

Mrs. Loyd glared resentfully at the quiet little white haired woman knitting so serenely by the west window.

'I ain't the only one Mamie Moore talks about,' she muttered, as she got upon her feet, 'She says, says she, "I hear that Silas Findlebury's ghost is walking again," and, being as he was my own uncle, I felt it a duty to myself, he having been a Findlebury, to come over and find out about it.'

Betsey's soft lips settled into a straight line, and for a moment she made no reply. Then:

'Your Uncle Silas was drowned off the White Rock six months ago—to be exact, on the 17th day of February. Leastways, we think he was drowned, and now we're sure he was drowned because he never came home, and the empty boat, all stove in amidst-ships came ashore one day. You know all that I know, Alida.' Betsey was quite pale when she finished.

Alida stared at her with round eyes.

'Well, Humboldt Pedrick declared he saw Uncle Silas ploughing the south field in April,' she said, boldly, 'at night.'

'Fiddle!' snapped Betsey, crossly.

'Well, who ploughed it, then?' demanded Alida, triumphantly. 'Humboldt says he's asked every man in Little River, and there ain't one that done it. Who did it, Aunt Betsey?'

'Good-bye, Alida,' said Mrs. Findlebury, coldly.

'I'm sorry you're in such a hurry, but it's most supper time, and I expect your dinner dishes ain't washed up yet, and it might be that your beds ain't made. I saw a pillow hanging out of Finney's winder just now.' She smiled grimly as the door slammed after Mrs. Loyd's bulky form.

When she was alone her sweet face grew suddenly pinched as if with mental suffering. She hid her face in her worn hands and rocked gently to and fro.

'I wonder—I wonder who did it,' she murmured over and over again.

She wondered what Alida and her inquisitive friends would say if they knew that Silas Findlebury had quarrelled bitterly with his wife the day before he disappeared.

No one but herself knew of that quarrel, the outgrowth of Silas' desire to build a new barn on the place. They had been saving money for two years to pay off the little mortgage remaining on the farm. The 500 dollars, together with 18 dollars for six months' interest, would build the barn that Silas declared he needed for the proper housing of his stock.

Betsey believed that the old barn would do for a while longer. She was eager to remove the last encumbrance from her home. They had quarrelled for the first time during their happy married life.

The very next day Silas had announced his intention of going fishing, and that was the last Betsey had seen of him. The money had been in his pockets, for Silas placed no faith in banks.

Early in April Mrs. Findlebury awoke one morning to find her south field ploughed and harrowed, ready for the corn. It had been Silas' habit to have his corn in before the 10th. The field was ploughed on the 7th, and Betsey herself planted the corn on the 8th and 9th.

Humboldt Pedrick declared that he saw Silas Findlebury driving two white horses before a white plough, ploughing his own cornfield at midnight. He also said that Silas was dressed in white robes, and that a cold wind blew over the field as he watched. Suddenly he was stricken with the truth. It was the ghost of Silas ploughing his own cornfield.

Betsey Findlebury grew very white when she heard what the gossips were saying, but she said nothing.

If she only knew whether Silas—but what else could have happened to a middle-aged man of his sober habits? The sound had been rough that day, and the sea was quite high, and near the mouth of the river there was a strong tide, and White Rock was a dangerous reef.

Well, there was the empty boat floating bottom upward. The oars were missing, and there was the broken side.

'It can't be explained,' muttered Betsey Findlebury, as she arose and began to get supper. 'There's more things in heaven and earth than—I've forgotten the rest—but I guess it means there's more queer happenings than we poor mortals can explain.'

After supper she went out to feed the chickens. On her way back she looked up at the roof of the old house. The two wide-mouthed chimneys needed re-painting, and if Silas had been alive she knew that he would have painted the bricks fresh red, with neat white stripes outlining the mortar. A big locust tree overhung the house and trailed drooping branches along the ridgepole.

'That limb needs lopping off,' sighed Betsey, as she went indoors.

At 12 o'clock that night Betsey Findlebury awoke suddenly and sat up in bed.

What was that sound? She listened intently. It was a gentle pattering overhead, and occasionally a heavy creaking sound.

Betsey Findlebury slipped from her bed and went to the garret stairs. Again she hearkened. Now the sounds were plainer, and they appeared to come from the roof.

What could it be? She sniffed the air.

In five minutes Betsey had dressed herself in the dark and noiselessly gone down stairs. The front door opened and closed, and Betsey tiptoed out on the porch, down the steps, and on to the grass of the front yard. When she had reached the shadow of a tall shrub she peered up at the roof of her house, and her nervous fingers clutched her throat.

Silhouetted against the midnight sky, in the radiance of the full moon, was a man's tall, white-clad form. Betsey saw him stepping carefully to and fro, bending now and then. His arm went back and forth, back and forth, and, although she shrill chorus of the katydids drowned any sounds he might have made, Betsey imagined she could hear the pat-pat-pat of a paint brush passing over the bricks of the shabby chimney.

The midnight painter was quietly letting himself down into the branches of the locust. By the time he had slipped down to the ground beside the back porch Betsey had flung wide the kitchen door and was saying in a cheery voice that she tried to hold steady:

'Hurry up, Silas. Your breakfast is waiting for you. Seems to me you've been a powerful long time over them chimneys.'

For an instant there was silence. Then the tall form, clothed in painter's overalls, stepped forward on to the porch.

Silas Findlebury appeared worn and haggard and very tired. His eyes looked anxiously at Betsey's face, beautiful with its tender, tremulous smile.

'Betsey, Betsey, do you want me?' he whispered brokenly.

'Silas Findlebury, you'll catch your death a-standing out there!' scolded Betsey, and so, drawing her lost husband within the house, Betsey Findlebury once and forever laid his ghost.

Over that midnight meal Silas Findlebury told how he had gone fishing that February day, how the wind and tide had carried him off shore and into the path of a sound steamer, and how a deck hand had flung a rope and pulled him aboard.

He told of their arrival in New York, and of his sudden inspiration to speculate with the \$518 contained in his pocket. If he could return home with double that amount of money they could pay off the mortgage and build the new barn as well.

Silas speculated and lost. Then he went to Milltown, where his brother lived, and obtained work there in one of the mills. Little by little he was saving money, trying to make up the sum he had lost. At different times he had walked the ten miles to Little River to do something on his own farm, to help Betsey, to catch a glimpse of her sitting beside her lonely lamp. To-night he had come to paint the chimneys. They had worried him, he said. Here Betsey's arms around him stopped his narrative.

**IN COLD WEATHER**

no beverage is so acceptable as SYMINGTON'S COFFEE ESSENCE. In two minutes you can have a delicious warm drink. If you haven't tried it you should do so at once.