOCTOR, lifting his glass.]* To astral envelopes, Andrew. *[They drink.]*



MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*With sad resignation.*] You were always kind to us, dear Mr. Grimm. There never was a kinder, better, sweeter man than you were.

PETER. Than I was?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose, my dear!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. What *will* become of William? [*Weeps.*]

PETER. William? Why should you worry over William? I am looking after him. I don't understand—

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Seeing that she has gone too far.*] I only meant—it's too bad he had such an M—

PETER. An M—?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*In pantomime—mouthing the word so that WILLIAM cannot hear.*] Mother ... Annamarie.

PETER. Oh! ...

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. She ought to have told you or Mr. Batholommey who the F— was.



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PETER. F—?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*In pantomime—as before.*] Father.

PETER. Oh... [*Spelling out the word.*] S-c-o-u-n-d-r-e-l—whoever he is! [*Calls.*] William. [*WILLIAM looks up from his book.*] You're very contented here with me, are you not?

WILLIAM. Yes, sir.

PETER. And you want to stay here?

WILLIAM. Yes, sir. [*At that moment, a country circus band—playing a typical parade march—blares out as it comes up some distant street.*] There's a circus in town.

PETER. A circus?

WILLIAM. Yes, sir. The parade has started. [*Opens the window and looks out towards left.*] Here it comes—

PETER. [*Hurrying to the door.*] Where? Where?

WILLIAM. [*Pointing.*] There!

PETER. [*As delighted as WILLIAM.*] You're right. It's coming this way! Here come the chariots. [*Gestures to the BATHOLOMMEYS to join him at the window. The music comes nearer and nearer—the parade is supposed to be passing. WILLIAM gives a cry of delight as a clown appears at the window with handbills under his arm.*]

THE CLOWN. [*As he throws the handbills into the room.*] Billy Miller's big show and monster circus is in town this afternoon. Only one ring. No confusion. [*Seeing WILLIAM.*] Circus day comes but once a year, little sir. Come early and see the wild animals and hear the lions roar-r-r! Mind! [*Holding up his finger to WILLIAM.*] I shall expect to see you. Wonderful troupe of trained mice in the side show. [*Sings.*]

“Uncle Rat has gone to town,  
Ha! H'm!  
Uncle Rat has gone to town  
To buy Miss Mouse a—”

[*Ends the song abruptly.*] Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! [*The CLOWN disappears, repeating “Billy Miller's Big Show,” &c., until his voice is lost and the voices of shouting children are heard as they run after him.*]

PETER. [*Putting his hand in his pocket.*] We'll go. You may buy the tickets, William—two front seats. [*FREDERIK re-enters with a floral catalogue.*]



MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Apart to REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY—looking at PETER.*] Somebody ought to tell him.

WILLIAM. [*Getting the money from PETER.*] I'm going! I'm going! [*Dances.*] Oh, Mr. Grimm, there ain't anyone else like you in the world. When the other boys laugh at your funny old hat, I never do. [*Pointing to PETER'S hat on the peg.*]

PETER. My hat? They laugh at my hat?

WILLIAM. We'll have such a good time at the circus. It's too bad you've got to die, Mr. Grimm.

*There is a pause. PETER stops short, looking at WILLIAM. The others are startled, but stand motionless, watching the effect of WILLIAM'S revelation. FREDERIK doesn't know what to make of it. There is an ominous silence in the room. Then MRS. BATHOLOMMEY, whose smile has been frozen on her face, takes WILLIAM'S hand and is about to draw him away, when PETER lays his hand on WILLIAM'S shoulder. MRS. BATHOLOMMEY steps back.*



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PETER. [*Kindly.*] Yes, William, most people have to. ... What made you think of it just then?

WILLIAM. [*Points to the DOCTOR.*] He said so. Perhaps in twenty minutes.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Quietly but very sternly.*] William! [*WILLIAM now understands that he should not have repeated what he heard.*]

PETER. Don't frighten the boy. Only children tell the truth. Tell me, William—you heard the Doctor say that? [*WILLIAM is silent. He keeps his eyes on the CLERGYMAN who is looking at him warningly. The tears run down his cheeks—he puts his fingers to his lips—afraid to speak.*] Don't be frightened. You heard the Doctor say that?

WILLIAM. [*His voice trembling.*] Y—es, sir.

PETER. [*Looks round the room—beginning to understand.*] ... What did you mean, Andrew?

DR. MACPHERSON. I'll tell you, Peter, when we're alone.

PETER. But ... [*MRS. BATHOLOMMEY shakes her finger threateningly at WILLIAM who whimpers.*] Never mind. It popped out; didn't it, William? Get the circus tickets and we'll have a fine time just the same. [*WILLIAM goes for the tickets.*]

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. I—er—good-morning, dear friend. [*Takes PETER'S hand.*] Any time you 'phone for me—day or night—I'll run over instantly. God bless you, sir. I've never come to you for any worthy charity and been turned away—never.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Suddenly overcome*] Good-bye, Mr. Grimm. [*In tears, she follows her husband. The DOCTOR and PETER look at each other.*]

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Cigar in mouth—very abruptly*] It's cardiac valvular—a little valve—[*Tapping heart*]—here. [*Slaps PETER on the shoulder*] There's my 'phone, [*As a bell is heard faintly but persistently ringing across the street*] I'll be back. [*Catches up his hat to hasten off.*]

PETER. Just a minute.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Turning*] Don't fret yourself, Peter. You're not to imagine you're worse than you are. [*Angrily.*] Don't funk!

PETER. [*Calmly*] That wasn't my reason for detaining you, Andrew. [*With a twinkle in his eye*] I merely wanted to say—

DR. MACPHERSON. Yes?



PETER. That if there is anything in that ghost business of yours, I won't forget to come back and apologize for my want of faith. [*The DOCTOR goes home. FREDERIK stands looking at his UNCLE. There is a long pause. PETER throws up both hands*] Rubbish! Doctors are very often wrong. It's all guess work, eh, Fritz?

FREDERIK. [*Thinking of his future in case of PETER'S death*] Yes, sir.



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PETER. However, to be on the safe side, I'll take that nip of plum brandy. [*Then thinking aloud.*] Not yet ... Not yet ... I'm not ready to die yet. I have so much to live for. ... When I'm older ... When I'm a little old leaf ready to curl up, eh, Fritz? [*He drains the glass. Goes up to the peg, takes down his hat, looks at it as though remembering WILLIAM'S words, then puts it back on the peg. He shows no sign of taking DR. MACPHERSON'S verdict to heart—in fact, he doesn't believe it.*] Frederik, get me some small change for the circus—enough for William and me.

FREDERIK. Are you going ... after all? ... And with that child?

PETER. Why not?

FREDERIK. [*Suddenly showing feeling.*] That little tattler? A child that listens to everything and just told you ... He shouldn't be allowed in this part of the house. He should be sent away.

PETER. [*Astonished.*] Why do you dislike him, Frederik? He's a fine little fellow. You surprise me, my boy ... [*CATHERINE enters and goes to the piano, running her hands softly over the keys—playing no melody in particular. PETER sits in his big chair at the table and picks up his pipe. FREDERIK, with an inscrutable face, now strikes a match and holds it to his uncle's pipe. PETER thoughtfully takes one or two puffs; then speaking so as not to be heard by CATHERINE.*] Frederik, I want to think that after I'm gone, everything will be the same here ... just as it is now.

FREDERIK. Yes, sir. [*Sitting near PETER.*

PETER. Just as it is ... [*FREDERIK nods assent. PETER smokes. The room is very cheerful. The bright midday sunshine creeps through the windows,—almost causing a haze in the room—and resting on the pots and vases and bright flowers on the tables.*

CATHERINE. [*Singing.*] “The bird so free in the heavens”—

PETER. [*Looking up—still in thought—seeming not to hear the song.*] And my charities attended to. [*FREDERIK nods assent.*

CATHERINE. “Is but the slave of the nest;  
For all must toil as God wills it,—  
Must laugh and toil and rest.”

PETER. [*Who has been thinking.*] Just as though I were here.

CATHERINE. “The rose must blow in the garden”—

PETER. William, too. Don't forget *him*, Frederik.



FREDERIK. No, Uncle.

CATHERINE. "The bee must gather its store;  
The cat must watch the mouse-hole;  
The dog must guard the door."

PETER. [*As though he had a weight off his mind.*] We won't speak of this again. It's understood. [*Smokes, listening with pleasure as CATHERINE finishes the song.*]

CATHERINE. [*Repeats the chorus.*]  
"The cat must watch the mouse-hole;  
The dog must guard the door.  
La la, La la," &c.

*At the close of the song, PETER puts down his pipe and beckons to CATHERINE.*



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PETER. Give me the Book. [CATHERINE *brings the Bible to PETER as the garden bell rings outside.*

FREDERIK. Noon.

PETER. [Opening the Book at the history of the family—points to the closely written page.] Under my name I want to see this written: “Married: Catherine and Frederik.” I want to see you settled, Katie— [Smiling] settled happily for life. [He takes her hand and draws FREDERIK towards his chair. CATHERINE, embarrassed, plays with a rose in her belt.] Will you?...

CATHERINE. I ... I don't know....

PETER. [Taking the rose and her hand in his own] I know for you, my dear. Make me happy.

CATHERINE. There's nothing I wouldn't do to make you happy, Uncle, but—

FREDERIK. You know that I love you, Kitty.

PETER. Yes, yes, yes. *That's all understood.* He has always loved you. Everybody knows it.

CATHERINE. Uncle...

PETER. Make it a June wedding. We have ten days yet. [Slipping her hand in FREDERIK'S, taking the rose, and tapping their clasped hands with the flower as he speaks.

FREDERIK. Say yes, Kitty.

CATHERINE. [Nervously] I couldn't in ten days....

FREDERIK. But—

PETER. [To FREDERIK.] Who is arranging the marriage, you or I? Say a month, then, Katie.... Promise me.

CATHERINE. [Her lips set.] If you have set your heart on it, I will, Uncle Peter ... I will ... I promise.

PETER. [Takes a ring of his hand.] The wedding ring—my dear mother's. [Gives it to CATHERINE.] You've made me very happy, my dear. [He kisses CATHERINE. Then, releasing her, he nods to FREDERIK to follow his example. PETER turns his back on the young people and smokes.



FREDERIK. Catherine ... [*Dreading his embrace, she retreats towards PETER and, as she touches him, his pipe falls to the floor. She looks at him, startled.* FREDERIK, *struck, looking intently at PETER who sits motionless.*

CATHERINE. Uncle Peter ... Uncle! What is it? What's the matter? [*Runs to the door—calling across the street.*] Doctor! There he is—just going out. [*Calls.*] Come back. Come back, Doctor. [*To FREDERIK.*] I felt it. I felt something strange a minute ago. I felt it.

FREDERIK. [*Taking PETER'S hand.*] Uncle Peter!

CATHERINE. [*Coming back to PETER and looking at him transfixed.*] Uncle Peter! Answer me! ... It's Katie!

*The DOCTOR enters hurriedly.*

DR. MACPHERSON. Is it ... Peter? [*He goes quickly to PETER and listens to his heart. CATHERINE and FREDERIK on either side of him. The DOCTOR with tender sympathy takes CATHERINE in his arms.*



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WILLIAM. [*Rushes in with two tickets in his hand, leaving the door open. The circus music is faintly heard.*] Mr. Grimm!

DR. MACPHERSON. Sh! [*A pause as though breaking the news to them all.*] He's gone.

FREDERIK. [*Questioningly—dazed.*] Dead? [*CATHERINE is overcome.*

WILLIAM. [*At PETER'S side—holding up the circus ticket.*] He can't be dead ... I've got his ticket to the circus.

CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

SCENE. *The second act takes place ten days later, towards the close of a rainy afternoon. A fire is burning in the grate and a basket of hickory wood stands beside the hearth. PETER'S hat is no longer on the peg. His pipes and jar of tobacco are missing. A number of wedding presents are set on a table, some unopened. The interior of the room, with its snapping fire, forms a pleasant contrast to the gloomy exterior. The day is fading into dusk. MRS. BATHOLOMMEY is at the piano, playing the wedding march from "Lohengrin." Four little girls are grouped about her, singing the words to the air.*

*"Faithful and true: We lead ye forth, Where love triumphant Shall lighten the way." "Bright star of love, Flower of the earth, Shine on ye both On Love's perfect day."*

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. That's better. Children, remember that this is to be a very *quiet* wedding. You're to be here at noon to-morrow. You're not to speak as you enter the room and take your places near the piano. Miss Staats will come down from her room,—at least I suppose she will—and will stand ... [*Thinks.*] I don't know where—but you're to stop when *I* look at you. Watch me as though I were about to be married. [*She takes her place at the foot of the stairs and the children repeat the song until she has marched across the room and stationed herself in some appropriate corner. As FREDERIK appears from the hall, where he leaves his raincoat and umbrella, MRS. BATHOLOMMEY motions the children to silence.*] That will do, dears, thank you. Hurry home between showers. [*The children go as she explains to FREDERIK.*] My Sunday-school scholars.... I thought your dear uncle would like a song at the wedding. I know how bright and cheery he would have been—poor man. Dear, noble, charitable soul!

FREDERIK. [*In a low voice.*] Where's Catherine?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Taking up her fancy work, seating herself.*] Upstairs.

FREDERIK. With that sick child? Tc!



MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Catherine finds it a pleasure to sit beside the little fellow. William is very much better.

FREDERIK. [*Taking a telegram from his pocket-book.*] Well, we shall soon be off to Europe. I've just had a telegram to say a cabin has been reserved for me on the *Imperator*. To-morrow, thank God, we shall take the afternoon train to New York.



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MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I must confess that I'm very glad. Of course, I'm happy to stay and chaperone Catherine; but poor Mr. Batholommeey has been alone at the parsonage for ten days ... ever since your dear uncle ... [*Pauses, unwinding yarn, then unburdening her mind.*] I didn't think at first that Catherine could persuade herself to marry you.

FREDERIK. [*Sharply.*] I don't understand you, Mrs. Batholommeey.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I mean she seemed so averse to—to an immediate marriage; but of course it was your uncle's last request, and that influenced her more than anything else. So it's to be a June wedding, after all; he has his wish. You'll be married in ten days from the time he left us. [*Remembering.*] Some more letters marked personal came for him while you were out. I put them in the drawer—[*Points to desk.*] with the rest. It seems odd to think the postman brings your uncle's letters regularly, yet *he* is not here.

FREDERIK. [*Looking towards the door of the office.*] Did Hartman come?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Yes. He seemed rather surprised that you'd sent for him.

FREDERIK. Did you—er—tell him that we intend to leave to-morrow?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I spoke of your wedding trip,—yes.

FREDERIK. Did he seem inclined to stay?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. He didn't say. He seemed very much agitated. [*MARTA enters, carrying a night lamp.*] We'll pack Miss Catherine's things to-night, Marta. [*She notices the lamp.*] The night lamp for William? [*Looks up towards the door of his room.*] Go in very quietly. He's asleep, I think. [*MARTA goes up the stairs and into WILLIAM'S room.*] By the way, Mr. Batholommeey was very much excited when he heard that your uncle had left a personal memorandum concerning us. We're anxious to hear it read. [*FREDERIK, paying no attention to her words, is glancing at the wedding presents.*] We're anxious to hear it read.

JAMES. [*Entering.*] Did you wish to see me?

FREDERIK. [*Offering his hand to JAMES.*] How do you do, Hartman? I'm very glad you consented to come back. My uncle never went into his office again after you left. There is some private correspondence concerning matters of which I know nothing; it lies on your old desk.... I'm anxious to settle everything to-night.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY *leaves the room.*

JAMES. Very well. I have no doubt but that I can get through with it by midnight.



FREDERIK. If you care to remain longer with the firm, I—er—

JAMES. No, thank you.

FREDERIK. I appreciate the fact that you came on my uncle's account. I have no ill-feeling against you, Hartman.

JAMES. I'm not refusing to stay because of any ill-feeling. I'm going because I know that you'll sell out before your uncle's cold in his grave. I don't care to stay to see the old place change hands.



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FREDERIK. I? Sell out? My intention is to carry out every wish of my dear old uncle's.

JAMES. I hope so. I haven't forgotten that you wanted him to sell out to Hicks of Rochester on the very day he died. [*Exit into the office.*]

CATHERINE *comes from WILLIAM'S room, simply dressed in white—no touch of mourning.* FREDERIK *goes to the foot of the stairs and calls softly.*

FREDERIK. Kitty! Here is our marriage license. I have the cabin on the *Imperator*. Everything is arranged.

CATHERINE. [*Coming downstairs.*] Yes. ... I meant to speak to you—again.

FREDERIK. To-morrow's the day, dear.

CATHERINE. [*Very subdued.*] Yes....

FREDERIK. A June wedding—just as Uncle Peter wished.

CATHERINE. [*As before.*] Yes.... Just as he wished. Everything is just as he.... [*With a change of manner—earnestly—looking at FREDERIK.*] Frederik, I don't want to go away. I don't want to go to Europe. If only I could stay quietly here in—[*Tears in her voice as she looks round the room.*—]in my dear home.

FREDERIK. Why do you want to stay in this old cottage—with its candles and lamps and shadows? It's very gloomy, very depressing.

CATHERINE. I don't want to leave this house.... I don't want any home but this. [*Panic-stricken.*] Don't take me away Frederik. I know you've never really liked it at Grimm's Manor. Are you sure you'll want to come back to live here?

FREDERIK. [*As though speaking to a child.*] Of course. I'll do anything you ask.

CATHERINE. I—I've always wanted to please ... [*After a slight pause, finding it difficult to speak his name.*] Uncle Peter.... I felt that I owed everything to him.... If he had lived ... if I could see *his* happiness at our marriage—it would make *me* happy; [*Pathetically.*] but he's gone ... and ... I'm afraid we're making a mistake. I don't feel towards you as I ought, Frederik. I've told you again and again; but I want to tell you once more: I'm willing to marry you ... but I don't love you—I never shall.

FREDERIK. How do you know?

CATHERINE. I know ... I know.... It seems so disloyal to speak like this after I promised *him*; but—



FREDERIK. Yes, you *did* promise Uncle Peter you'd marry me, didn't you?

CATHERINE. Yes.

FREDERIK. And he died believing you?

CATHERINE. Yes.

FREDERIK. Then it all comes to this: are you going to live up to your promise?

CATHERINE. That's it. That's what makes me try to live up to it. [*Wiping her eyes.*] But you know how I feel.... You understand....

FREDERIK. Perfectly; you don't quite know your own mind.... Very few young girls do, I suppose. I love you and in time you'll grow to care for me. [*MARTA re-enters from WILLIAM'S room and closing the door comes down the stairs and passes off.*] What are we to do with that child?



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CATHERINE. He's to stay here, of course.

FREDERIK. The child should be sent to some institution. What claim has he on you—on any of us?

CATHERINE. Why do you dislike him?

FREDERIK. I don't, but—

CATHERINE. Yes, you do. I can't understand it. I remember how angry you were when you came back from college and found him living here. You never mention his mother's name, yet you played together as children. When Uncle tried to find Annamarie and bring her back, you were the only one opposed to it.

FREDERIK. William is an uncomfortable child to have in the house. He has a way of staring at people as though he had a perpetual question on his lips. It's most annoying.

CATHERINE. What question?

FREDERIK. As for his mother—I've never seen her since she left this house and I don't care to hear her name on your lips. Her reputation is—*[The rain starts pattering on the shingled roof.]* Tc! More rain ... the third day of it.... *[Going to the window—calling.]* Otto! *[Angrily.]* Otto! See what the wind has done—those trellises. *[Bangs the window shut.]* That old gardener should have been laid off years ago.... By the way, his son James is here for a few hours—to straighten matters out. I must see how he's getting on. *[Taking her hand, drawing her towards the table with a change of manner.]* Have you seen all the wedding presents, Kitty? I'll be back in a few minutes. *[Pats her cheek and exits.]*

CATHERINE *stands over her wedding presents just as he left her—not looking at them—her eyes filled with tears. The door is suddenly opened and the DOCTOR enters, a tweed shawl over his shoulders, wearing a tweed cap. He has a book under his arm.*

DR. MACPHERSON. How's William? *[CATHERINE tries to hide her tears, but he sees through her. He tosses his cap, coat and book on the sofa.]* What's the matter?

CATHERINE. Nothing.... I was only thinking.... I was hoping that those we love ... and lose ... *can't* see us here. I'm beginning to believe there's not much happiness in *this* world.

DR. MACPHERSON. Why, you little snip. I've a notion to spank you. Talking like that with life before you! Read this book, child; *[Gesturing towards the book on the sofa.]* it proves that the dead do see us; they do come back. *[Walks to the foot of the stairs—turns.]* Catherine, I understand that you've not a penny to your name—unless you marry Frederik; that he has inherited you along with the orchids and tulips. Don't let that influence you. If Peter's plans bind you—and you look as though they did—my door's



open. Think it over. It's not too late. [*Goes half-way up the stairs—then pauses.*] Don't let the neighbours' opinions and a few silver spoons—[*Pointing to the wedding presents stand in the way of your future.*] [*Exit into WILLIAM'S room. The rain increases. The sky grows blacker—the room darker.*] CATHERINE gives a cry and stretches out her arms, not looking up.



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CATHERINE. Uncle Peter! Uncle Peter! Why did you do it? Why did you ask it? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! If you could see me now. [*She stands rigid—her arms outstretched. MARTA, who has silently entered from the dining-room with fresh candles, goes to CATHERINE. CATHERINE suddenly buries her face on MARTA'S broad breast, breaking into sobs; then recovering, wipes her eyes.*] There, there ... I mustn't cry ... others have troubles, too, haven't they?

MARTA. Others have troubles, too.

CATHERINE. I had hoped, Marta, that Annamarie would have heard of Uncle's loss and come back to us at this time....

MARTA. If it had only brought us all together once more; but no message ... nothing ... I cannot understand.

CATHERINE. She knows that our door is open....

*The rain beats against the windows. A sharp double knock is heard at the door. CATHERINE starts as though suddenly brought to herself, hastily goes into the next room, taking the DOCTOR'S book with her. MARTA has hurried towards the front door, when the REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY and COLONEL LAWTON appear in the hall as though they had entered quickly, to escape the storm. MARTA, greeting them, passes of to tell FREDERIK of their presence. The REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY wears a long, black cloth, rain-proof coat. COLONEL LAWTON wears a rubber poncho. COLONEL LAWTON is a tall man with a thin brown beard and moustache, about forty-eight. He is dressed in a Prince Albert coat, unpressed trousers, and a negligee shirt. He wears spectacles and has a way of throwing back his head and peering at people before answering them. The REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY sets his umbrella in the hall and the COLONEL hangs his broad-brimmed hat on the handle—as though to let it drip.*

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Brr! I believe it's raining icicles.

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Taking off his overshoes.*] Gee Whillikins! What a day! Good thing the old windmill out yonder is tied up. Great weather for baptisms, Parson. [*There is a faint, far-away rumble of thunder. FREDERIK enters.*] Well, here we are, Frederik, my boy—at the time you mentioned.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. How are you, Frederik?

COLONEL LAWTON *crosses to the fire, followed by the REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY.*

FREDERIK. [*Who has gone to the desk for a paper lying under a paper-weight.*] I sent for you to hear a memorandum left by my uncle. I only came across it yesterday. [*There is a louder peal of thunder. A flash of lightning illuminates the room.*



COLONEL LAWTON. I must have drawn up ten wills for the old gentleman, but he always tore 'em up. May I have a drink of his plum brandy, Frederik?

FREDERIK. Help yourself. Pastor?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Er—er—

COLONEL LAWTON *goes to the sideboard and pours out two drinks from a decanter. A heavy roll of thunder now ends in a sharp thunderclap.* MRS. BATHOLOMMEY, *who is entering the room, gives a cry and puts her hands over her face.* COLONEL LAWTON *bolts his whiskey.* The REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY *takes a glass and stands with it in his hand.*



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MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Removing her hands in time to see the brandy.*] Why, Henry! What are you doing? Are your feet wet?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. No, Rose; they're not. I want a drink and I'm going to take it. It's a bad night. [*Drinks.*]

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Throws a hickory log on the fire, which presently blazes up, making the room much lighter.*] Go ahead, Frederik. [*Sits.*]

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY *has drawn up a chair for his wife, and now seats himself before the snapping hickory fire.*

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. I knew that your uncle would remember his friends and his charities. He was so liberal! One might say of him that he was the very soul of generosity. He gave in such a free-handed, princely fashion.

FREDERIK. [*Reading in a businesslike manner.*] For Mrs. Batholomme—

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. The dear man—to think that he remembered me! I knew he'd remember the church and Mr. Batholomme, of course; but to think that he'd remember me! He knew that my income was very limited. He was so thoughtful! His purse was always open.

FREDERIK. [*Eyes MRS. BATHOLOMMEY for a second, then continues.*] For Mr. Batholomme—[REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY *nods solemnly.*] and the Colonel.

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Taking out a cigar.*] He knew that I did the best I could for him ... [*His voice breaks.*] the grand old man. [*Recovering.*] What'd he leave me? Mrs. B.—er? [*Nods inquiringly at MRS. BATHOLOMMEY, who bows assent, and he lights his cigar.*]

FREDERIK. [*Glancing at the paper.*] Mrs. Batholomme, he wished you to have his miniature—with his affectionate regards.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Dear old gentleman—and er—yes?

FREDERIK. To Mr. Batholomme—

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. But—er—you didn't finish with me.

FREDERIK. You're finished.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I'm finished?

FREDERIK. You may read it yourself if you like.



REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. No, no, no. She'll take your word for it. [*Firmly.*] Rose!

FREDERIK. [*Reads.*] "To Mr. Batholommey, my antique watch fob—with my profound respects." [*Continues.*] To Colonel Lawton—

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. His watch fob? Is *that* what he left to *Henry*? Is that all? [*As FREDERIK nods.*] Well! If he had no wish to make *your* life easier, Henry, he should at least have left something for the church. Oh! Won't the congregation have a crow to pick with you!

FREDERIK. [*Reading.*] "To my life-long friend, Colonel Lawton, I leave my most cherished possession." [*COLONEL LAWTON has a look on his face as though he were saying, "Ah! I'll get something worth while."*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Angrily.*] When the church members hear that—



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COLONEL LAWTON. [*Chewing his cigar.*] I don't know why he was called upon to leave anything to the church—he gave it thousands; and only last month, he put in chimes. As I look at it, he wished to give you something he had *used*—something personal. Perhaps the miniature and the fob *ain't* worth three whoops in Hell,—it's the sentiment of the thing that counts—[*Chewing the word with his cigar.*] the sentiment. Drive on, Fred.

FREDERIK. “To Colonel Lawton, my father's prayer-book.”

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Suddenly changing—dazed.*] His prayer-book ... me?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Seeing FREDERIK lay down the paper and rise.*] Is that all?

FREDERIK. That's all.

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Still dazed.*] A prayer-book.... Me? Well, I'll be— [*Struck.*] Here, Parson, let's swap. You take the prayer-book—I'll take the old fob.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Stiffly.*] Thank you. I already *have* a prayer-book. [*Goes to the window and looks out—his back turned to the others—trying to control his feelings.*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Her voice trembling with vexation and disappointment.*] Well, all that I can say is—I'm disappointed in your uncle.

COLONEL LAWTON. Is it for this you hauled us out in the rain, Frederik?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Bitterly.*] I see now ... he only gave to the church to show off.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose! ... I myself am disappointed, but—

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. He did! Or why didn't he *continue* his work? He was *not* a generous man. He was a hard, uncharitable, selfish old man.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Horrified.*] Rose, my dear!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. He was! If he were here, I'd say it to his face. The congregation sicked *you* after him. Now that he's gone and you'll get nothing more, they'll call you slow—slow and pokey. You'll see! You'll see to-morrow.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Sh!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. As for the Colonel, who spent half his time with Mr. Grimm, what is his reward? A watch-fob! [*Prophetically.*] Henry, mark my words—this will be the end of *you*. It's only a question of a few weeks. One of these new football playing



ministers, just out of college, will take *your* place. It's not what you *preach* now that counts; it's what you coax out of the rich parishioners' pockets.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*In a low voice.*] Mrs. Batholommey!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Religion doesn't stand where it did, Henry—there's no denying that. There was a time when people had to go to church—they weren't decent if they didn't. Now you have to wheedle 'em in. The church needs funds in these days when a college professor is openly saying that— [*Her voice breaks.*] the Star of Bethlehem was a comet. [*Weeps.*]



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REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Control yourself. I must insist upon it, Mrs. Batholommeey.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Breaking down—almost breathlessly.*] Oh! If I said all the things I feel like saying about Peter Grimm—well—I shouldn't be fit to be a clergyman's wife. Not to leave his dear friends a—

COLONEL LAWTON. He *wasn't* liberal; but, for God's sake, madam, pull yourself together and think what he ought to have done for me!—I've listened to his plans for twenty years. I've virtually given up my business for him, and what have I got out of it? Not a button! Not a button! A bible. Still *I'm* not complaining. Hang that chimney, Frederik, it's smoking. [*COLONEL LAWTON stirs the fire—a log falls out and the flame goes down. The room has gradually grown darker as the night approaches.*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Turning on COLONEL LAWTON.*] Oh, you've feathered your nest, Colonel! You're a rich man.

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Enraged, raising his voice.*] What? I never came here that you weren't begging.

FREDERIK. [*Virtuously—laying down the paper.*] Well, I'm disgusted! When I think how much more I should have if he hadn't continually doled out money to every one of you!

COLONEL LAWTON. What?

FREDERIK. He was putty in your hands.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Yes, you can afford to defend his memory—you've got the money.

FREDERIK. I don't defend his memory. He was a gullible old fossil, and the whole town knew it.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. *You* did at any rate. I've heard you flatter him by the hour.

FREDERIK. Of course. He liked flattery and I gave him what he wanted. Why not? I gave him plenty. The rest of you were at the same thing; and I had the pleasure of watching him give you the money that belonged to me—to *me*—my money.... What business had he to be generous with my money? [*The COLONEL strikes a match to light his cigar, and, as it flares up, the face of FREDERIK is seen—distorted with anger.*] I'll tell you this: had he lived much longer, there would have been nothing left for me. It's a fortunate thing for me that—[*He pauses, knowing that he has said too much. The room is now very dark. The rain has subsided. Everything is quiet outside. There is not a sound, save the ticking of the clock.*]



REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Solemnly—breaking the pause.*] Young man, it might have been better had Mr. Grimm given his *all* to charity—for he has left his money to an ingrate.

FREDERIK. [*Laughing derisively.*] Ha! Ha!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Sh! Someone's coming.

*All is quiet. The clock ticks in the dark. The door opens.*

FREDERIK. [*With a change of voice.*] Come in. [*Nobody enters.*] Where's a light? We've been sitting in the dark like owls. Come in. [*A pause. He strikes a match and holds it above his head. The light shows the open door. A wind, blowing through the doorway, causes the match to flicker, and FREDERIK protects it with his hand.*]



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COLONEL LAWTON. I'll see who's ... [*Looks out.*] No one.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Someone *must* be there. Who opened the door? [*The wind puts out the match in FREDERIK'S hand. The room is once more in semi-darkness.*] There ... it closed again ... [FREDERIK *strikes another match and holds it up. The door is seen to be closed.*

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Who is nearest to the door.*] I didn't touch it.

FREDERIK. [*Blowing out the match.*] I'll have the lamps brought in.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Curious ...

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. It was the wind—a draught.

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Returning to his chair.*] Must have been.

CATHERINE. [*Entering with a lamp.*] Did someone call me?

*Without pausing, she sets the lamp on the table down right—opposite the group of characters. She turns up the wick and PETER GRIMM is seen standing in the room—half in shadow. He is as he was in life. The clothes he wears appear to be those he wore about his house in the first act. He carries his hat in his hand. He has the same kind smile, the same deferential manner, but his face is more spiritual and years younger. The lamp, which CATHERINE\_ has placed on the table, brightens the room.\_*

PETER. [*Whose eyes never leave CATHERINE.*] Yes ... I called you.... I've come back.

FREDERIK. [*To CATHERINE.*] No.

PETER. Don't be frightened, Katie. It's the most natural thing in the world. You wanted me and I came.

FREDERIK. Why? What made you think someone called you?

CATHERINE. I'm so accustomed to hear Uncle Peter's voice in this room, that sometimes I forget he's not here ... I can't get over it! I was almost sure I heard him speak ... but, of course, as soon as I came in—I remembered.... But some one must have called me.

FREDERIK. No.

PETER *stands looking at them, perplexed; not being able to comprehend as yet that he is not seen.*



CATHERINE. Isn't it curious ... to hear your name and turn and ... [*Unconsciously, she looks in PETER'S face.*] no one there?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Kindly.*] Nerves ... imagination.

FREDERIK. You need a complete change. [*Crossing to the door.*] For heaven's sake, let's have more light or we shall all be hearing voices.

PETER. Strange.... Nobody seems to see me.... It's—it's extraordinary! Katie! ... Katie! ... [*His eyes have followed CATHERINE who is now at the door.*]

CATHERINE. [*Pausing.*] Perhaps it was the book I was reading that made me think I heard.... The Doctor lent it to me.

FREDERIK. [*Pooh-poohing.*] Oh!

CATHERINE. [*Half to herself.*] If he *does* know, if he *can* see, he'll be comforted by the thought that I'm going to do everything he wanted. [*She passes out of the room.*]



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PETER. [*Showing that he does not want her to carry out his wishes.*] No, no, don't ... Frederik, I want to speak to you.

[FREDERIK, *not glancing in PETER'S direction, lights a cigarette.*

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Well, Frederik, I hope the old gentleman can see his mistake *now*.

PETER. I can see several mistakes. [REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY *rises and goes towards the door, pausing in front of PETER to take out his watch.*] ... Mr. Batholomme, I'm glad to see you in my house.... I'm very sorry that you can't see me. I wasn't pleased with my funeral sermon; it was very gloomy—very. I never was so depressed in my life.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*To FREDERIK.*] Do you know what I should like to say to your uncle?

PETER. I know.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. I hope at least you'll care for the parish poor as your uncle did—and keep on with *some* of his charities.

PETER. [*Putting his hand on REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY'S shoulder.*] That's all attended to. I arranged all that with Frederik. He must look after my charities.

FREDERIK. I might as well tell you now—you needn't look to me. It's Uncle Peter's fault if your charities are cut off.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Half-doubtingly.*] It doesn't seem possible that he made no arrangements to continue his good works. [FREDERIK *remains stolid.* REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY *puts back his watch after glancing at it.*] Just thirty minutes to make a call. [*Goes into the hall to put on his overshoes, coat, &c., leaving PETER'S hand extended in the air.*

COLONEL LAWTON. [*Rising.*] I must be toddling. [*Pauses.*] It's queer, Frederik, how things turn out in this world. [*He stands, thinking matters over—cigar in mouth, his hand on his chin.*

PETER. [*Slipping his hand through COLONEL LAWTON'S arm. They seem to look each other in the eye.*] You were perfectly right about it, Thomas, I should have made a will ... I—suppose it *is* a little too late, isn't it?... It would be—er—unusual to do it now, wouldn't it?

COLONEL LAWTON, *who has heard nothing—seen nothing—moves away as though PETER had never held his arm, and goes up into the hall for his cape and overshoes.*



COLONEL LAWTON. [*Noticing an old gold-headed walking-stick in the hall.*] Oh, er—what are you going to do with all the old man's family relics, Frederik?

FREDERIK. The junk, you mean? I shall lay it on some scrap-heap, I suppose. It's not worth a penny.

COLONEL LAWTON. I'm not so sure of that. They say there's a lot of money paid for this sort of trash.

FREDERIK. Is that so? Not a bad idea to have a dealer in to look it over.

PETER *stands listening, a faint smile on his face.*

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. If I could have the old clock—cheap, Frederik, I'd take it off your hands.



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FREDERIK. I'll find out how much it's worth. I shall have everything appraised. [*Sets his watch by the clock.* MRS. BATHOLOMMEY gives him a look and joins her husband at the door.

COLONEL LAWTON. Good-night. [*Exit, closing the door.*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*As REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY goes out—calling after him.*] Henry, Catherine wants you to come back for supper. [*MRS. BATHOLOMMEY leaves the room too disgusted for words.* FREDERIK goes into the office.

PETER. [*Now alone.*] We live and learn ... and oh! what I have learned since I came back.... [*He goes to his own particular peg in the vestibule and hangs up his hat. He glances at the wedding presents. Presently he sees the flowers which CATHERINE has placed on the desk. With a smile, he touches the flowers.* MARTA enters with another lamp, which she places on a table. As PETER'S eyes rest on MARTA, he nods and smiles in recognition, waiting for a response.] Well, Marta?... Don't you know your old master?... No?... No?... [*She winds the clock and leaves the room.*] I seem to be a stranger in my own house ... yet the watch-dog knew me and wagged his tail as I came in. [*He stands trying to comprehend it all.*] Well! Well!

FREDERIK. [*Looking at his watch, re-enters from the office and goes to the 'phone, which presently rings. FREDERIK instantly lifts the receiver as though not wishing to attract attention. In a low voice.*] Yes ... I was waiting for you. How are you, Mr. Hicks? [*Listens.*] I'm not anxious to sell—no. I prefer to carry out my dear old uncle's wishes. [*PETER eyes him—a faint smile on his lips.*] If I got my price? Well ... of course in that case ... I might be tempted. To-morrow? No, I can't see you to-morrow. I'm going to be married to-morrow, and leave at once for New York. Thank you. [*Listens.*] To-night? Very well, but I don't want it known. I'll sell, but it must be for more than the price my uncle refused. Make it ten thousand more and it's done. [*Listens.*] You'll come to-night?... Yes, yes.... [*Listens at the 'phone.*] The dear old man told you his plans never failed, eh? God rest his soul! [*Laughing indulgently.*] Ha! Ha! Ha!

PETER. Ha! Ha! Ha!

FREDERIK. [*Echoing HICKS' words.*] What would he say if he knew? What could he say? Everything must change.

*A far-away rumble of thunder is heard—the lightning flickers at the window and a flash is seen on the telephone which tinkles and responds as though from the electric shock. Exclaiming "Ugh," FREDERIK drops the receiver—which hangs down.*

PETER. [*The storm passes as he speaks into the receiver without touching the telephone.*] Good-evening, my friend. We shall soon meet—face to face. You won't be able to carry this matter through.... [*Looking into space as though he could see the*



*future.*] You're not well and you're going out to supper to-night; ... you will eat something that will cause you to pass over.... I shall see you to-morrow.... A happy crossing!



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FREDERIK. [*Picks up the receiver.*] Hello?... You don't feel well, you say? [*Then echoing the purport of HICKS' answer.*] I see.... Your lawyer can attend to everything to-night without you. Very well. It's entirely a question of money, Mr. Hicks. Send your lawyer to the Grimm Manor Hotel. I'll arrange at once for a room. Good-bye. [*Hangs up the receiver.*] That's off my mind. [*He lights a fresh cigarette—his face expressing the satisfaction he feels in the prospect of a perfectly idle future.* PETER looks at him as though to say: "And that's the boy whom I loved and trusted!" FREDERIK gets his hat, throws his coat over his arm, and hastens out.

PETER. [*Turns and faces the door leading into the next room, as though he could feel the presence of some one waiting there.*] Yes ... I am still in the house. Come in ... come in ... [*He repeats the signal of the first act.*] Ou—oo. [*The door opens slowly—and CATHERINE enters as though at PETER'S call. She looks about her, not understanding. He holds out his arms to her. CATHERINE walks slowly towards him. He takes her in his arms, but she does not respond. She does not know that she is being held.*] There! There!... Don't worry.... It's all right.... We'll arrange things very differently. I've come back to change all my plans. [*She moves away a step—just out of his embrace. He tries to call her back.*] Katie! ... Can't I make my presence known to you? Katie! Can't my love for you outlive me? Isn't it here in the home?... Don't cry. [*She moves about the room in thought. As PETER watches her—she pauses near his desk.*

CATHERINE. [*Suddenly.*] Crying doesn't help matters.

PETER. She hears me. She doesn't know it, but she hears me. She's cheering up. [*She inhales the flowers—a half smile on her lips.*] That's right, you haven't smiled before since I died. [*Suddenly giving way to the realization of her loss, CATHERINE sighs.*

PETER. [*Correcting himself.*] I—I mean—since I learned that there was a happier place than the world I left.... I'm a trifle confused. I've not had time to adjust myself to these new conditions. [*CATHERINE smiles sadly—goes up to the window, and, leaning against the pane, looks out into the night. PETER continues comfortingly.*] The dead have never really died, you know. We couldn't die if we tried. We're all about you.... Look at the gardens: they've died, haven't they? But there they are all the better for it. Death is the greatest thing in the world. It's really a—Ha!—delightful experience. What is it, after all? A nap from which we waken rested, refreshed ... a sleep from which we spring up like children tumbling out of bed—ready to frolic through another world. I was an old man a few days ago; now I'm a boy. I feel much younger than you—much younger.



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*[A conflict is going on in CATHERINE'S mind. She walks to the chair by the fireplace and sits—her back to the audience. He approaches her and lays a tender hand on her shoulder.]* I know what you're thinking.... Katie, I want you to break that very foolish promise I asked you to make. You're almost tempted to. Break it! Break it at once; then—*[Glancing smilingly towards the door through which he came—as though he wished to leave—like a child longing to go back to play.]* then I could—take the journey back in peace.... I can't go until you do—and I ... I long to go.... Isn't my message any clearer to you? *[Reading her mind.]* You have a feeling ... an impression of what I'm saying; but the words ... the words are not clear.... Mm ... let me see.... If you can't understand me—there's the Doctor, he'll know how to get the message— he'll find the way.... Then I can hurry back ... home....

CATHERINE. *[Helplessly—changing her position like a tired child.]* Oh, I'm so alone.

PETER. *[Cheerily.]* Not alone at all—not at all. I shall drop in very often ... and then, there's your mother. *[Suddenly remembering.]* Oh, yes, I had almost forgotten. I have a message for you, Katie.... *[He seats himself in a chair which is almost in front of her.]* I've met your mother. *[She sits in a reverie. PETER continues with the air of a returned traveller relating his experiences.]* She heard that I had crossed over and there she was—waiting for me. You're thinking of it, aren't you? Wondering if we met.... Yes, that was the first interesting experience. She knew me at once. "You were Peter Grimm," she said, "before you knew better"—that's what *they* call leaving *this* world—"to know better." You call it "dying." *[Confidentially.]* She's been here often, it seems, watching over you. I told her how much I loved you and said that you had a happy home. I spoke of your future—of my plans for you and Frederik. "Peter Grimm," she said, "you've over-looked the most important thing in the world—love. You haven't given her *her right* to the choice of her lover—*her right!*" Then it came over me that I'd made a terrible mistake ... and at that minute, you called to me. *[Impressively.]* In the darkness surrounding all I had left behind, there came a light ... a glimmer where you stood ... a clear call in the night.... It seemed as though I had not been away one second ... but in that second, you had suffered.... Now I am back to show you the way.... I am here to put my hand on your dear head and give you your mother's blessing; to say she will be with you in spirit until she holds you in her arms—you and your loved husband—*[CATHERINE turns in her chair and looks towards the door of the room in which JAMES is working. PETER catches the thought.]*—yes, James, it's you.... And the message ended in this kiss. *[Prints a kiss on her cheek.]* Can't you think I'm with you, dear child? Can't you *think* I'm trying to help you? Can't you even hope? Oh, come, at least hope! Anybody can hope.



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CATHERINE *rises with an entire change of manner—takes a bright red blossom from the vase on PETER'S desk—then deliberately walks to the door of the room in which JAMES is working. PETER follows her action hopefully. She does not tap on the door, however, but turns and sits at the piano—in thought—not facing the piano. She puts PETER'S flowers against her face. Then, laying the flowers on the piano, sings softly three or four bars of the song she sang in the first act—and stops abruptly.*

CATHERINE. [*To herself.*] That I should sit here singing—at a time like this!

PETER. Sing! Sing! Why not? Lift up your voice like a bird! Your old uncle doesn't sleep out there in the dust. That's only the dream. He's here— here—alive. All his age gone and youth glowing in his heart. If I could only tell you what lies before you—before us all! If people even *suspected* what the next life really is, they wouldn't waste time here—I can tell you *that*. They'd do dreadful things to get away from this existence—make for the nearest pond or—[*Pausing abruptly.*] Ah, here comes someone who'll know all about it! [*The DOCTOR comes from WILLIAM'S room. PETER greets him in a cordial but casual way, as though he had parted from him only an hour before.*] Well, Andrew, I apologize. [*Bowing obsequiously.*] You were right. I apologize.

CATHERINE. How is he, Doctor?

DR. MACPHERSON. William is better. Dropped off to sleep again. Can't quite understand him.

PETER. I apologize. I said that if I could come back, I would; and here I am—apologizing. Andrew! Andrew! [*Trying to attract DR. MACPHERSON'S attention.*] I have a message, but I can't get it across. This is your chance. I want *you* to take it. I don't wish Catherine to marry Frederik.

DR. MACPHERSON. He's somewhat feverish yet.

PETER. Can't *you* understand one word?

DR. MACPHERSON. It's a puzzling case....

PETER. What? Mine?

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Getting a pad from his pocket—writing out a prescription with his fountain pen.*] I'll leave this prescription at the druggist's—

PETER. I'm quite shut out.... They've closed the door and turned the key on me.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Suddenly noticing that CATHERINE seems more cheerful.*] What's happened? I left you in tears and here you are—all smiles.



CATHERINE. Yes, I—I am happier—for some reason.... For the last few minutes I—I've had such a strange feeling.

DR. MACPHERSON. That's odd: so have I! Been as restless as a hungry mouse. Something seemed to draw me down here—can't explain it.

PETER. I'm beginning to be felt in this house.

DR. MACPHERSON. Catherine, I have the firm conviction that, in a very short time, I shall hear from Peter. [*Sitting at the table.*]



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PETER. I hope so. It's high time now.

DR. MACPHERSON. What I want is some positive proof; some absolute test; some—er—*[Thinks]*.

CATHERINE *has seated herself at the table.—Unconsciously they both occupy the same seats as in the first act.*

PETER. The trouble is with other people, not with us. You want us to give all sorts of proofs; and here we are just back for a little while—very poorly put together on the chance that you'll see us at all.

DR. MACPHERSON. Poor old Peter—bless his heart! *[His elbow on the table as though he had been thinking over the matter. CATHERINE sits quietly listening.]* If he kept that compact with me, and came back,—do you know what I'd ask him first? If our work goes on.

PETER. Well, now, that's a regular sticker. It's bothered me considerably since I crossed over.

CATHERINE. What do you mean, Doctor?

DR. MACPHERSON. The question *every man wants the answer to*: what's to become of me—*me—my work?* Am I going to be a bone setter in the next life and he a tulip man?... I wonder.

PETER. Andrew, I've asked everybody—Tom, Dick and Harry. One spirit told me that sometimes our work *does* go on; but he was an awful liar—you knew we don't drop our earth habits at once. He said that a genius is simply a fellow who's been there before in some other world and knows his business. Now then: *[Confidentially preparing to open an argument— sitting in his old seat at the table, as in the first act.]* it stands to reason, Andrew, doesn't it? What chance has the beginner compared with a fellow who knew his business before he was born?

DR. MACPHERSON. *[Unconsciously grasping the thought.]* I believe it is possible to have more than one chance at our work.

PETER. There ... you caught that.... Why can't you take my message to Catherine?

DR. MACPHERSON. *[Rising to get his shawl—gruffly.]* Thought over what I told you concerning this marriage? Not too late to back out.

PETER. He's beginning to take the message.



CATHERINE. Everything's arranged: I shall be married as Uncle Peter wished. I sha'n't change my mind.

DR. MACPHERSON. H'm! [*Picks up his shawl.*]

PETER. [*Trying to detain the DOCTOR—tugging at his shawl without seeming to pull it.*] Don't give up! Don't give up! A girl can always change her mind—while there's life. Don't give up! [*The DOCTOR turns, facing PETER, looking directly at him as he puts his hand in his coat pocket.*] You heard that, eh?... Didn't you? Yes? Did it cross over?... What?... It did?... You're looking me in the face, Andrew; can you see me? [*The DOCTOR takes a pencil out of his pocket, writes a prescription, throws his shawl over his shoulder—turning his back towards PETER and facing CATHERINE.*] Tc! Tc! Tc!



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DR. MACPHERSON. Good-night.

CATHERINE. Good-night. [*CATHERINE goes quietly to the fireplace, kneeling down, mends the fire, and remains there sitting on an ottoman.*]

PETER. [*Calling after the DOCTOR.*] If I could only make some sign—to start you thinking; but I can't depend upon you, I see that.... [*Then changing—as though he had an idea.*] Ah, yes! There is another way. Now to work. [*With renewed activity, he taps in the direction of the office door, although he himself stands three feet away from it. The door opens promptly and JAMES appears on the threshold—pen in hand—as though something had made him rise suddenly from his desk. CATHERINE, still seated, does not see JAMES, who stands looking at her—remembering that she is to be married on the following day. PETER tempts JAMES.*] Yes, she is pretty, James ... young and lovely.... Look!... There are kisses tangled in her hair where it curls ... hundreds of them.... Are you going to let her go? Her lips are red with the red of youth. Every smile is an invocation to life. Who could resist her smiles? Can you, James? No, you will not let her go. And her hands, James.... Look! Hands made to clasp and cling to yours. Imagine her little feet trudging happily about *your* home.... Look at her shoulders ... shaped for a resting-place for a little head.... You were right, James, we should ask nothing of our girls but to marry the men they love and be happy wives and happy mothers of happy children. You feel what I am saying.... You couldn't live without her, could you? No? Very well, then—[*Changing abruptly.*] Now, it's your turn.

JAMES *pauses a moment. There is silence. Then he comes forward a step and CATHERINE, hearing him, turns and rises.*

JAMES. [*Coldly—respectfully.*] Miss Grimm ...

CATHERINE. James ...

JAMES. I felt that you were here and wished to speak to me. I—I don't know why ...

PETER. Good for James.

CATHERINE. [*Shaking hands with him.*] I'm very glad to see you again, James. [*When PETER sees that he has brought the two young people together, he stands in the background. The lovers are in the shadow, but PETER'S figure is marked and clear.*] Why did you go away?

JAMES. Oh—er—

CATHERINE. And without saying a word.

JAMES. Your uncle sent me away. I told him the truth again.



CATHERINE. Oh ...

JAMES. I am going in a few hours.

CATHERINE. Where are you going? What do you intend to do?

JAMES. [*Half-heartedly.*] Father and I are going to try our luck together. We're going to start with a small fruit farm. It will give me a chance to experiment....

CATHERINE. It will seem very strange when I come back home.... Uncle gone ... and you, James. [*Her voice trembling.*]



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JAMES. I hope you'll be happy, Catherine.

CATHERINE. James, Uncle died smiling at me—thinking of me ... and just before he went, he gave me his mother's wedding ring and asked me to marry Frederik. I shall never forget how happy he was when I promised. That was all he wanted. His last smile was for me ... and there he sat—still smiling after he was gone ... the smile of a man leaving the world perfectly satisfied—at peace. It's like a hand on my heart—hurting it—when I question anything he wanted. I couldn't meet him in the hereafter if I didn't do everything he wished; I couldn't say my prayers at night; I couldn't speak his name in them.... He trusted me; depended upon me; did everything for me; so I must do this for him.... I wanted you to know this, James, because ...

JAMES. Why haven't you told Frederik the truth?

CATHERINE. I have.

JAMES. That you don't love him? [CATHERINE *doesn't answer, but JAMES knows.*] ... And he's willing to take you like that?—a little girl like you—in *that way*.... God! He's rotten all the way through. He's even worse than I thought. Katie, I didn't mean to say a word of this to-day— not a word; but a moment since—something made me change my mind—I don't know what!... [PETER *smiles.*] I felt that I *must* talk to you. You looked so young, so helpless, such a child. You've never had to think for yourself—you don't know what you're doing. You *couldn't* live under it, Catherine. You're making the greatest mistake possible, if you marry where you don't love. Why should you carry out your uncle's plans? You're going to be wretched for life to please a dead man who doesn't know it; or, if he does know it, regrets it bitterly.

PETER. I agree with you now, James.

CATHERINE. You musn't say that, James.

JAMES. But I will say it—I will speak my mind. I don't care how fond you were of your uncle or how much he did for you—it wasn't right to ask this of you. It wasn't fair. The whole thing is the mistake of a *very* obstinate old man.

CATHERINE. James!

JAMES. I loved him, too; but he *was* an obstinate old man. Sometimes I think it was the Dutch blood in his veins.

PETER. A very frank, outspoken fellow. I like to hear him talk—now.

JAMES. Do you know why I was sent away? Why I quarrelled with your uncle? I said that I loved you ... he asked me.... I didn't tell him because I had any hopes—I hadn't.... I haven't now.... [*Struck.*] But in spite of what I'm saying ... I don't know what



makes me think that I ... I could take you in my arms and you would let me ... but I do think it.

CATHERINE. [*Retreats, backing towards PETER.*] No!... Don't touch me, James—you mustn't! Don't!... Don't!

PETER *pushes her into JAMES' arms, without touching her. She exclaims "Oh, James!" and fairly runs towards JAMES as though violently propelled. In reality, she thinks that she is yielding to an impulse. As she reaches him, she exclaims "No," and turns back, but JAMES, with outstretched arms, catches her.*



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JAMES. You love me. [*Draws her to him.*]

CATHERINE. Don't make me say that, James.

JAMES. I *will* make you say it! You *do* love me.

CATHERINE. No matter if I do, that won't alter matters.

JAMES. What? What?

CATHERINE. No, no, don't say any more.... I won't hear it. [*She stands free of JAMES—then turns and walks to the stairs.*] Good-bye, Jim.

JAMES. Do you mean it? Are you really going to sacrifice yourself because of—Am I really losing you?... Catherine! Catherine!

CATHERINE. [*In tears—beseechingly.*] Please don't.... Please don't....

FREDERIK *enters*. *Until the entrance of FREDERIK, PETER has had hope in his face, but now he begins to feel apprehensive.*

FREDERIK. [*Throwing his hat and coat on a chair.*] I have some work to do—more of my uncle's unopened mail; then I'll join you, Hartman. We must—er—make haste.

JAMES *looks at* CATHERINE, *then at* FREDERIK. CATHERINE *gives him an imploring glance—urging him not to speak*. FREDERIK *has gone to* PETER'S desk.

JAMES. I'll come back later. [*Goes towards the hall.*]

FREDERIK. Catherine, have you asked James to be present at the ceremony tomorrow?

CATHERINE. No.

FREDERIK. James, will you—

JAMES. I shall be leaving early in the morning.

FREDERIK. Too bad! [*Exit JAMES.*]

FREDERIK *lights the desk candles, takes the mail out of the drawer—opens two letters—tears them up after barely glancing at them—then sees CATHERINE still standing at the foot of the stairs—her back to him. He lays the cigar on the desk, crosses, and, taking her in his arms, kisses her.*



CATHERINE. [*With a revulsion of feeling.*] No! No! No! [*She covers her face with her hands—trying to control herself.*] Please!... Not now...

FREDERIK. Why not *now*? [*Suspiciously.*] Has Hartman been talking to you? What has he been saying to you? [CATHERINE *starts slowly up the stairs.*] Wait a moment, please.... [*As she retreats a step up the stairs, he follows her.*] Do you really imagine you—you care for that fellow?

CATHERINE. Don't—please.

FREDERIK. I'm sorry to insist. Of course, I knew there was a sort of school-girl attachment on your part; ... that you'd known each other since childhood. I don't take it at all seriously. In three months, you'll forget him. I must insist, however, that you do *not* speak to him again to-night. After to-morrow—after we are married—I'm quite sure that you will not forget you are my wife, Catherine—my wife.

CATHERINE. I sha'n't forget. [*She escapes into her room. FREDERIK goes to his desk.*]



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PETER. [*Confronting FREDERIK.*] Now, sir, I have something to say to you, Frederik Grimm, my beloved nephew! I had to die to find you out; but I know you! [FREDERIK *is reading a letter.*] You sit there opening a dead man's mail—with the heart of a stone—thinking: “He's gone! he's gone!— so I'll break every promise!” But there is something you have forgotten— something that always finds us out: the law of reward and punishment. Even now it is overtaking you. Your hour has struck. [FREDERIK *takes up another letter and begins to read it; then, as though disturbed by a passing thought, he puts it down. As though perplexed by the condition of his own mind, he ponders, his eyes resting unconsciously on PETER.*] Your hour has struck.

FREDERIK. [*To himself.*] What in the world is the matter with me to-night?

PETER. Read!

FREDERIK. [*Has opened a long, narrow, blue envelope containing a letter on blue paper and a small photograph. He stares at the letter, aghast.*] My God! Here's luck.... Here's luck! From that girl Annamarie to my uncle. Oh, if he had read it!

PETER. [*Standing in front of FREDERIK looks into space—as though reading the letter in the air.*] “Dear Mr. Grimm: I have not written because I can't do anything to help William, and I am ashamed.”

FREDERIK. Wh! [*As though he had read the first part to himself, now reads aloud.*] “Don't be too hard upon me.... I have gone hungry trying to save a few pennies for him, but I never could; and now I see that I cannot hope to have him back. William is far better off with you. I—” [*Hesitates.*]

PETER. [*Going back of the desk, standing behind FREDERIK'S chair.*] Go on....

FREDERIK. “I wish that I might see him once again. Perhaps I could come and go in the night.”

PETER. That's a terrible thing for a mother to write.

FREDERIK. [*Who has been looking down at the letter—suddenly feeling PETER'S presence.*] Who's that? Who's in this room? [*Looks over his shoulder—then glances about.*] I could have sworn somebody was looking over my shoulder ... or had come in at the door ... or ... [*But seeing no one—he continues.*] “I met someone from home; ... if there is any truth in the rumour of Catherine's marriage—it mustn't be, Mr. Grimm—it mustn't be ... not to Frederik. For Frederik is my little boy's—” [FREDERIK *gives a furtive glance upstairs at the door of the child's room. Picks up the small picture which was in the envelope.*] Her picture ... [*Turns it over—looks at the back—reads.*] “For my boy, from Annamarie.” [FREDERIK, *conscious-stricken for the time being, bows his head.*]



PETER. For the first time since I entered this house, you are yourself, Frederik Grimm. Once more a spark of manhood is alight in your soul. Courage! It's not too late to repent. Turn back, lad! Follow your impulse. Take the little boy in your arms. Go down on your knees and ask his mother's pardon. Turn over a fresh page, that I may leave this house in peace....



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FREDERIK. [*Looks about uneasily, then glances towards the door leading into the hall.*] Who is at the door? Curious ... I thought I heard someone at ...

PETER. I am at the door—I, Peter Grimm! Annamarie is at the door—the little girl who is ashamed to come home; the old mother in the kitchen breaking her heart for some word. William is at the door—your own flesh and blood—nameless; Katie, sobbing her heart out—you can hear her; all—we are all at the door—every soul in this house. We are all at the door of your conscience, Frederik.... Don't keep us waiting, my boy. It's very hard to kill the love I had for you. I long to love you again—to take you back to my heart—lies and all. [FREDERIK *rises—in deep thought.*] Yes! Call her! Tell her the truth. Give her back her promise.... Give her back her home.... Close the door on a peaceful, happy, silent room and go. Think—think of that moment when you give her back her freedom! Think of her joy, her gratitude, her affection. It's worth living for, lad. Speak! Make haste and call her, Fritz. [FREDERIK *takes several steps—then turns back to the desk. He tears the letter in two, muttering to himself, "Damn the woman," and sinks into his chair.*] Frederik Grimm, stand up before me! [FREDERIK *starts to rise, but changes his mind.*] Stand up! [FREDERIK *rises—not knowing why he has risen. PETER points an accusing finger at FREDERIK.*] Liar to the dead! Cheat, thief, hypocrite! You sha'n't have my little girl. You only want her for a week, a day, an hour. I refuse. I have come back to take her from you and you cannot put me to rest.... I have come back.... You cannot drive me from your thoughts—I am there.... [Tapping his forehead, without touching it.] I am looking over your shoulder ... in at the window ... under the door.... You are breathing me in the air.... I am looking at your heart. [He brings his clenched fist down on the desk in answer to FREDERIK'S gesture; but, despite the seeming violence of the blow, he makes no sound.] Hear me! You shall hear me! Hear me! [Calling loudly.] Hear me! Hear me! Hear me! Will nobody hear me? Is there no one in this house to hear me? No one? Has my journey been in vain?... [For the first time fully realizing the situation.] Oh, must we stand or fall by the mistakes we made here and the deed we did? Is there no second chance in this world?

FREDERIK. [*With a sneer on his lips as though trying to banish his thoughts.*] Psh!

MARTA enters with a tray, containing a pot of coffee and a plate of small cakes. PETER, who has watched her with appealing eyes, like a dog craving attention, glances from her to the desk and from the desk back to MARTA—trying to tempt her to look at the torn letter. FREDERIK, deep in thought, does not notice her. PETER points to the desk as though to say, "Look!" After a pause, she picks up the picture and the letter—holding them in one hand to clear a spot for the tray which she is about to set on the desk.



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PETER. [*Speaking in a hushed voice.*] Marta, see what you have in your hand ... that letter ... there ... read it.... Run to Catherine with it. Read it from the house-tops.... The letter ... Look! There you have the story of Annamarie.... It is the one way to know the truth in this house—the only way.... There in your hand—the letter.... He will never speak.... The letter for Catherine.

MARTA *sets down the picture and the letter; but something prompts her to look at them; however, before she can carry out her impulse, FREDERIK starts up.*

FREDERIK. My God! How you startled me! [MARTA *sets down the tray.*] Oh! To be off and out of this old rat-trap. [*He wipes his forehead with his black-bordered handkerchief.*] I mean—our loss comes home to us so keenly here where we are accustomed to see him.

MARTA. A cup of coffee, sir?

FREDERIK. No, no, no.

MARTA. [*Pathetically.*] I thought you wished to keep to your uncle's customs.... He always took it at this time.

FREDERIK. [*Recovering.*] Yes, yes, of course.

MARTA. ... No word?...

FREDERIK. [*Hesitates.*] What do you mean?

MARTA. No letter?

FREDERIK. Letter?... [*Covering the letter with his hand.*] From whom?...

MARTA. From ... At a time like this, I thought ... I felt ... that Annamarie ... that there should be some message.... Every day I expect to hear ...

FREDERIK. No.

PETER *gestures to MARTA—pointing to the picture and letter, now covered by FREDERIK'S hand.*

MARTA. [*Hesitating.*] Are you certain?

FREDERIK. Quite certain. [*She curtsies and leaves the room. FREDERIK, as though relieved to see her go, jumps to his feet, and, tearing the letter in smaller pieces, lights them in the candle, dropping the burning pieces on a tray. As the flame dies out, FREDERIK brushes the blackened paper into the waste-basket.*] There's an end to *that!*



PETER *crouches near the basket—hovering over it, his hinds clasped helplessly. After a pause, he raises his hand, until it points to a bedroom above. An echo of the circus music is very faintly heard; not with the blaring of brasses, but with the sounds of elfin horns, conveying the impression of a phantom circus band. The door of WILLIAM'S room opens, and he comes out as though to listen to the music. He wears a sleeping suit and is bare-footed. He has come down stairs before FREDERIK sees him. FREDERIK quickly puts aside the photograph, laying it on the desk, covering it with his hand.*

FREDERIK. [*Gruffly.*] Why aren't you in bed? If you're ill, that's the proper place for you.

WILLIAM. I came down to hear the circus music.

FREDERIK. Circus music?

WILLIAM. It woke me up.



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FREDERIK. The circus left town days ago. You must have been dreaming.

WILLIAM. The band's playing now. Don't you hear it, sir? The procession's passing. *[He runs to the window and opens it. The music stops. A breeze sweeps through the room—bellies out the curtains and causes the lustres to jingle on the mantel. Surprised.]* No. It's almost dark. There's no procession ... no shining horses.... *[Turning sadly away from the window.]* I wonder what made me think the—I must have been dreaming. *[Rubbing his eyes.]*

FREDERIK. *[Goes to the window, closes it. The child looks at him and, in retreating from him, unconsciously backs towards PETER.]* Are you feeling better?

WILLIAM. Yes, sir, I feel better—and hungry.

FREDERIK. Go back to bed.

WILLIAM. Yes, sir. *[FREDERIK sits.]*

PETER. Where's your mother, William?

WILLIAM. Do you know where Annamarie is?

PETER. Ah!

FREDERIK. Why do you ask me? What should I know of her?

WILLIAM. Grandmother doesn't know; Miss Catherine doesn't know; nobody knows.

FREDERIK. I don't know, either. *[Tears up the picture—turning so that WILLIAM does not see what he is doing. PETER, who has been smiling at WILLIAM, motions him to come nearer. WILLIAM, feeling PETER'S presence, looks round the room.]*

WILLIAM. Mr. Frederik, where's *old* Mr. Grimm?

FREDERIK. Dead.

WILLIAM. Are you sure he's dead? 'Cause—*[Puzzled—unable to explain himself, he hesitates.]*

FREDERIK. *[Annoyed.]* You'd better go to bed.

WILLIAM. *[Pointing to a glass of water on a tray.]* Can I have a drink of water, please?

FREDERIK. Go to bed, sir, or you'll be punished. Water's not good for little boys with fever.



WILLIAM. [*Going towards the stairs.*] Wish I could find a cold brook and lie in it. [*Goes slowly up the stairs.* FREDERIK *would destroy the pieces of the picture; but* PETER *faces him as though forbidding him to touch it, and, for the first time, FREDERIK imagines he sees the apparition of his uncle.*

FREDERIK. [*In a very low voice—almost inaudibly.*] My God! I thought I saw ... [*Receding a step and yet another step as the vision of PETER is still before him, he passes out of the room, wiping the beads of sweat from his forehead.* WILLIAM, *hearing the door close, comes down stairs and, running to the table at back, drinks a glass of water.*

WILLIAM. Um! That's good!

PETER. William! [*WILLIAM doesn't see PETER yet, but he feels his influence.*

WILLIAM. Wish it *had* been the circus music.

PETER. You shall hear it all again. [*Gestures towards the plate of cakes on the tray.*] Come, William, here's something very nice.



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WILLIAM. [*Seeing the cakes.*] Um! Cakes! [*He steals to the tray, looking over his shoulder in fear of being caught.*]

PETER. Don't be frightened. I'm here to protect you. Help yourself to the cakes. William, do you think you could deliver a message for me ... a very important message?...

*The circus music is heard. WILLIAM sits at the tray and PETER seats himself opposite as though he were the host doing the honours. WILLIAM, being unconsciously coaxed by PETER, is prevailed upon to choose the biggest cake. He takes a bite, looking towards PETER.*

WILLIAM. [*To himself.*] Ha!... Think I am dreaming. [*Rubbing his little stomach ecstatically.*] Hope I won't wake up and find there wasn't any cake.

PETER. Don't worry, you won't. [*WILLIAM has taken another piece of cake which he nibbles at—now holding a piece in each hand.*] Pretty substantial dream, eh? There's a fine, fat raisin. [*WILLIAM eats the raisin, then looks into the sugar-bowl.*] Don't hesitate, William. Sugar won't hurt you now. Nothing can hurt you any more. Fall to, William—help yourself. [*WILLIAM looks over his shoulder, fearing the return of FREDERIK.*] Oh, he won't come back in a hurry. Ha! Frederik thought he saw me, William; well, he didn't. He had a bad conscience—hallucination. [*WILLIAM nibbles a lump of sugar.*] Now, William, I have a message for you. Won't you try and take it for me, eh? [*But WILLIAM eats another lump of sugar.*] I see ... I can't expect to get any assistance from a boy while his little stomach's calling. [*WILLIAM empties the cream jug and helps himself to cakes. Presently the music dies out.*] Now I'm going to tell you something. [*Impressively.*] You're a very lucky boy, William; I congratulate you. Do you know why—of all this household—you are the only one to help me?... This is the secret: in a little time—it won't be long—you're going—[*As though he were imparting the most delightful information.*—to know better! Think of *that*! Isn't the news splendid? [*But WILLIAM eats on.*] Think of what most of us have to endure before we know better! Why, William, you're going into the circus without paying for a ticket. You're laying down the burden before you climb the hill. And in your case, William, you are fortunate indeed; for there are some little soldiers in this world already handicapped when they begin the battle of life.... Their parents haven't fitted them for the struggle.... Like little moon moths,—they look in at the windows; they beat at the panes; they see the lights of happy firesides—the lights of home; but they never get in.... You are one of these wanderers, William.... And so, it is well for you that before your playing time is over—before your man's work begins,—you're going to know the great secret. Happy boy! No coarsening



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of your child's heart, until you stand before the world like Frederik; no sweat and toil such as dear old James is facing; no dimming of the eye and trembling of the hand such as the poor old Doctor shall know in time to come; no hot tears to blister your eyes, ... tears such as Katie is shedding now; but, in all your youth, your faith—your innocence, —you'll fall asleep and oh! the awakening, William!... "It is well with the *child*." [WILLIAM *lays down the cake and, clasping his hands, thinks*. PETER *answers his thoughts*.] What? No—don't think of it! Nonsense! You *don't* want to grow up to be a man. Grow up to fail? Or, still worse—to succeed—to be famous? To wear a heavy laurel wreath? A wreath to be held up by tired hands that ache for one hour's freedom. No, no, you're to escape all that, William; joy is on the way to meet you with sweets in its outstretched hands and laughter on its lips. [WILLIAM *takes the last swallow of a piece of cake, exclaims "Hm!" in a satisfied way, brushes the crumbs off his lap, and sits back in his chair*.] Have you had enough? Good! William, I want you to try to understand that you're to help me, will you? Will you tell Miss Catherine that—

WILLIAM. [*Without looking up, his hands folded in his lap*.] Take me back with you, Mr. Grimm?

PETER. Can you see me, William?

WILLIAM. No, sir; but I know.

PETER. Come here. [WILLIAM *doesn't move*.] Here ... here ... [WILLIAM *advances to the center of the room and pauses hesitatingly*.] Take my hand ... [WILLIAM *approaches in the direction of the voice*. PETER *takes WILLIAM'S outstretched hand*.] Have you got it?

WILLIAM. No, sir....

PETER. [*Putting his hand on WILLIAM'S head*.] Now?... Do you feel it?

WILLIAM. I feel something, yes, sir. [*Puts his hand on PETER'S hand, which is still on his head*.] But where's your hand? There's nothing there.

PETER. But you hear me?

WILLIAM. I can't really hear you.... It's a dream. [*Coaxingly*.] Oh, Mr. Grimm, take me back with you.

PETER. You're not quite ready to go with me yet, William—not until we can see each other face to face.

WILLIAM. Why did you come back, Mr. Grimm? Wasn't it nice where you were?



PETER. It was indeed. It was like—[*Whimsically.*]—new toys.

WILLIAM. [*To whom the idea appeals.*] As nice as that!

PETER. Nicer. But I had to come back with this message. I want you to help me to deliver it. [*Indicating the picture.*]

WILLIAM. Where's the bosom of Abraham, Mr. Grimm?

PETER. Eh?

WILLIAM. The minister says you're asleep there.

PETER. Stuff and nonsense! I haven't been near the bosom of Abraham.

WILLIAM. Too bad you died before you went to the circus, Mr. Grimm. But it must be great to be in a place where you can look down and see the circus for nothing. Do you remember the clown that sang: "Uncle Rat has gone to town?"



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PETER. Yes, indeed; but let us talk of something more important. Come here, William [*He starts towards the desk.*]; would you like to see someone whom all little boys love—love more than anybody else in the whole world? [PETER *is standing at the desk with his finger on the torn pieces of the picture.*

WILLIAM. Yes, the clown in the circus.... No ... it isn't a clown; ... it's our mother.... Yes, I want to see my mother, Annamarie. [*Unconsciously WILLIAM comes to the desk and sees the torn picture— picks up a piece and looks at it. Very simply.*] Why ... there she is!... That's her face.

PETER. Ah! You recognize her. Mother's face is there, William, but it's in little bits. We must put her together, William. We must show her to everybody in the house, so that everybody will say: "How in the world did she ever get here? To whom does this picture belong?" We must set them to thinking.

WILLIAM. Yes. Let us show her to everybody. [*He sits and joins the pieces under the guidance of PETER.*] Annamarie ... Annamarie ...

PETER. You remember many things, William ... things that happened when you lived with Annamarie, don't you?

WILLIAM. I was very little....

PETER. Still, you remember....

WILLIAM. [*Evasively.*] I was afraid....

PETER. You loved her.

WILLIAM. [*To picture.*] Oh, yes ... yes, I loved you.

PETER. Now, through that miracle of love, you can remember many things tucked away in your childish brain,—things laid away in your mind like toys upon a shelf. Come, pick them up and dust them off and bring them out again. It will come back. When you lived with Annamarie ... there was you ... and Annamarie ... and—

WILLIAM. —and the other one.

PETER. Ah! We're getting nearer! Who was the other one?

WILLIAM. [*Gives a quick glance towards the door—then as though speaking to the picture.*] I must put you together before *he* comes back. [*He fits the other pieces together—PETER trying to guide him. Presently WILLIAM hums as a child will when at play, singing the tune of "Uncle Rat."*] "Uncle Rat has gone to town."



PETER *and* WILLIAM. [*Singing together.*] “Ha! H’m!” [*At this instant, PETER is indicating another piece of the picture.*]

WILLIAM. Her other foot. [*Then sings.*]

“Uncle Rat has gone to town,  
To buy his niece a wedding gown.”

[*Adjusting a piece of the picture.*] Her hand.

WILLIAM *and* PETER. [*Singing.*] “Ha! H’m!”

WILLIAM. Her other hand. [*Sings.*]

“What shall the wedding breakfast be?  
Hard boiled eggs and—”

[*Speaking.*] Where’s—[*WILLIAM pauses—looking for a piece of the picture.*]

PETER. [*Finishing the verse.*] “A cup of tea.” [*With a gesture as though knocking on the door of the adjoining room to attract MRS. BATHOLOMMEY’S attention.*]



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WILLIAM. [*Speaks.*] There's her hat.

WILLIAM *and* PETER. [*Singing.*] "Ha! H'm!"

WILLIAM. [*Stops singing and claps his hands with boyish delight—staring at the picture.*] Annamarie! Annamarie! You're not in bits any more— you're all put together.

*By this time, PETER is going up the stairs, and, as he stands in front of CATHERINE'S door, it opens. PETER passes in and CATHERINE comes out.*

CATHERINE. [*Astonished.*] Why, William! What are you doing here?

WILLIAM. Miss Catherine! Come down! Come down! I have something to show you.

CATHERINE. [*Not coming down.*] No, dear—come upstairs; there's a good boy. You mustn't play down there. Come to bed. [*Passes into WILLIAM'S room.*

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Who has entered, and sees WILLIAM..*] William!

WILLIAM. Look—look! [*Pointing to the picture.*] See what old Mr. Grimm brought back with him.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Alarmed.*] What are you talking about, William? Old Mr. Grimm is dead.

WILLIAM. No, he isn't; ... he's come back.... He has been in this room.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Absurd!

WILLIAM. I was talking to him.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. You're feverish again. I must get the Doctor. [*Comes down to WILLIAM.*] And I thought you were feeling better! [*Seeing CATHERINE, who appears on the balcony as though wondering why WILLIAM doesn't come to bed.*] The child's mind is wandering. He imagines all sorts of things. I'll call the Doctor—

PETER. [*Who has re-entered.*] You needn't—he's coming now. Come in, Andrew. I'm giving you one more chance.

*The DOCTOR enters, wearing his skull-cap, and carrying his pipe in his hand. It is evident that he has come over in a hurry.*

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Surprised.*] I was just going for you. How fortunate that you came.

DR. MACPHERSON. I thought I'd have another peep at William.



*By this time, CATHERINE has seated herself on a chair, and takes WILLIAM on her lap. He puts his arms round her neck.*

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. He's quite delirious.

DR. MACPHERSON. Doesn't look it. [*Putting his hand on WILLIAM'S cheek and forehead.*] Very slight fever. What makes you think he was delirious? [*Taking WILLIAM'S pulse.*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Interrupting.*] He said that old Mr. Grimm was in this room—that he was talking to him.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Interested.*] Yes? Really? Well, possibly he is. Nothing remarkable in *that*, is there?

PETER. Well, at last!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. What? Oh, of course, you believe in—

DR. MACPHERSON. In fact, I had a compact with him to return if—



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MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. A compact? Of all the preposterous—

DR. MACPHERSON. Not at all. Dozens of cases on record—as I can show you—where these compacts have actually been kept. [*Suddenly struck—looking at WILLIAM.*] I wonder if that boy's a sensitive. [*Hand on his chin.*] I wonder ...

CATHERINE. [*Echoing the DOCTOR'S words.*] A sensitive?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. What's that?

DR. MACPHERSON. It's difficult to explain. I mean a human organism so constituted that it can be *informed* or *controlled* by those who—er— have—[*With a gesture.*] crossed over.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I think I'll put the boy to bed, Doctor.

DR. MACPHERSON. Just a moment, Mistress BatholommeY. I'm here to find out what ails William. William, what makes you think that Mr. Grimm is in this room?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I wouldn't have the child encouraged in such ideas, Catherine. I—

DR. MACPHERSON. Sh! Please, please. [*Taking the boy on his knee.*] What makes you think Peter Grimm is in this room?

WILLIAM. [*Hesitating.*] ... The things he said to me.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Said to you?

CATHERINE. [*Wonderingly.*] William, ... are you sure he ...

DR. MACPHERSON. Said to you, eh? [WILLIAM *nods assent.*] *Old* Mr. Grimm? [WILLIAM *nods.*] Sure of that, William?

WILLIAM. Oh, yes, sir.

DR. MACPHERSON. Think before you speak, my boy; what did Mr. Grimm say to you?

WILLIAM. Lots of things ...

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Really!

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Raises his hand for silence.*] How did he look, William?

WILLIAM. I didn't see him.



MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Ha!

DR. MACPHERSON. You must have seen something.

WILLIAM. I thought once I saw his hat on the peg where it used to hang. [*Looks at the peg.*] No, it's gone.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Remonstrating.*] Doctor!

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Thinking.*] I wonder if he really did—

CATHERINE. Do you think he could have seen Uncle Peter?

PETER. [*Pointing to the desk.*] William!

WILLIAM. Look! ... [*Points to the picture.*] That's what I wanted to show you when you were upstairs.

CATHERINE. [*Seeing the picture.*] It's his mother—Annamarie.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. The Lord save us—his mother! I didn't know you'd heard from Annamarie.

CATHERINE. We haven't.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Then how'd that picture get into the house?

PETER. Ah! I knew she'd begin! Now that she's wound up, we shall get at the truth.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. It's a new picture. She's much changed. How ever did it find its way here?

CATHERINE. I never saw it before. It's very strange.... We've all been waiting for news of her. Even her mother doesn't know where she is, or— could Marta have received this since I—



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MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I'll ask her. [*Exit into dining-room.*]

CATHERINE. If not, who had the picture?... And why weren't we *all* told?... Who tore it up? Did you, William? [WILLIAM *shakes his head, meaning "No."*] Who has been at the desk? No one save Frederik ... Frederik ... and surely he—[*She pauses—perplexed.*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Re-entering.*] No, Marta hasn't heard a word; and, only a few minutes ago, she asked Frederik if some message hadn't come, but he said "No, nothing." I didn't tell her of the picture.

CATHERINE. [*Looking at the picture.*] I wonder if there was any message with it.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I remember the day that picture came ... the day your uncle died.... It was in a long blue envelope—the size of the picture.... I took it from the postman myself because every one was distracted and rushing about. It dropped to the floor and as I picked it up I thought I knew the writing; but I couldn't remember whose it was.... It was directed to your uncle.... [*Looking from the desk to the waste-basket.*] There's the envelope [*Holding up a scrap of blue envelope.*] and paper; ... some one has burned it.

CATHERINE. Annamarie wrote to my uncle ...

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Not understanding.*] But what could Peter have to say to *me* concerning Annamarie? [*Making a resolution—rising.*] We're going to find out. You may draw the curtains, Catherine, if you please. [CATHERINE *draws the curtains.* The DOCTOR *turns the lights down and closes the door.* A pause.] Peter Grimm ...

PETER. Yes, Andrew?...

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Not hearing.*] If you have come back ... if you are in the room ... and the boy speaks truly—give me some sign ... some indication ...

PETER. I can't give you a sign, Andrew.... I have spoken to the boy ... the boy ...

DR. MACPHERSON. If you cannot make your presence known to me—I know there are great difficulties—will you try and send your message by William? I presume you have one—

PETER. Yes, that's right.

DR. MACPHERSON. —or else you wouldn't have come back.

PETER. That's just the point I wanted to make, Andrew. You understand perfectly.



DR. MACPHERSON. [*As before.*] I am waiting.... We are all waiting. [*Noticing that a door is a trifle ajar.*] The door's open again. [MRS. BATHOLOMMEY, *without making a sound, closes it and sits as before.*

PETER. Sh! Listen! [*A pause.*

WILLIAM. [*In a peculiar manner—as though in a half dream—but not shutting his eyes. As though controlled by PETER.*] There was Annamarie and me and the other.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Very low, as though afraid to interrupt WILLIAM'S train of thought.*] What other?

WILLIAM. The man ... that came.

DR. MACPHERSON. What man?



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WILLIAM. The man that made Annamarie cry.

CATHERINE. Who was he?

WILLIAM. I don't know ...

PETER. Yes, you do. Don't tell lies, William.

DR. MACPHERSON. What man made Annamarie cry?

WILLIAM. I can't remember....

PETER. Yes, you can.... You're afraid....

CATHERINE. [*In a low voice.*] So you do remember the time when you lived with Annamarie; ... you always told me that you didn't ... [*To DR. MACPHERSON.*] I must know more of this—[*Pauses abruptly.*] Think, William, who came to the house?

PETER. That's what *I* asked you, William.

WILLIAM. That's what *he* asked ...

DR. MACPHERSON. Who?

WILLIAM. Mr. Grimm.

DR. MACPHERSON. When, William?

WILLIAM. Just now ...

CATHERINE *and* MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Together.*] Just now!

DR. MACPHERSON. H'm.... You both ask the same question, eh? The man that came to see—

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Perplexed.*] It can't be possible that the child knows what he's talking about.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Ignoring her.*] What did you tell Mr. Grimm when he asked you?

PETER. You'd better make haste, William. Frederik is coming back.

WILLIAM. [*Looking uneasily over his shoulder.*] I'm afraid.

CATHERINE. Why does he always look towards that door? You're not afraid now, William?



WILLIAM. [*Looking towards the door.*] N-no—but.... Please, please don't let Mr. Frederik come back. 'Cause then I'll be afraid again.

DR. MACPHERSON. Ah!

PETER. William! William!

WILLIAM. [*Rising quickly.*] Yes, Mr. Grimm?

PETER. You must say that I am very unhappy.

WILLIAM. He says he is very unhappy.

DR. MACPHERSON. Why is he unhappy?... Ask him.

WILLIAM. Why are you unhappy, Mr. Grimm?

PETER. I am thinking of Catherine's future....

WILLIAM. [*Not understanding the last word—puzzled.*] Eh?

PETER. To-morrow ...

WILLIAM. [*After a slight pause.*] To-morrow ...

PETER. Catherine's—

WILLIAM. [*Looks at CATHERINE—hesitating.*] Your—[*Stops. CATHERINE gives the DOCTOR a quick glance—she seems to divine the message.*]

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Prompting.*] Her—

CATHERINE. What, William? What of to-morrow?

PETER. She must not marry Frederik.

WILLIAM. I mustn't say *that*.

DR. MACPHERSON. What?

WILLIAM. What he wanted me to say. [*Points towards PETER. All instinctively look towards the spot to which WILLIAM points, but they see no one.*]

PETER. [*Speaking slowly to the boy.*] Catherine—must—not—marry Frederik Grimm.



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DR. MACPHERSON. Speak, William. No one will hurt you.

WILLIAM. Oh, yes, *he* will.... [*Looking timidly towards the door FREDERIK passed through.*] I don't want to tell his name—'cause ... 'cause ...

DR. MACPHERSON. Why don't you tell the name, William?

PETER. Make haste, William, make haste.

WILLIAM. [*Trembling.*] I'm afraid ... I'm afraid ... he will make Annamarie cry; ... he makes me cry ...

CATHERINE. [*With suppressed excitement—half to herself.*] Why are you afraid of him? Was Frederik the man that came to see Annamarie?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Catherine!

CATHERINE. [*On her knees before WILLIAM.*] Was he? Was it Frederik Grimm? Tell me, William.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Surely you don't believe ...

CATHERINE. [*In a low voice.*] I've thought of a great many things to-day ... little things ... little things I'd never noticed before.... I'm putting them together just as he put that picture together.... I must know the truth.

PETER. William, make haste.... Frederik is listening at the door.

WILLIAM. [*Frightened.*] I won't say any more. He's there ... at the door ... [*He looks over his shoulder and CATHERINE goes towards the door.*]

DR. MACPHERSON. William, tell me.

PETER. William!

CATHERINE *opens the door suddenly.* FREDERIK *is standing, listening. He is taken unawares and for a few seconds he does not move—then he recovers.*

WILLIAM. Please don't let him scold me. I'm afraid of him. [*Going towards the stairs—looking at FREDERIK.*] I was afraid of him when I lived with Annamarie and he came to see us and made her cry.

DR. MACPHERSON. Are you sure you remember that? Weren't you too small?

WILLIAM. No, I do remember.... I always did remember; only for a little while I—I forgot.... I must go to bed. He told me to. [*Goes upstairs.*]



PETER. [*Calling after WILLIAM.*] You're a good boy, William. [*WILLIAM goes to his room.*]

CATHERINE. [*After a slight pause—simply.*] Frederik, you've heard from Annamarie.... [*Gestures towards the desk. FREDERIK sees the photograph and is silent.*] You've had a letter from her. You tried to destroy it. Why did you tell Marta that you'd had no message—no news? You went to see her, too. Why did you tell me that you'd never seen her since she went away? Why did you lie to me? Why do you hate that child?

FREDERIK. Are you going to believe what that boy—

CATHERINE. I'm going to find out. I'm going to find out where she is, before I marry you. That child may be right or wrong; but I'm going to know what his mother was to you. I want the truth.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Who has been in thought—now looking up.*] We've heard the truth. We had that message from Peter Grimm himself.



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CATHERINE. Yes, it is true. I believe Uncle Peter Grimm was in this room to-night.

FREDERIK. [*Not surprised—glancing towards the spot where PETER stood when he thought he saw him.*] Oh! You, too? Did you see him, too?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Incredulously.*] Impossible!

CATHERINE. I don't care what anyone else may think—people have the right to think for themselves; but I believe he has been here—he *is* here. Uncle Peter, if you can hear me now, give me back my promise—or—or I'll take it back!

PETER. [*Gently—smilingly—relieved.*] I did give it back to you, my dear; but what a time I have had getting it across!

CURTAIN.

### ACT III.

*The third act takes place at twenty minutes to twelve on the same night.*

*The fire is out. The table on which PETER took his coffee in the first act is now being used by the DOCTOR for WILLIAM'S medicines, two bottles, two glasses, two teaspoons, a clinical thermometer, &c. WILLIAM, who has been questioned by the DOCTOR, is now asleep upstairs. PETER'S hat hangs on the peg in the shadow. Although the hour is late, no one has thought of going to bed. FREDERIK is waiting at the hotel for the lawyer whom HICKS was to send to arrange for the sale of PETER GRIMM'S nurseries, but he has not arrived. The DOCTOR, full of his theories, is seated before the fire, writing the account of PETER GRIMM'S return, for the American Branch of the "London Society for Psychical Research." It is now a fine, clear night. The clouds are almost silvery and a hint of the moon is showing.*

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Reading what he has written.*] "To be forwarded to the 'London Society for Psychical Research': Dr. Hyslop: Dear Sir: This evening at the residence of Peter—" [*Pauses and inserts "the late" and continues to read after inserting the words.*] "—the late Peter Grimm— the well-known horticulturist of Grimm Manor, New York, certain phenomena were observed which would clearly indicate the return of Peter Grimm, ten days after his decease. While he was invisible to all, three people were present besides myself—one of these, a child of eight, who received the message. No spelling out by signals nor automatic writing was employed, but word of mouth." [*A rap sounds.*] Who will that be at this hour?... [*Looks at the clock.*] Nearly midnight. [*Opening the door.*] Yes?

A VOICE. [*Outside.*] Telegram for Frederik Grimm.



DR. MACPHERSON. Not in. I'll sign. [*He signs and, receiving the telegram, sets it against a candle-stick on the desk and resumes his seat. Reads:*] "I made a compact with Peter Grimm, while he was in the flesh, that whichever went first was to return and give the other some sign; and I propose to give positive proof—" [*He hesitates—thinks—then repeats.*] "positive proof that he kept this compact and that I assisted in the carrying out of his instructions."



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MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Enters—evidently highly wrought up by the events of the evening.*] Who was that? Who knocked?

DR. MACPHERSON. Telegram.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. I thought perhaps Frederik had come back. Don't you consider William much better?

DR. MACPHERSON. Mm ...

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Dear, dear! The scene that took place to-night has completely upset me. [*The DOCTOR takes up his pen and reads to himself.*] Well, Doctor: [*She pushes forward a chair and sits at the other side of the table—facing him.*] the breaking off of the engagement is rather sudden, isn't it? We've been talking it over in the front parlour, Mr. Batholommeey and I. James has finished his work and has just joined us. I suggest sending out a card—a neat card—saying that, owing to the bereavement in the family, the wedding has been indefinitely postponed. Of course, it isn't exactly true.

DR. MACPHERSON. Won't take place at all. [*Goes on reading.*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Evidently not; but if the whole matter looks very strange to me—how is it going to look to other people; especially when we haven't any—any rational explanation—as yet? We must get out of it in some fashion.

DR. MACPHERSON. Whose business is it?

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Nobody's, of course. But Catherine's position is certainly unusual; and the strangest part of it all is—she doesn't seem to feel her situation. She's sitting alone in the library, seemingly placid and happy. What I really wish to consult you about is this: shouldn't the card we're going to send out have a narrow black border? [*The DOCTOR is now writing.*] Doctor, you don't appear to be interested. You might at least answer my question.

DR. MACPHERSON. What chance have I had to answer? You've done all the talking.

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Rising—annoyed.*] Oh, of course, all these little matters sound trivial to you; but men like you couldn't look after the workings of the *next* world if other people didn't attend to *this*. Some one has to do it.

DR. MACPHERSON. I fully appreciate the fact, Mistress Batholommeey, that other people are making it possible for me to be myself. I'll admit that; and now if I might have a few moments in peace to attend to something really important—

*The REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY has entered with his hat in his hand.*



REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Doctor, I've been thinking things over. I ran in for a moment to suggest that we suspend judgment until the information William has volunteered can be verified. I can scarcely believe that—

DR. MACPHERSON. Ump! [*Rises and goes to the telephone on the desk.*] Four-red.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. I regret that Frederik left the house without offering some explanation.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*At the 'phone.*] Marget, I'm at Peter's. I mean—I'm at the Grimms'. Send me my bag. I'll stay the night with William. Bye. [*Seats himself at the table.*]



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REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Tell Frederik that, if he cares to consult me, I shall be at home in my study. Good-night, Doctor. Good-night, Rose.

DR. MACPHERSON. Hold on, Mr. Batholomme! [*The REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY turns.*] I'm writing an account of all that's happened here to-night—

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Dubiously.*] Indeed!

DR. MACPHERSON. I shall verify every word of the evidence by William's mother for whom I am searching. [*The REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY smiles faintly behind his hand.*] Then I shall send in my report, and not until then. What I wish to ask is this: would you have any objection to the name of Mrs. Batholomme being used as a witness?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Looks perplexed.*] Well,—er—a—

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Oh, no, you don't! You may flout our beliefs; but wouldn't you like to bolster up your report with "the wife of a clergyman who was present!" It sounds so respectable and sane, doesn't it? No, sir! You cannot prop up your wild-eyed—

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Rose, my dear!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Sweeping on.*]—theories against the good black of a minister's coat. I think myself that you have *probably* stumbled on the truth about William's mother.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. *Can* it be true? Oh, dreadful! Dreadful!

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. But that child knew it all along. He's eight years old and he was with her until five—and five's the age of memory. Every incident of his mother's life has lingered in his little mind. Supposing you do find her and learn that it's all true: what do you prove? Simply that *William remembered*, and that's all there is to it.

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. Let us hope that there's not a word of truth in it. Don't you think, Doctor—mind, I'm not opposing your ideas as a clergyman,—I'm just echoing what *everybody else* thinks—don't you believe these spiritualistic ideas, leading away from the Heaven we were taught to believe in, tend towards irresponsibility—er—eccentricity—and—often—er—insanity? Is it healthy—that's the idea—is it healthy?

DR. MACPHERSON. Well, Batholomme, religion has frequently led to the stake, and I never heard of the Spanish Inquisition being called *healthy* for anybody taking part in it. Still, religion flourishes. But your old-fashioned, unscientific, gilt, ginger-bread Heaven blew up ten years ago—went out. My Heaven's just coming in. It's new. Dr. Funk and a lot of the clergymen are in already. You'd better get used to it, Batholomme, and get in line and into the procession.



REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. You'll have to convince me first, Doctor—and that no man can do. I made up my mind at twenty-one, and my Heaven is just where it was then.

DOCTOR MACPHERSON. So I see. It hasn't improved a particle.



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REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Tolerantly.*] Well, well. Good-night. [MRS. BATHOLOMMEY *follows him in the hall.*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. Good-night, Henry; I'll be home to-morrow. You'll be glad to see me, dear, won't you?

REV. MR. BATHOLOMMEY. My church mouse! [*He pats her cheek, kisses her good-night and goes.*]

MRS. BATHOLOMMEY. [*Who has gone to the door of her room—giving DR. MACPHERSON a parting shot.*] Write as much as you like, Doctor; words are but air. We didn't see Peter Grimm and you know and I know and everybody knows that *seeing is believing.*

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Looking up.*] Damn everybody! It's everybody's ignorance that has set the world back a thousand years. Where was I before you—Oh, yes. [*Reads as MRS. BATHOLOMMEY leaves the room.*] "I assisted in the carrying out of his instructions." [FREDERIK GRIMM *enters.*]

FREDERIK. Anybody in this house come to their senses yet?

DR. MACPHERSON. I think so, my boy. I think several in this house have come to their senses. Catherine has, for one. I'm very glad to see you back, Frederik. I have a few questions to put to you.

FREDERIK. Why don't you have more light? It's half dark in this room. [*He picks up the lamp from the DOCTOR'S table and holds it so that he can look searchingly in the direction of the desk to see if PETER'S apparition is still there. His eye is suddenly riveted on the telegram resting against the candlestick on the desk.*] Is that telegram for me?

DR. MACPHERSON. Yes.

FREDERIK. Oh.... It may explain perhaps why I've been kept waiting at the hotel.... [*Tries to go to the desk but cannot muster up courage.*] I had an appointment to meet a man who wanted to buy the gardens. I may as well tell you, I'm thinking of selling out root and branch.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Amazed.*] Selling out? Peter Grimm's gardens? So this is the end of Peter's great work?

FREDERIK. You'll think it strange, Doctor; but I—I simply can't make up my mind to go near that old desk of my uncle's.... I have a perfect terror of the thing! Would you mind handing me that telegram? [*The DOCTOR looks at him with scarcely veiled contempt, and hands him the telegram. After a glance at the contents, FREDERIK gives vent to a*



*long-drawn breath.*] Billy Hicks—the man I was to sell to—is dead.... [*Tosses the telegram across the table towards DR. MACPHERSON, who does not take it. It lies on the table.*] I knew it this afternoon! I knew he would die ... but I wouldn't let myself believe it. Someone told it to me ... whispered it to me.... Doctor, as sure as you live—somebody else is doing my thinking for me in this house.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Studying FREDERIK.*] What makes you say that?

FREDERIK. To-night—in this room, I thought I saw my uncle ... [*Pointing towards the desk.*] there.



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DR. MACPHERSON. Eh?...

FREDERIK. And just before I—I saw him—I—I had the ... the strangest impulse to go to the foot of the stairs and call Kitty—give her the house—and run—run—get out of it.

DR. MACPHERSON. Oh, a good impulse, I see! Very unusual, I should say.

FREDERIK. I thought he gave me a terrible look—a terrible look.

DR. MACPHERSON. Your uncle?

FREDERIK. Yes. My God! I won't forget that look! And as I started out of the room—he blotted out.... I mean—I thought I saw him blot out; ... then I left the photograph on the desk and—

DR. MACPHERSON. That's how William came by it. [*Jots down a couple of notes.*] Did you ever have this impulse before—to give up Catherine—to let her have the cottage?

FREDERIK. Not much, I hadn't. Certainly not. I told you someone else was thinking for *me*. I don't want to give her up. It's folly! I've always been fond of her. But if she has turned against me, I'm not going to sit here and cry about it. I shall be up and off. [*Rising.*] But I'll tell you one thing: from this time, I propose to think for myself. I've taken a room at the hotel and a few things for the night. I've done with this house. I'd like to sell it along with the gardens, and let a stranger raze it to the ground; but— [*Thinks as he looks towards the desk.*] when I walk out of here to-night—it's hers—she can have it. ... I wouldn't sleep here.... I give her the home because ...

DR. MACPHERSON. Because you don't believe anything; but you want to be on the safe side in case he— [*Gesturing to desk.*] was there.

FREDERIK. [*Puzzled—awed—his voice almost dropping to a whisper.*] How do you account for it, Doctor?

DR. MACPHERSON. It might have been an hallucination or perhaps you did see him, though it could have been inflammation of conscience, Frederik: when did you last see Annamarie?

FREDERIK. [*Angrily.*] Haven't I told you already that I refuse to answer any questions as to my—

DR. MACPHERSON. I think it only fair to tell you that it won't make a particle of difference whether you answer me or not. I have someone on the track now—working from an old address; I've called in the detectives and I'll find her, you may be sure of that. As long as I'm going to know it, I may as well hear your side of it, too. When did you last see Annamarie?



FREDERIK. [*Sits—answers dully, mechanically, after a pause.*] About three years ago.

DR. MACPHERSON. Never since?

FREDERIK. No.

DR. MACPHERSON. What occurred the last time you saw her?

FREDERIK. [*Quietly, as before.*] What *always* occurs when a young man realizes that he has his life before him, must be respected—looked up to, settle down, think of his future and forget a silly girl?

DR. MACPHERSON. A scene took place, eh? Was William present?



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FREDERIK. Yes. She held him in her arms.

DR. MACPHERSON. And then?

FREDERIK. I left the house.

DR. MACPHERSON. Then it's all true. [FREDERIK *is silent.*] What are you going to do for William?

FREDERIK. Nothing. I'm a rich man now—and if I recognize him—he'll be at me till the day he dies. His mother's gone to the dogs and under her influence, the boy—

DR. MACPHERSON. Be silent, you damned young scoundrel. Oh! What an act of charity if the good Lord took William, and I say it with all my heart. Out of all you have—not a crumb for—

FREDERIK. I want you to know I've sweat for that money, and I'm going to keep it!

DR. MACPHERSON. *You've* sweat for—

FREDERIK. [*Showing feeling.*]—Yes! How do you think I got the money? I went to jail for it—jail, jail. Every day I've been in this house has been spent in prison. I've been doing time. Do you think it didn't get on my nerves? I've gone to bed at nine o'clock and thought of what I was missing in New York. I've got up at cock-crow to be in time for grace at the breakfast table. I took charge of a class in Sabbath-school, and I handed out the infernal cornucopias at the church Christmas tree, while he played Santa Claus. What more can a fellow do to earn his money? Don't you call that sweating? No, sir; I've danced like a damned hand-organ monkey for the pennies he left me, and I had to grin and touch my hat and make believe I liked it. Now I'm going to spend every cent for my own personal pleasure.

DR. MACPHERSON. Will rich men never learn wisdom!

FREDERIK. [*Rising.*] No, they won't! But in every fourth generation there comes along a *wise* fellow—a spender who knows how to distribute the money others have hoarded: I'm the spender.

DR. MACPHERSON. Shame upon you and your like! Your breed should be exterminated.

FREDERIK. [*Taking a little packet of letters from the desk.*] Oh, no, we're quite as necessary as you are. And now—I shall answer no more questions. I'm done. Good-night, Doctor.



DR. MACPHERSON. Good-night and good-bye. [*With a look of disgust, he has gone to the table, held a medicine bottle to the light to look at the label and poured a spoonful into a wine-glass filled with water. As FREDERIK leaves the house, the DOCTOR taps on a door and calls.*] Catherine! [*CATHERINE enters, and shows by the glance she directs at the front door that she knows FREDERIK has been in the room and has just left the house.*] Burn up your wedding dress. We've made no mistake. I can tell you that! [*Goes up the stairs to WILLIAM'S room, taking the lamp with him. JAMES has entered, and, taking CATHERINE'S hand, holds it for a moment.*

JAMES. Good-night, Catherine. [*She turns and lays her hand on his shoulder.*



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CATHERINE. I wonder, James, if *he* can see us now.

JAMES. That's the big mystery!... Who can tell? But any man who works with flowers and things that grow—knows there is no such thing as death— there's nothing but life—life and always life. I'll be back in the morning.... Won't you ... see me to the door?

CATHERINE. Yes ... yes.... [*They go up together, CATHERINE carrying a candle into the dark vestibule. The moment they disappear, a lamp standing on the piano goes out as though the draught from the door or an unseen hand had extinguished it. It is now quite dark outside, and the moon is hidden for a moment. At the same time, a light, seemingly coming from nowhere, reveals PETER GRIMM standing in the room at the door—as though he had been there when the young people passed out. He is smiling and happy. The moon is not seen, but the light of it (as though it had come out from behind a cloud) now reveals the old windmill. From outside the door the voices of JAMES and CATHERINE are heard as they both say:] Good-night.*

JAMES. Catherine, ... I won't go without it....

PETER. [*Knowing that JAMES, is demanding a kiss.] Aha! [Rubs his hands in satisfaction—then listens—and after a second pause exclaims, with an upraised finger, as though he were hearing the kiss.] Ah! Now I can go.... [He walks to the peg on which his hat hangs, and takes it down. His work is done. CATHERINE re-enters, darting into the hall in girlish confusion.*

JAMES' HAPPY VOICE. [*Outside.] Good-night!*

CATHERINE. [*Calling to him through the crack in the door.] Good-night! [She closes the door, turns the key and draws the heavy bolt—then leans against the door, candle-stick in hand—the wind has blown out the candle.] Oh, I'm so happy! I'm so happy!*

PETER. Then good-night to you, my darling: love cannot say good-bye. [*She goes to PETER'S chair, and, sitting, thinks it all over—her hands clasped in her lap—her face radiant with happiness.] Here in your childhood's home I leave you. Here in the years to come, the way lies clear before you. [His arm upraised.] "Lust in Rust"—Pleasure and Peace go with you. [CATHERINE looks towards the door—remembering JAMES' kiss—half smiling.] [Humorously.] Y—es; I saw you. I heard ... I know.... Here on some sunny, blossoming day when, as a wife, you look out upon my gardens—every flower and tree and shrub shall bloom enchanted to your eyes.... All that happens—happens again. And if, at first, a little knock of poverty taps at the door, and James finds the road hard and steep—what is money?—a thing,—a good thing to have,—but still a thing ... and happiness will come without it. And when, as a mother, you shall see my plantings with new eyes, my Catherine,—when you explain each leaf and bud to your little people—you*



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will remember the time when *we* walked together through the leafy lanes and I taught you—even as you teach them—you little thing!... So, I shall linger in your heart. And some day, should your children wander far away and my gardens blossom for a stranger who may take my name from off the gates,—what *is* my name? Already it grows faint to my ears. [*Lightly.*] Yes, yes, yes, let others take my work.... Why should *we* care? All that happens, happens again. [*She rests her elbow on the chair, half hides her face in her hand.*] And never forget this: I shall be waiting for you—I shall know all your life. I shall adore your children and be their grandfather just as though I were here; I shall find it hard not to laugh at them when they are bad, and I shall worship them when they are good—and I don't want them too good.... Frederik was good.... I shall be everywhere about you ... in the stockings at Christmas, in a big, busy, teeming world of shadows just outside your threshold, or whispering in the still noises of the night.... And oh! as the years pass, [*Standing over her chair.*] you cannot imagine what pride I shall take in your comfortable middle life—the very *best* age, I think—when you two shall look out on your possessions arm in arm—and take your well-earned comfort and ease. How I shall love to see you look fondly at each other as you say: “Be happy, Jim—you’ve worked hard for this;” or James says: “Take your comfort, little mother, let them all wait upon *you*—*you* waited upon *them*. Lean back in your carriage—you’ve earned it!” And towards the end—[*Sitting on a chair by her side and looking into her face.*] after all the luxuries and vanities and possessions cease to be so important—people return to very simple things, dear. The evening of life comes bearing its own lamp. Then, perhaps, as a little old grandmother, a little old child whose bed-time is drawing near, I shall see you happy to sit out in the sunlight of another day; asking nothing more of life than the few hours to be spent with those you love,... telling your grandchildren, at your knees, how much brighter the flowers blossomed when *you* were young. Ha! Ha! Ha! All that happens, happens again.... And when, one glad day, glorified, radiant, young once more, the mother and I shall take you in our arms,—oh! what a reunion! [*Inspired.*] The flight of love—to love.... And now ... [*He bends over her and caresses her hand.*] good-night. [CATHERINE rises and, going to the desk, buries her face in the bunch of flowers placed there in memory of PETER.

CATHERINE. Dear Uncle Peter....

MARTA enters—pausing to hear if all is quiet in WILLIAM'S room. CATHERINE, lifting her face, sees MARTA and rapturously hugs her, to MARTA'S amazement—then goes up the stairs.

PETER. [*Whose eyes never leave CATHERINE.*] “Lust in Rust!” Pleasure and Peace! Amen! [CATHERINE passes into her room, the music dying away as her door closes. MARTA, still wondering, goes to the clock and winds it.] Poor Marta! Every time she thinks of me, she winds my clock. We're not quite forgotten.



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DR. MACPHERSON. [*Re-appears, carrying WILLIAM, now wrapped up in an old-fashioned Dutch patchwork quilt. The DOCTOR has a lamp in his free hand.*] So you want to go downstairs, eh? Very good! How do you feel, laddie?

WILLIAM. New all over.

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Placing the lamp on the little table right, and laying WILLIAM on the couch.*] Now I'll get you the glass of cold water. [*Goes into the dining-room, leaving the door open.*]

PETER. [*Calling after the DOCTOR.*] Good-night, Andrew. I'm afraid the world will have to wait a little longer for the *big* guesser. Drop in often. I shall be glad to see you here.

WILLIAM. [*Quickly rising on the couch, looks towards the peg on which PETER GRIMM'S hat hung. Calling.*] Mr. Grimm! Where are you? I knew that you were down here. [*Seeing PETER.*] Oh, [*Raising himself to his knees on the sofa.*] I see you now!

PETER. Yes? [*There is an impressive pause and silence as they face each other.*]

WILLIAM. Oh, you've got your hat;... it's off the peg.... You're going. Need you go right away—Mr. Grimm? Can't you wait a little while?

PETER. I'll wait for you, William.

WILLIAM. May I go with you? Thank you. I couldn't find the way without you.

PETER. Yes, you could. It's the surest way in this world. But I'll wait,— don't worry.

WILLIAM. I sha'n't. [*Coaxingly.*] Don't be in a hurry ... I want—[*Lies down happily.*] to take a nap first.... I'm sleepy. [*He pulls the covering up and sleeps.*]

PETER. I wish you the pleasantest dream a little boy can have in *this* world.

*Instantly, as though the room were peopled with faint images of WILLIAM'S dream, the phantom circus music is heard, with its elfin horns; and, through the music, voices call "Hai! Hai!" The sound of the cracking of a whip is heard, and the blare of a clown's ten-cent tin horn. The phantom voice of the CLOWN (very faint) calls:*

CLOWN'S VOICE. Billy Miller's big show and monster circus is in town this afternoon! Don't forget the date! Only one ring—no confusion. Circus day comes but once a year, little sir. Come early and see the wild animals and hear the lion roar-r-r! Mind, I shall expect you! Wonderful troupe of trained mice in the side-show.

*During the above, the deeper voice of a "HAWKER"—muffled and far off—cries:*



HAWKER'S VOICE. Peanuts, pop-corn, lemonade—ice cold lemo—lemo— lemonade!  
Circus day comes but once a year.

*Breaking in through the music, and the voices of the CLOWN and HAWKER, the gruff voice of a "BARKER" is heard calling.*

BARKER'S VOICE. Walk in and see the midgets and the giant! Only ten cents—one dime!

*As these voices die away, the CLOWN, whose voice indicates that he is now perched on the head of the couch, sings:*



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CLOWN'S VOICE.

“Uncle Rat has gone to town,  
Ha! H'm!  
Uncle Rat has gone to town  
To buy his niece”—

*His voice ends abruptly—the music stops. Everything is over. There is silence. Then three clear knocks sound on the door.*

PETER. Come in.... [*The door opens. No one is there—but a faint path of phosphorous light is seen.*] Oh, friends! Troops of you! [*As though he recognizes the unseen guests.*] I've been gone so long that you came for me, eh? I'm quite ready to go back. I'm just waiting for a happy little fellow who's going back with us.... We'll follow. Do you all go ahead—lead the way. [*He looks at WILLIAM, holds out his arms, and WILLIAM jumps up and runs into them.*] Well, William! You know better now. Come! [*Picking up WILLIAM.*] Happy, eh? [*WILLIAM nods, his face beaming.*

WILLIAM. Oh, yes!

PETER. Let's be off, then. [*As they turn towards the door.*

DR. MACPHERSON. [*Re-entering, goes to the couch with the water, and suddenly, setting down the glass, exclaims in a hushed voice:*] My God! He's dead! [*He half raises up a boy that appears to be WILLIAM. The light from the lamp on the table falls on the dead face of the child. Then the DOCTOR gently lays the boy down again on the couch, and sits pondering over the mystery of death.*

PETER. [*To the DOCTOR.*] Oh, no! There never was so fair a prospect for *life!*

WILLIAM. [*In PETER'S arms.*] I am happy!

*Outside a hazy moonlight shimmers. A few stars twinkle in the far-away sky; and the low moon is seen back of the old windmill.*

PETER. [*To WILLIAM.*] If the rest of them only knew what they're missing, eh?

WILLIAM. [*Begins to sing, joyously.*]  
“Uncle Rat has gone to town.”

PETER *dances up a few steps towards the door, singing with WILLIAM.*

PETER *and WILLIAM.*

“Ha! H'm!  
Uncle Rat has gone to town



To buy his niece a wedding gown.  
Ha! H'm!"

PETER. [*Gives one last fond look towards CATHERINE'S room. To WILLIAM.*] We're off! [*Putting the boy over his shoulder, they sing together, as they go up, the phantom circus music accompanying them.*]  
"What shall the wedding breakfast be?  
Ha! H'm!"

PETER. [*Alone.*]  
"What shall the wedding breakfast be?  
Hard boiled eggs and a cup of tea."

WILLIAM *and* PETER. "Ha! H'm!"

PETER GRIMM *has danced off with the child through the faint path of light. As he goes, the wind or an unseen hand closes the door after them. There is a moment's pause until their voices are no longer heard—then the curtain slowly descends. The air of the song is taken up by an unseen orchestra and continues as the audience passes out.*

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CURTAIN.