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The Silent Wife.

(Continued from page 3.)

"It's Dr. Weston's day to-day," said Helena one morning, a fortnight after Doris's arrival. "Of course, you've guessed my secret?"

Doris looked bewildered.

"Your secret? I'm afraid I don't understand."

Helena made an impatient movement of her thin shoulders.

"You're not very sharp, then, nurse," she sneered.

"No, I'm afraid I'm not."

Helena laughed rudely.

"You're sharp enough sometimes."

Doris made no reply. It was one of Miss Farr's nasty days.

"I'm madly in love with Paul Weston."

Doris started—a fact that did not escape Helena's sharp eyes. "Well," the girl challenged, "why shouldn't I be? He's awfully handsome, isn't he?"

"Yes, quite good-looking," Doris agreed.

Here was a new complication—one that, unless she was careful, might lead to much unpleasantness.

"Did you know Dr. Weston well?" Helena continued.

"Pretty well. You see he was the doctor at the cottage hospital where I trained."

Helena gave Doris a sharp look.

"I wonder you didn't fall in love with him, and marry him."

"You see, I didn't," Doris forced a smile.

"Are you engaged?" demanded Helena.

For the first time Doris began to regret having removed her wedding-ring. Had she not done so this inquisitive, impish girl would have imagined that Nurse Angela was a widow.

"I was engaged once; but"—assuming her most professional air—"I am not here to discuss my affairs, Miss Farr. The doctor will be here shortly, I want to get you ready for him."

Doris contrived to meet Paul Weston alone.

"Well, how are you getting on?" He gave Doris one of the kindly glances that warmed her heart, and proved she was not friendless. "You look ever so much better."

"I am—thanks to you," she said gratefully.

"How do you get on with Miss Lena?" Doris shrugged her shoulders, then laughed.

"Oh, pretty well. Of course, she's terribly trying at times."

"And Mr Farr?"

Doris coloured.

"I see very little of Mr Farr. When I do he is always most courteous."

Paul drew his own conclusions.

"Was it wise to remove your wedding-ring?" he asked; and the girl answered: "Perhaps not. I did it on the spur of the moment. If necessary I shall tell the truth."

Helena's bell rang violently. She had seen Dr. Weston's car, from the window.

"What a time you've been coming up!" She glanced quickly from one to the other.

"I suppose you were talking over old times?" she said suspiciously.

"Hardly that," Paul Weston said coldly.

After this his visit was purely professional.

When he left the house, Helena flew into one of her worst rages.

"You've set him against me! He used to be nice to me before you came!"

Her rage died down as suddenly as it had flared up. She began to sob and cry, and beg Doris to forgive.

"If you go, he won't come at all. And if I don't see him sometimes I shall die."

Doris had to be very firm, and tell Miss Farr that if she went on like this it would be impossible to nurse her at home.

"Bring me my jewels," she said. "They always soothe me."

The remainder of the evening passed, as it frequently did, in Helena decking herself in her jewels and admiring herself in the mirror. Mr Farr was away on business.

Nurse and patient dined together. Doris had gone into her own room to get a few minutes' relief from Helena's incessant babble; but hardly had she reached it before she heard a succession of screams issuing from the long sitting-room.

She rushed back, to see Helena, bedizened in her jewels, standing in the centre of the room, her hand extended towards the window.

"Some one's there!" she shrieked. A man! I saw him! He was looking in at me!"

Doris hurried to the window, opened it, and stepped on to the balcony. Helena had made no mistake. A man was descending the iron staircase with such rapidity that it was impossible for Doris to follow him. He disappeared in the direction of the shrubbery.

But, quick as he was, Doris saw that the intruder was Roger Armer!

What ought she to do? She stood a moment rooted to the spot. She could not give her husband away. That the gang of which he was head was after Helena Farr's jewels was certain.

Helena continued to shriek. She also started to ring the bell. Several servants rushed into the room. All was commotion.

"Did you see him?" Helena flew to Doris, and clung to her.

"I thought I saw a man," she forced herself to say. And then suddenly she made up her mind. If Armer was a thief why should she shield him? He deserved any fate that might befall him. She turned to the butler and footman.

"I think it would be well to search the grounds. There might be—someone there."

She took Helena into her own room. "Take off those jewels," she said, so sternly that the younger girl began to whimper.

"It's things like those that tempt men to crime. You don't want to lose them, do you?"

"No, no, no!" moaned the hysterical girl, tearing off the ornaments. "I'll go to bed. I shan't feel safe until I know no one can get my jewels."

As soon as she had seen Helena safely in bed, the parcel of precious stones in their usual hiding-place, Doris returned to the sitting-room.

She had given her patient a soothing draught, and could rely on a few hours' quiet.

The menservants had made an exhaustive search. Their report was that they had seen no one. The butler, an old and privileged retainer, gave his opinion.

"It's one of Miss Helena's crazy fancies. The moonlight plays strange tricks, nurse, as I dare say you know."

To this Nurse Angela smiled an assent.

As she spoke, Doris Armer decided on a certain course of action. She could not remain in this house and allow Helena's jewels to be stolen. She had already written an anonymous letter to her husband, with no result.

She must write again, an even stronger one, and if this had no effect she would ask Mr Farr to insist on Helena's jewels being placed in some safer place than the girl's room.

"I'll write the letter at once, and find someone to deliver it at Westways Court."

She crossed to her bureau, and took up a pen. As she did so her eyes fell on the evening paper. A paragraph caught her attention:

"The mystery surrounding the disappearance of the beautiful Mrs Roger Armer is solved at last."

With whitening face Doris Armer read the account of the inquest upon herself.

"I'm dead!" she murmured. "Dead to the world—dead to Roger. Legally dead!"

Quietly she folded up the paper. "Let it rest so. After all, it's best. I wonder who that poor girl was? How little I guessed, when I gave her my clothes and the shabby little purse, that it would end like this. It gives me freedom—the dead cannot speak!"

With a low cry Doris Armer laid her head on her arms and burst into bitter weeping. And this was how she celebrated her so-called "freedom!"

Presently she rose, and bathed her face. It would not do for the servants to see her like this.

When, half an hour later, Mrs Cox summoned her to the consultation about some new tea-gowns she was making for Miss Lena, she found a rather pale but perfectly composed Nurse Angela.

How Doris forced herself to give advice and express interest in Martha's work, she could never have told.

"So," said Martha, "they've found Mrs Armer. Suicide, I expect—eh?"

"It looks like it; but it mightn't have been."

"Ah, well, she must have been off her dot. Never to speak to her husband! Oh, good riddance for him, poor gent. I saw him once—a handsome feller. Mr Farr knows him in business. I heard him say as how he was going to ask him here to dinner before long. Hallo, nurse, what's up? Feeling bad?"

"A bit faint."

Doris went to the window. Roger coming her—Roger, the thief! Roger! And she, the wife who was legally dead, beneath the same roof! The room whirled round.

"'Twas that scare Lena made as unnerved you. I'll go and get you a drop o' stimmat."

Martha Cox hurried away.

A tap at the door was followed by the entrance of a woman, heavily veiled, and dressed in a long travelling-coat.

"Is this the housekeeper's room?" the stranger asked. "I'm afraid they did not receive my wire saying I was coming to-night. I am the new housekeeper."

She raised her veil, and Doris found herself looking into the face of her husband's accomplice—the woman the gang had addressed as Wanda.

(To be Continued.)

ANGLING NOTES.

(By "Creel").

"SMALL FRY."

He was an angler bold, she his wifey dear,
And he caught small fish; it did seem queer.

Curious she was to know the reason,
She asked him why, this very season.

He hum—ed and haw—ed and tried to explain,
That he lost his best fish, again and again.

That the fish seemed governed by certain rules,
For they swam about in little schools.

She seemed very thoughtful, started to think,
Looked at his creel, then said with a wink:

"I'm enlightened dear, for I know, alas,
You caught your fish in the infant class."

—By "Creel."

SHE KNEW THEM.

Young Wife (gloomily): "Do you suppose our husbands really went fishing last Saturday?"

Second Young Wife (confidentially): "I am sure of it."

First Young Wife: "They didn't bring home any fish!"

Second Young Wife: "That's my principal reason for believing they went fishing."

A local party visited the Dunsdale and creeled some nice fish on the fly. They report the fish in good condition after the recent "fresh."

The Waiau appears to be coming back to form as some fine fish have been caught lately. Mr C. Brownridge (Tua-tapere), landed six good fish in prime condition. Messrs Aitken, Olsen and friend, also bagged some hefty fish, the heaviest being about nine pounds as "fat as butter."

Conditions atmospherically were considerably better last week-end and the rivers (with the exception of the smaller streams, such as the Mimihau, Wyndham, Otamita, Dunsdale, Lora, Otapiri, etc.), which were more suitable for the gentle art, being fairly high. I understand some very fair bags were secured on the Oreti with the worm, and also on the Makarewa with the minnow. Fly fishers on the smaller streams had to contend with an east wind.

Last Friday, fishing the Otamita, Mr Jas. Hoffman caught 12 fish on the fly. They were mostly on the small side, although as "fat as butter." Messrs J. McArthur and H. T. Braxton, creeled 13 fish between them on the same stream. Messrs Speden Bros., landed 11 fish on the creeper, and included in the "take" were two three-pounders.

ON PUTTING THE FISH BACK.

The following article is taken from the "Field" of September 9th, 1920:—In most trout rivers fish under a certain length or weight have to be returned, with as little injury to them as possible, to the water.

In some few places all have to be treated, and I would wish first to consider this last set of conditions. Theoretically it should make no difference to the angler.

He has had all the sport of catching, playing, and landing his fish, and it should be admired, detached from the hook, and slipped into the water without a pang. We would like to hug ourselves and say that this is our honest belief. He was a good fighter and has gone back to his native element to recover from shock, to grow, to perpetuate his species, and perhaps to gladden the angler's heart by being foolish enough to be caught again. Thus the theoretical aspect. But it is so with the larger proportion of fresh water fishermen? Is there not some curious—admittedly unworthy feeling of satisfaction in knocking a sizeable fish on the head and putting him, to make a brave show with his brethren, in the basket? Who has not holla'd his best over a fox killed in the pen? Who has not chuckled inwardly when he has brought down a brace of high birds with a right and left? Is there not some kink in our nature, handed down perhaps from far away ancestors, who had to hunt for their daily food, that awakes in us the wish to—let us say—bag our game? The Englishman is credited with the gross saying, "It is a fine day, let us go and kill something." This is admittedly a shameless exaggeration, but there is a suspicion of truth in it, and conscience puts up but a feeble resistance to the plea of mercy. While we remain the imperfect mortals that we are, there

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