

With a growl the other snatched the trinket out from under her hand.

"Give it to me! It's mine!" he muttered. "She sha'n't have it!"

He stood with the thing held tight in his left hand, and this hand held behind him, as if he expected an attack on this last possession. There he stood, prematurely old, decked out in clothes foolishly unsuited to his time of life or the season of the year, and vulgarly sprig.

And then, suddenly, he jammed his hat on his head and pointed at the side door through which he had entered the room. "There's somebody!" he said sharply. Outlined on the glass was the familiar figure of Jaffrey. He had seen the light in the library, and, hoping to find Amy alone, had come up the nearer way; he was turning the knob.

Amy knew she had locked the door and, as a consequence, a moment was left to her.

"He must not find you!" she whispered.

"Why not?" asked the old man.

She did not answer, for she had no answer that would not have exposed her own identity. Running across the library to the door leading into the front hall, she opened it and peeped out to see whether a passage to the front entrance of the house was free of observers.

"Come! This way!" she commanded in an undertone; and, finding that the old man had shuffled after her, she almost pushed him out into the world of cold air, snow, gray dusk, and city smoke.

HE had gone! The crisis had passed. But now it was all that she could do to hold herself erect as she crossed the library again to let Jaffrey come in. The dancing fire-light, throwing its strange shadows on the walls, seemed only a part of a dizzy world in which shadows were vampires and tongues of flame seared the flesh, and strength slipped away like sawdust out of a broken doll.

"Amy," cried young Duncan. "Amy! What has happened? You're ill. That's it—you're ill!"

She retreated, wiping her forehead with her hand.

"Don't touch me, please," she whispered. "Wait a minute, let me think."

But she found it difficult to think. Her ears rang with the old man's phrases. He still might have been in the room, talking about cheap lodging-houses, leaking shoes, homeless nights, and peddling on the streets. She ran to the window and looked out.

"You've been asleep, haven't you?" Jaffrey asked. "That's it! You've been asleep—you've had a dream!"

"It was like a dream," she said weakly. "Let me think."

Suddenly the thought of her heartlessness became terrible to her. Her father! She had turned him away. She had denied her own name to him! He was in the evening of life, and she had shut him out, to go on and on until that evening turned to night and oblivion.

She would have to tell Jaffrey the first lie. That lie would drop the first poison into their love!

Amy walked around the table, touching the papers, as if to establish contact with real life—the old familiar life of yesterday and the day before. She knew Jaffrey was following her with his astonished gaze. She feared that he might notice her quick glances out the front windows at a figure walking with leaden steps toward the corner of the avenue.

"Jaffrey!" she cried out suddenly. "Come to this window. See! See! Under the arc light—a man—a man walking toward the corner. If you love me, don't ask any questions now. Do you hear? Run after that man. No matter what he says, bring him back here. Tell him a mistake has been made. Do just that for me. If you love me, do that!"

Young Duncan stared at her for a moment, and then, taking his hat, slammed the door after him. She could see the puffs of his breath on the frosty air as he ran beyond the gate.

She could only wait now, and she covered her aching eyes with her hands and waited for the squeak and crunch of the snow under the returning footsteps of the only two men who belonged to her life. She did not doubt that the old man would return, and she was right.

Jaffrey's voice said, "No, after you, sir," at the door. They stood there together—the two men; but, as Amy only gazed at them through a film of her tears, both walked toward the fire.

"Jaffrey dear," said Amy at last, "I

you, Jaffrey. But there was something else, too. I could not lie to you. Nothing else mattered. I couldn't lie to you, dear."

"Lie to me? What a notion, Amy!"

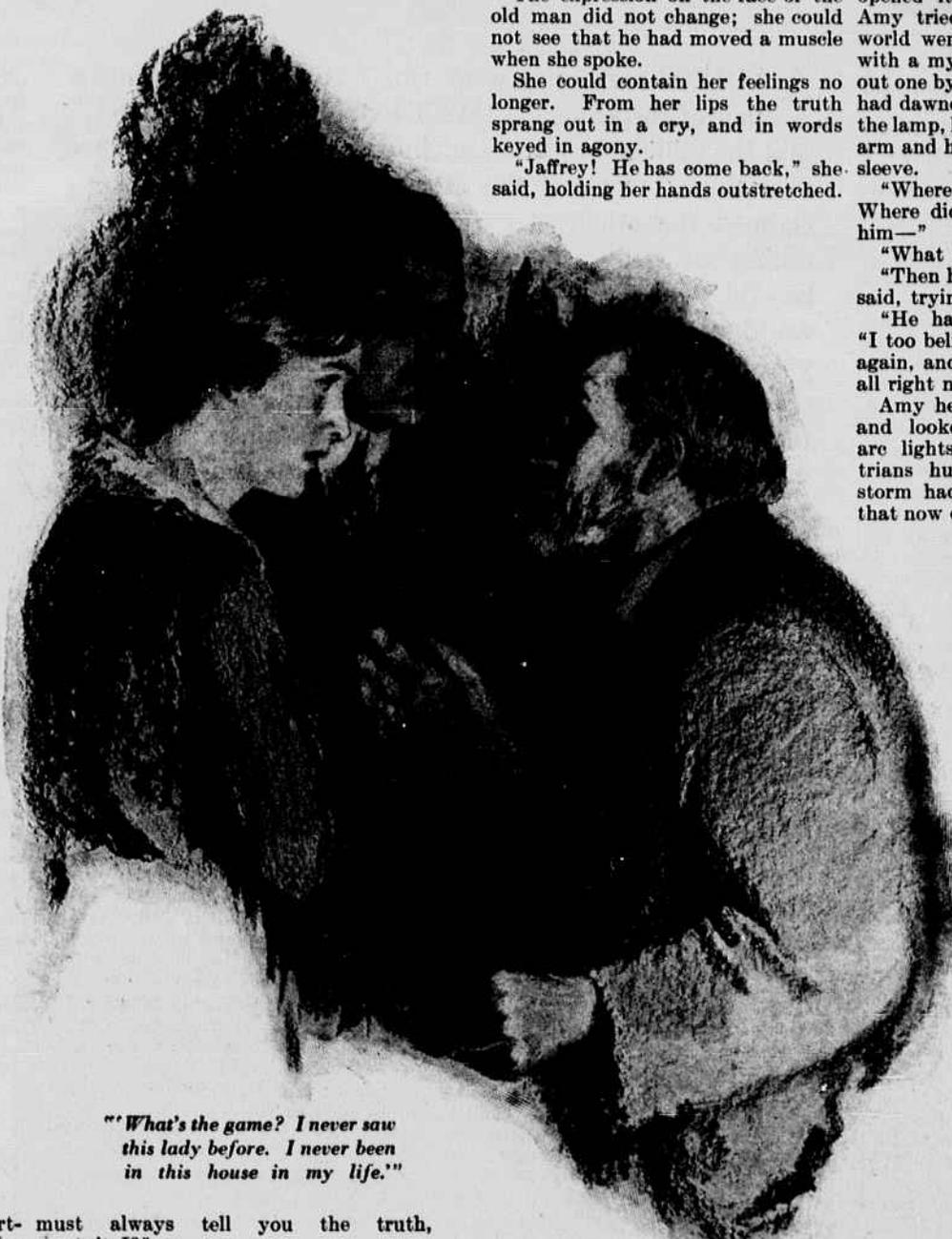
SHE had turned toward the other man, who had been standing at the other end of the hearth with a dazed expression. And now she thought she saw the sudden leap of understanding in his eyes. His mouth twitched, but it said nothing; and at last the corners of that weak mouth settled into a faint, but a wise and knowing, smile. He had heard her name—the name "Amy."

Deliberately she added: "Yes, Jaffrey; it is I—Amy Andrew."

The expression on the face of the old man did not change; she could not see that he had moved a muscle when she spoke.

She could contain her feelings no longer. From her lips the truth sprang out in a cry, and in words keyed in agony.

"Jaffrey! He has come back," she said, holding her hands outstretched.



"What's the game? I never saw this lady before. I never been in this house in my life."

must always tell you the truth, mustn't I?"

"You talk like a tired young child," he said. "But you had better explain, girl. This gentleman doesn't understand, I suppose."

His manner of speaking lightly faded away as he looked into Amy's eyes. She came near to him, as if to be in reach of his arms if she should fall.

"Jaffrey, this man has been here before. He left just as you came in," she said, taking pains with each spoken word. "He told me a very disagreeable story, but it had in it an appeal to one's pity. I sent him away without much pity, Jaffrey, and without much kindness. I am ashamed of that. It was selfish, Jaffrey."

She repeated his name as if she were saying good-by to him and yearned to address him as many times as possible before their parting.

"Please listen, Jaffrey," she went on. "Please listen quietly—both of you. I thought I had tenderness and unselfishness and bravery; but I had to call them to me—I had to summon them. I had such a dread of bringing unhappiness to

"He has come back. He has come back to claim me. This—is—my—father."

"Wha'd I tell yer?" the old man said, wheeling toward young Duncan and shaking the gnarled hands and the trimmed cuffs at him. "I knew you was wrong, feller."

"Wrong!" exclaimed Amy. She walked toward her father until her own eyes were close to his. There was no sign of recognition in them for a moment; and then suddenly they cast upon Amy one long glance of a love so great that it seemed to shed a light upon her.

"Why, I don't understand," her father growled. "What's the game? I never seen this lady before. I never been in this house in my life."

"What's your business?" asked Jaffrey. "Selling Marvello Washing Compound," answered the other. "But I don't never sell except at back doors."

Young Duncan put his arm around Amy. She could not speak.

"Do you mean to say you never have been in this room?" the young man asked.

"Certainly not. Wouldn't I remember it?" replied the other, buttoning his light overcoat. "The lady is mistaken. That's all. The lady is mistaken."

"Wait!" exclaimed Amy.

"There's no use, lady," the other said. "You couldn't ever convince me of that, any more than you could convince me that my name wasn't Edgar Anglin. Outside of that, I ain't entitled to any recognition. I sell soap, and, as I'm always glad to be of some good to somebody, I'll just leave a sample of the Marvello right here in this place on your table."

"Wait!"

But her father backed toward the door, opened it, slammed it, and was gone. Amy tried to follow him; but all the world went dark to her, and then filled with a myriad of green stars which went out one by one, until she thought morning had dawned; and she found herself under the lamp, her head in the curve of Jaffrey's arm and her loosened hair falling over his sleeve.

"Where did he go?" she asked. "Quick! Where did he go? If the city swallows him—"

"What then?"

"Then he will never be seen again," she said, trying to remember.

"He has gone," said Jaffrey gravely. "I too believe he will never be seen by us again, and we can do nothing. Are you all right now?"

Amy held on to the edge of the chair and looked out into the night. The arc lights at the corner showed pedestrians hurrying homeward. When the storm had passed the air had cleared, so that now even the sound of the voices of passers-by could be heard. All the noises of the city, muffled during the afternoon by the snowfall, asserted themselves again. A group of school-boys went by, singing; a taxicab plowed through the cross street and threw strange shadows behind it as it approached a light, and before it after it had passed the circle of white radiance, and it, too, sang as it went. From far away came the sound of bellowing steamers of the lake and of the locomotives calling to each other across the freight terminals. That meant travel.

Travel? She knew he would go; she knew he would go far away. It was better for all of them; it was even better for him, for he would know now—he would know surely, because of himself—that there was some good in every man.

He could be counted on to say that over and over the rest of his life—perhaps to hundreds of people. He had the right to say it. He had lived it, a little, at last.

And then she turned toward Jaffrey.

"He was here," she said. "I was not in a delusion. He was here."

"I know. I understand it all. Poor Amy—my dear, dear girl!"

"You understand!" To her this appeared impossible.

"Did he—" she began.

"No," Jaffrey answered. "He lived up to you, dear. And this shall always be between us. He has gone. But he left this. He left this under the sample. Don't you see that this tells it all to me?"

He held up in his fingers a little gold trinket.

"Your mother's name is on it," he said; and then he put both arms around her and said into her ear her own name. It was voiced so that she knew all that he meant to tell her:

"Amy Andrew."