

"I am a confounded coward!"

He threw away his cigar, and turned and walked indoors.

Timothy, after securing the cigar, sped home to brood over this piece of information.

"Wonder what makes him a coward? What's he frightened of, any way?"

"A great chap like that a coward!" thought Timothy.

Presently he had a great idea. His eyes shone and sparkled wickedly.

"I'll do it," he said aloud. I ain't going to let teacher make up with a coward, so there!"

He went to bed and slept peacefully.

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A couple of days later the weather changed. A strong westerly wind brought rain and clouds. Miss Wildon drew the fascinating little red hood of her cloak over her curls, and set out cheerfully for choir practice. She played the harmonium in the building known as the church, but which was really an old Mission house, and not at all ecclesiastical in appearance. Harold Crayley had joined the choir during his stay, and helped considerably with his fine tenor voice and thorough musical knowledge. It is just possible that Miss Wildon thought of him when she put on that red hood. He invariably walked home with her, so how could she help it? She was a little late, and when the practice was over she stayed to lock the harmonium and sort some music. Harold Crayley stayed also—to put out the lights, and then they left the building together. The rain had ceased but a gusty wind was blowing dark clouds across the moon. While passing a tall briar hedge, a waving spray of the prickly shrub caught Miss Wildon's hood, and they stopped to disentangle it. The moon shone out as Crayley touched the red hood reverently, and showed him her face gay with youth and happiness, and the little, bare, curly head thrown backward so as not to strain the captured

hood. He was very close to her, and his heart beat uncomfortably fast. There is no knowing how courageous he might have become, but just then the briar sprang back to its place, and she was free. They turned the corner, and then a little shriek of horror from Miss Wildon and an exclamation from Crayley broke the silence that had fallen between them. Miss Wildon grasped her companion's arm with both hands and asked wonderingly:

"What is it? Oh! What is it?"

A tall figure, draped in white with one long arm extended, holding what appeared to be a human head with gleaming eyes, was standing in the middle of the road.

"Don't be frightened," said Harold quickly. "Someone is playing us a trick. I must teach him a lesson. Let me go!"

But Miss Wildon, though Harold thought her an angel, was only human and very feminine.

"Oh! don't go and leave me here! What is it?"

She held him if anything tighter than before. Harold Crayley lost his head.

"You must let me go, my pet," he said tenderly. "Stand by that gate across the way, and you will be all right, my darling."

She released his arm hurriedly and turned and fled round the corner to a gate leading into a paddock. There she waited in terrified silence. Supposing Harold were hurt—shot or knocked on the head, or something dreadful like that—? She ought not to have left him! But she was such a coward. Yet in the midst of all her fear something thrilled her through with pure delight. He had called her "pet" and "darling." Hark! He was calling her. Without a moment's hesitation she ran to him. He was bending over a long white figure lying prone on the road.

He looked up at her.

"It's as I thought," he said. "Someone playing a foolish trick, and I fear I've hurt him seriously. He fell on his head. Help me."