

Not a Word, Mind, to Dinah Ann!

"Not a word, mind, to Dinah Ann!" Dinah Ann herself, the speaker's wife, having strolled down the garden in the sweet stillness of the summer night, heard these suggestive words as the gig pulled up at the gate and her husband descended from it.

"Not a word, for your life, mind, to Dinah Ann!" "No fear!" replied a voice, which she recognized as that of her brother, Harry Leete.

James Harbury, substantial farmer and agriculturist, came through the gate and turned to fasten it. Had he turned the other way, to the left instead of to the right, he would have seen his wife standing against the hedge as close as she could stand, almost into it.

"Just like Peter Hall! You'd have taken the reins yourself, James, I reckon, had you come back with him." "Oh, he'd not get as bad as all that! But, I say, Dinah Ann, it's a sad thing about Patrige at the Down Farm."

"What a dreadful thing!" exclaimed Dinah Ann, who had a feeling heart, with all her curiosity. "Ay, tis. I think I'd like a snack of cold beef, Dinah Ann, though it is late."

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"For him to lose his tea," ran her thoughts, "of all things! It must be some uncommonly urgent business to induce James to forego a meal of any kind. I do wonder what secret they have got between them."

"This rural district, remote from the haunts of wily men of the world, was given over entirely to farmers and farming interests, simple minded and simple mannered people, who lived out their uneventful lives in the routine of daily duties."

own mare, which he either rode or drove generally, being sick. He was a tall, slender man of nine-and-thirty years, very fair, with exceedingly handsome features and mild blue eyes, looking as unlike the popular notion of a farmer as a man could look, and presenting a marked contrast to his agricultural neighbors.

He had one fault—though perhaps all people would not call it a fault—love of money. That he was one of the "warmest" farmers in the district, was universally believed, and the most saving of men. Too saving, his wife would tell him; and where was the use of it, she would ask, considering she had neither child nor child—and every now and then she would make the money fly, for she was a dear lover of smart attire and of having pretty things about her.

"Neither child nor child," in that fact had lain a sharp sting. They had been married eight years now, and the sting was wearing itself away. Time softens all things. He had never given her cause for an unhappy thought—until to-night. He had never had any secrets from her, except that he never could be brought to tell her what the exact sum was that he was enabled to put by at the end of the year.

But she did care for this, this mysterious secret which had come to her hearing to-night. She knew how good looking James was, how universally he was liked by man and woman, and what a kind heart he had—she put it "soft"—and something like jealousy began to torment her spirit.

"What do you think?" "You deceitful villain! You know you did not near the stable," thought his wife. "You are sure you think so?" she added aloud.

"What can make you ask that, Dinah Ann?" "What can make you ask that, Dinah Ann?" "What can make you ask that, Dinah Ann?" "What can make you ask that, Dinah Ann?"

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there—about those sheep, you know, Dinah Ann. I shall get them at my own price after all.

"Of course you will. I told you so all along. But I do wonder you could not wait till to-morrow."

"Oh—market day's always a bustling day; one forgets half one's business or has not time to do it. Anyway I thought I'd go in this afternoon."

"I should like to go with you, James!" Mr. Harbury received the impulsive wish with a blank look and had no ready answer at hand.

"I want to buy a new silk gown and to order a best cap and ever so many other things. Yes; I will go with you, James. I won't be five minutes getting ready."

"But—Dinah Ann—not to-day. I can't take you this afternoon. You shall go to-morrow instead."

"Why can't you take me?" "Business," he shortly replied. And, his gig being just then brought round, White Bess in the shafts, he got into it without more ado and drove away, calling out goodbye to his wife.

"I'll be even with you, Mr. James," nodded she. "The sun was setting when he drove in again and round to the stable yard. Leaving his horse and gig with Evan, he was crossing to the house, when his attention was caught by a huge volume of black smoke puffing out of the chimney of a narrow building that was formerly made to serve as a brewhouse and washhouse until the larger one was built."

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