

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a dark brown color, framing the central text.

The Dead Hand

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Being the First of the Experiences of The Oracle of Maddox Street

By L. T. Meade and Robert Eustace

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My name is Diana Marburg. I am a palmist by profession. Occult phenomena, spiritualism, clairvoyance, and many other strange mysteries of the unseen world, have, from my earliest years, excited my keen interest.

Being blessed with abundant means, I attended in my youth many foreign schools of thought. I was a pupil of Lewis, Darling, Braid and others. I studied Reichenbach and Mesmer, and, finally, started my career as a thought reader and palmist in Maddox Street.

Now I live with a brother, five years my senior. My brother Rupert is an athletic Englishman, and also a barrister, with a rapidly growing practice. He loves and pities me—he casts over me the respectability of his presence, and wonders at what he calls my lapses from sanity. He is patient, however, and when he saw that in spite of all expostulation I meant to go my own way, he ceased to try to persuade me against my inclinations.

Gradually the success of my reading of the lines of the human hand brought me fame— my prophecies turned out correct, my intuition led me to right conclusions, and I was sought after very largely by that fashionable world which always follows anything new. I became a favourite in society, and was accounted both curious and bizarre.

On a certain evening in late July, I attended Lady Fortescue's reception in Curzon Street. I was ushered into a small anteroom which was furnished with the view of adding to the weird effect of my own appearance and words. I wore an Oriental costume, rich in colour and bespangled with sparkling gems. On my head I had twisted a Spanish scarf, my arms were bare to the elbows, and my dress open at the throat. Being tall, dark, and, I believe, graceful, my quaint dress suited me well.

Lady Fortescue saw me for a moment on my arrival, and inquired if I had everything I was likely to want. As she stood by the door she turned.

“I expect, Miss Marburg, that you will have a few strange clients to-night. My guests come from a varied and ever widening circle, and to-night all sorts and conditions of men will be present at my reception.”

She left me, and soon afterwards those who wished to inquire of Fate appeared before me one by one.

Towards the close of the evening a tall, dark man was ushered into my presence. The room was shadowy, and I do not think he could see me at once, although I observed him quite distinctly. To the ordinary observer he doubtless appeared as a well set up man of the world, but to me he wore quite a different appearance. I read fear in his eyes, and irresolution, and at the same time cruelty round his lips. He glanced at me as if he meant to defy any message I might have for him, and yet at the same time was obliged to yield to an overpowering curiosity. I asked him his name, which he gave me at once.

“Philip Harman,” he said; “have you ever heard of me before?”

“Never,” I answered.

“I have come here because you are the fashion, Miss Marburg, and because many of Lady Fortescue’s guests are flocking to this room to learn something of their future. Of course you cannot expect me to believe in your strange art, nevertheless, I shall be glad if you will look at my hand and tell me what you see there.”

As he spoke he held out his hand. I noticed that it trembled. Before touching it I looked full at him.

“If you have no faith in me, why do you trouble to come here?” I asked.

“Curiosity brings me to you,” he answered. “Will you grant my request or not?”

“I will look at your hand first if I may.” I took it in mine. It was a long, thin hand, with a certain hardness about it. I turned the palm upward and examined it through a powerful lens. As I did so I felt my heart beat wildly and something of the fear in Philip Harman’s eyes was communicated to me. I dropped the hand, shuddering inwardly as I did so.

“Well,” he asked in astonishment, “what is the matter, what is my fate? Tell me at once. Why do you hesitate?”

“I would rather not tell you, Mr. Harman. You don’t believe in me, go away and forget all about me.”

“I cannot do that now. Your look says that you have seen something which you are afraid to speak about. Is that so?”

I nodded my head. I placed my hand on the little round table, which contained a shaded lamp, to steady myself.

“Come,” he said rudely, “out with this horror—I am quite prepared.”

“I have no good news for you,” I answered. “I saw something very terrible in your hand.”

“Speak.”

“You are a ruined man,” I said, taking his hand again in mine, and examining it carefully. “Yes, the marks are unmistakable. You will perpetrate a crime which will be discovered. You are about to commit a murder, and will suffer a shameful death on the scaffold!”

He snatched his hand away with a violent movement and started back. His whole face was quivering with passion.

“How dare you say such infamous things!” he cried. “You go very far in your efforts to amuse, Miss Marburg.”

“You asked me to tell you,” was my reply.

He gave a harsh laugh, bowed low and went out of the room. I noticed his face as he did so; it was white as death.

I rang my little hand-bell to summon the next guest, and a tall and very beautiful woman between forty and fifty years of age entered. Her dress was ablaze with diamonds, and she wore a diamond star of peculiar brilliancy just above her forehead. Her hair white as snow, and the glistening diamond star in the midst of the white hair, gave to her whole appearance a curious effect.

“My name is Mrs. Kenyon,” she said; “you have just interviewed my nephew, Philip Harman. But what is the matter, my dear,” she said suddenly, “you look ill.”

“I have had a shock,” was my vague reply, then I pulled myself together.

“What can I do for you?” I asked.

“I want you to tell me my future.”

“Will you show me your hand?”

Mrs. Kenyon held it out, I took it in mine. The moment I glanced at it a feeling of relief passed over me. It was full of good qualities—the Mount of Jupiter well developed, the heart-line clear and unchained, a deep, long life-line, and a fate-line ascending clear upon the Mount of Saturn. I began to speak easily and rapidly, and with that fluency which often made me feel that my words were prompted by an unseen presence.

“What you tell me sounds very pleasant,” said Mrs. Kenyon, “and I only hope my character is as good as you paint it. I fear it is not so, however; your words are too flattering, and you think too well of me. But you have not yet touched upon the most important point of all—the future. What is in store for me?”

I looked again very earnestly at the hand. My heart sank a trifle as I did so.

“I am sorry,” I said, “I have to tell you bad news—I did not notice this at first but I see it plainly now. You are about to undergo a severe shock, a very great grief.”

“Strange,” answered Mrs. Kenyon. She paused for a moment, then she said suddenly: “You gave my nephew a bad report, did you not?”

I was silent. It was one of my invariable rules never to speak of one client to another.

“You need not speak,” she continued, “I saw it in his face.”

“I hope he will take the warning,” I could not help murmuring faintly. Mrs. Kenyon overheard the words.

“And now you tell me that I am to undergo severe trouble. Will it come soon?”

“Yes,” was my answer. “You will need all your strength to withstand it,” and then, as if prompted by some strange impulse, I added. “I cannot tell you what that trouble may be, but I like you. If in the time of your trouble I can help you I will gladly do so.”

“Thank you,” answered Mrs. Kenyon, “you are kind. I do not profess to believe in you; that you should be able to foretell the future is, of course, impossible, but I also like you. I hope some day we may meet again.” She held out her hand; I clasped it. A moment later she had passed outside the thick curtain which shut away the anteroom from the gay throng in the drawing-rooms.

I went home late that night. Rupert was in and waiting for me.

“Why, what is the matter, Diana?” he said the moment I appeared. “You look shockingly ill; this terrible life will kill you.”

“I have seen strange things to-night,” was my answer. I flung myself on the sofa, and for just a moment covered my tired eyes with my hand.

“Have some supper,” said Rupert gently. He led me to the table, and helped me to wine and food.

“I have had a tiring and exciting evening at Lady Fortescue’s,” I said. “I shall be better when I have eaten. But where have you been this evening?”

“At the Appollo—there was plenty of gossip circulating there—two society scandals, and Philip Harman’s crash. That is a big affair and likely to keep things pretty lively. But, my dear Di, what is the matter?”

I had half risen from my seat; I was gazing at my brother with fear in my eyes, my heart once again beat wildly.

“Did you say Philip Harman?” I asked.

“Yes, why? Do you know him?”

“Tell me about him at once, Rupert, I must know. What do you mean by his crash?”

“Oh, he is one of the plungers, you know. He has run through the Harman property and cannot touch the Kenyon.”

“The Kenyon!” I exclaimed.

“Yes. His uncle, Walter Kenyon, was a very rich man, and has left all his estates

to his young grandson, a lad of about thirteen. That boy stands between Harman and a quarter of a million. But why do you want to know?"

"Only that I saw Philip Harman to-night." was my answer.

"You did? That is curious. He asked you to prophesy with regard to his fate?"

"He did, Rupert."

"And you told him?"

"What I cannot tell you. You know I never divulge what I see in my clients' hands."

"Of course you cannot tell me, but it is easy to guess that you gave him bad news. They say he wants to marry the heiress and beauty of the season, Lady Maud Greville. If he succeeds in this he will be on his feet once more, but I doubt if she will have anything to say to him. He is an attractive man in some ways and good-looking, but the Countess of Cheddsville keeps a sharp look out on the future of her only daughter."

"Philip Harman must on no account marry an innocent girl," was my next impulsive remark. "Rupert, your news troubles me very much, it confirms—I could not finish the sentence. I was overcome by what Rupert chose to consider intense nervousness."

"You must have your quinine and go to bed," he said; "come, I insist, I won't listen to another word."

A moment later I had left him, but try-hard as I would I could not sleep that night. I felt that I myself was on the brink of a great catastrophe, that I personally, was mixed up in this affair. In all my experience I had never seen a hand like Philip Harman's before. There was no redeeming trait in it. The lines which denoted crime and disaster were too indelibly marked to be soon forgotten. When at last I did drop asleep that hand accompanied me into the world of dreams.

The London season came to an end. I heard nothing more about Philip Harman and his affairs, and in the excitement and interest of leaving town, was beginning more or less to forget him, when on the 25th of July, nearly a month after Lady

Fortescue's party, a servant entered my consulting-room with a card. The man told me that a lady was waiting to see me, she begged for an interview at once on most urgent business. I glanced at the card. It bore the name of Mrs. Kenyon.

The moment I saw it that nervousness which had troubled me on the night when I saw Philip Harman and read his future in the ghastly lines of his hand returned. I could not speak at all for a moment; then I said, turning to the man who stood motionless waiting for my answer:

"Show the lady up immediately."

Mrs. Kenyon entered. She came hurriedly forward. When last I saw her she was a beautiful woman with great dignity of bearing and a kindly, sunshiny face. Now as she came into the room she was so changed that I should scarcely have known her. Her dress bore marks of disorder and hasty arrangement, her eyes were red with weeping.

"Pardon my coming so early, Miss Marburg," she said at once; then, without waiting for me to speak, she dropped into a chair.

"I am overcome," she gasped, "but you promised, if necessary, to help me. Do you remember my showing you my hand at Lady Fortescue's party?"

"I remember you perfectly, Mrs. Kenyon. What can I do for you?"

"You told me then that something terrible was about to happen. I did not believe it. I visited you out of curiosity and had no faith in you, but your predictions have come true, horribly true. I have come to you now for the help which you promised to give me if I needed it, for I believe it lies in your power to tell me something I wish to discover."

"I remember everything," I replied gravely; "what is it you wish me to do?"

"I want you to read a hand for me and to tell me what you see in it."

"Certainly, but will you make an appointment?"

"Can you come with me immediately to Godalming? My nephew Philip Harman has a place there."

“Philip Harman!” I muttered.

“Yes,” she answered, scarcely noticing my words, “my only son and I have been staying with him. I want to take you there; can you come immediately?”

“You have not mentioned the name of the person whose hand you want me to read?”

“I would rather not do so—not yet, I mean.”

“But can you not bring him or her here? I am very busy just now.”

“That is impossible,” replied Mrs. Kenyon. “I am afraid I must ask you to postpone all your other engagements, this thing is most imperative. I cannot bring the person whose hand I want you to read here, nor can there be any delay. You must see him if possible to-day. I implore you to come. I will give you any fee you like to demand.”

“It is not a question of money,” I replied, “I am interested in you. I will do what you require.” I rose as I spoke. “By the way,” I added, “I presume that the person whose hand you wish me to see has no objection to my doing so, otherwise my journey may be thrown away.”

“There is no question about that,” replied Mrs. Kenyon, “I thank you more than I can say for agreeing to come.”

A few moments later we were on our way to the railway station. We caught our train, and between twelve and one o’clock arrived at Godalming. A carriage was waiting for us at the station, we drove for nearly two miles and presently found ourselves in a place with large shady grounds. We drew up beside a heavy portico, a man servant came gravely forward to help us to alight and we entered a large hall.

I noticed a curious hush about the place, and I observed that the man who admitted us did not speak, but glanced inquiringly at Mrs. Kenyon, as if for directions.

“Show Miss Marburg into the library,” was her order. “I will be back again in a moment or two,” she added, glancing at me.

I was ushered into a well-furnished library; there was a writing-table at one end of it on which papers of different sorts were scattered. I went forward mechanically and took up an envelope. It was addressed to Philip Harman, Esq., The Priory, Godalming. I dropped it as though I could not bear to touch it. Once again that queer nervousness seized me, and I was obliged to sit down weak and trembling. The next moment the room door was opened.

“Will you please come now, Miss Marburg?” said Mrs. Kenyon. “I will not keep you long.”

We went upstairs together, and paused before a door on the first landing.

“We must enter softly,” said the lady turning to me. There was something in her words and the look on her face which seemed to prepare me, but for what I could not tell. We found ourselves in a large room luxuriously furnished — the window blinds were all down, but the windows themselves were open and the blinds were gently moving to and fro in the soft summer air. In the centre of the room and drawn quite away from the wall was a small iron bedstead. I glanced towards it and a sudden irrepressible cry burst from my lips. On the bed lay a figure covered with a sheet beneath which its outline was indistinctly defined.

“What do you mean by bringing me here?” I said, turning to the elder woman and grasping her by the arm.

“You must not be frightened,” she said gently, “come up to the bed. Hush, try to restrain yourself. Think of my most terrible grief; this is the hand I want you to read.” As she spoke she drew aside the sheet and I found myself gazing down at the beautiful dead face of a child, a boy of about thirteen years of age.

“Dead! my only son!” said Mrs. Kenyon, “he was drowned this morning. Here is his hand; yesterday it was warm and full of life, now it is cold as marble. Will you take it, will you look at the lines? I want you to tell me if he met his death by accident or by design?”

“You say that you are living in Philip Harman’s house?” I said.

“He asked us here on a visit.”

“And this boy, this dead boy stood between him and the Kenyon property?” was my next inquiry.

“How can you tell? How do you know?”

“But answer me, is it true?”

“It is true.”

I now went on *my* knees and took one of the child’s small white hands in mine. I began to examine it.

“It is very strange,” I said slowly, “this child has died a violent death, and it was caused by design.”

“It was?” cried the mother. “Can you swear it?” She clutched me by the arm.

“I see it, but I cannot quite understand it,” I answered, “there is a strong indication here that the child was murdered, and yet had I seen this hand in life I should have warned the boy against lightning, but a death by lightning would be accidental. Tell me how did the boy die?”

“By drowning. Early this morning he was bathing in the pool which adjoins a wide stream in the grounds. He did not return. We hastened to seek for him and found his body floating on the surface of the water. He was quite dead.”

“Was the pool deep?”

“In one part it was ten feet deep, the rest of the pool was shallow. The doctor has been, and said that the child must have had a severe attack of cramp, but even then the pool is small, and he was a good swimmer for his age.”

“Was no one with him?”

“No. His cousin, Philip Harman, often accompanied him, but he bathed alone this morning.”

“Where was Mr. Harman this morning?”

“He went to town by an early train, and does not know yet. You say you think it was murder. How do you account for it?”

“The boy may have been drowned by accident, but I see something more in his

hand than mere drowning, something that baffles me, yet it is plain—Lightning. Is there no mark on the body?”

“Yes, there is a small blue mark just below the inner ankle of the right foot, but I think that was a bruise he must have got yesterday. The doctor said it must have been done previously and not in the pool as it would not have turned blue so quickly.”

“May I see it?”

Mrs. Kenyon raised the end of the sheet and showed the mark. I looked at it long and earnestly.

“You are sure there was no thunder-storm this morning?” I asked.

“No, it was quite fine.”

I rose slowly to my feet.

“I have looked at the boy’s hand as you asked me,” I said, “I must repeat my words —there are indications that he came by his death not by accident but design.”

Mrs. Kenyon’s face underwent a queer change as I spoke. She came suddenly forward, seized me by the arms and cried:

“I believe you, I believe you. I believe that my boy has been murdered in some fiendish and inexplicable way. The police have been here already, and of course there will be an inquest, but no one is suspected. Who are we to suspect?”

“Philip Harman,” I could not help answering.

“Why? Why do you say that?”

“I am not at liberty to tell you. I make the suggestion.”

“But it cannot be the case. The boy went to bathe alone in perfect health. Philip went to town by an earlier train than usual. I saw him off myself, I walked with him as far as the end of the avenue. It was soon afterwards that I missed my little Paul, and began to wonder why he had not returned to the house. I went with a

servant to the pool and I saw, oh, I saw that which will haunt me to my dying day. He was my only son, Miss Marburg, my one great treasure. What you have suggested, what I myself, alas, believe, drives me nearly mad. But you must tell me why you suspect Philip Harman.”

“Under the circumstances it may not be wrong to tell you,” I said slowly. “The night I read your hand I also as you know read his. I saw in his hand that he was about to be a murderer. I told him so in as many words.”

“You saw that! You told him! Oh, this is too awful! Philip has wanted money of late and has been in the strangest state. He has always been somewhat wild and given to speculation, and lately I know lost heavily with different ventures. He proposed to a young girl, a great friend of mine last week, but she would have nothing to do with him. Yes, it all seems possible. My little Paul stood between him and a great property. But how did he do it? There is not a particle of evidence against him. Your word goes for nothing, law and justice would only scout you. But we must act, Miss Marburg, and you must help me to prove the murder of my boy, to discover the murderer. I shall never rest until I have avenged him.”

“Yes, I will help you,” I answered.

As I descended the stairs accompanied by Mrs. Kenyon a strange thought struck me.

“I have promised to help you, and we must act at once,” I said. “Will you leave this matter for the present in my hands, and will you let me send a telegram immediately to my brother? I shall need his assistance. He is a barrister and has chambers in town, but he will come to me at once. He is very clever and practical.”

“Is he entirely in your confidence?”

“Absolutely. But pray tell me when do you expect Mr. Harman back?”

“He does not know anything at present, as he was going into the country for the day; he will be back as usual to-night.”

“That is so much the better. May I send for my brother?”

“Do anything you please. You will find some telegraph forms in the hall and the groom can take your message at once.”

I crossed the hall, found the telegraph forms on a table, sat down and filled one in as follows:

“*Come at once—_I need your help most urgently. Diana.*” _

I handed the telegram to a servant, who took it away at once.

“And now.” I said turning to Mrs. Kenyon, “will you show me the pool? I shall go there and stay till my brother arrives.”

“You will stay there, why?”

“I have my own reasons for wishing to do so. I cannot say more now. Please show me the way.”

We went across the garden and into a meadow beyond. At the bottom of this meadow ran a swift-flowing stream. In the middle of the stream was the pool evidently made artificially. Beside it on the bank stood a small tent for dressing. The pool itself was a deep basin in the rock about seven yards across, surrounded by drooping willows which hung over it. At the upper end the stream fell into it in a miniature cascade—at the lower end a wire fence crossed it. This was doubtless done in order to prevent the cattle stirring the water.

I walked slowly round the pool, looking down into its silent depths without speaking. When I came back to where Mrs. Kenyon was standing I said slowly:

“I shall remain here until my brother comes. Will you send me down a few sandwiches, and bring him or send him to me directly he arrives?”

“But he cannot be with you for some hours,” said Mrs. Kenyon. “I fail to understand your reason.”

“I scarcely know that yet myself,” was my reply, “but I am certain I am acting wisely. Will you leave me here? I wish to be alone in order to think out a problem.”

Mrs. Kenyon slowly turned and went back to the house.

“I must unravel this mystery.” I said to myself, “I must sift from the apparent facts of the case the awful truth which lies beneath. That sixth sense which has helped me up to the present shall help me to the end. Beyond doubt foul play has taken place. The boy met his death in this pool, but how? Beyond doubt this is the only spot where a solution can be found. I will stay here and think the matter through. If anything dangerous or fatal was put into the pool the murderer shall not remove his awful weapon without my knowledge.”

So I thought and the moments flew. My head ached with the intensity of my thought, and as the afternoon advanced I was no nearer a solution than ever.

It was between four and five o’clock when to my infinite relief I saw Rupert hurrying across the meadow.

“What is the meaning of this, Diana?” he said. “Have you lost your senses? When I got your extraordinary wire I thought you must be ill.”

I stood up, clasped his hands and looked into his face.

“Listen,” I said. “A child has been murdered, and I want to discover the murderer. You must help me.”

“Are you mad?” was his remark.

“No, I am sane,” I answered; “little Paul Kenyon has been murdered. Do you remember telling me that he stood between Philip Harman and the Kenyon property? He was drowned this morning in this pool, the supposition being that the death occurred through accident. Now listen, Rupert, we have got to discover how the boy really met his death. The child was in perfect health when he entered the pool, his dead body was found floating on the water half-an-hour afterwards. The doctor said he died from drowning due to cramp. What caused such sudden and awful cramp as would drown a boy of his age within a few paces of the bank?”

“But what do you expect to find here?” said Rupert. He looked inclined to laugh at me when first he arrived, but his face was grave now, and even pale.

“Come here,” I said suddenly, “I have already noticed one strange thing; it is this. Look!”

As I spoke I took his hand and approached the wire fence which protected the water from the cattle. Leaning over I said:

“Look down. Whoever designed this pool, for it was, of course, made artificially, took more precaution than is usual to prevent the water being contaminated. Do you see that fine wire netting which goes down to the bottom of the pool? That wire has been put there for some other reason than to keep cattle out. Rupert, do you think by any possibility it has been placed there to keep something in the pool?”

Rupert bent down and examined the wire carefully.

“It is curious,” he said. “I see what you mean.” A frown had settled on his face. Suddenly he turned to me.

“Your suggestion is too horrible. Diana. What can be in the pool? Do you mean something alive, something—” he stopped speaking, his eyes were fixed on my face with a dawning horror.

“Were there any marks on the boy?” was his next question.

“One small blue mark on the ankle. Ah! look, what is that?” At the further end and in the deep part of the pool I suddenly saw the surface move and a slight eddying swirl appear on the water. It increased into ever widening circles and vanished. Rupert’s bronzed face was now almost as white as mine.

“We must drag the pool immediately,” he said. “Harman cannot prevent us; we have seen enough to warrant what we do; I cannot let this pass. Stay here, Diana, and watch. I will bring Mrs. Kenyon with me and get her consent.”

Rupert hurriedly left me and went back to the house across the meadow. It was fully an hour before he returned. The water was once more perfectly still. There was not the faintest movement of any living thing beneath its surface. At the end of the hour I saw Mrs. Kenyon, my brother, a gardener, and another man coming across the meadow. One of the men was dragging a large net, one side of which was loaded with leaden sinkers—the other held an old-fashioned single-barrelled gun.

Rupert was now all activity. Mrs. Kenyon came and stood by my side without speaking. Rupert gave quick orders to the men. Under his directions one of them

waded through the shallows just below the pool, and reaching the opposite bank, threw the net across, then the bottom of the net with the sinkers was let down into the pool.

When this was done Rupert possessed himself of the gun and stood at the upper end of the pool beside the little waterfall. He then gave the word to the men to begin to drag. Slowly and gradually they advanced, drawing the net forward, while all our eyes were fixed upon the water. Not a word was spoken; the men had not taken many steps when again was seen the swirl in the water, and a few little eddies were sucked down. A sharp cry broke from Mrs. Kenyon's lips. Rupert kept the gun in readiness.

"What is it?" cried Mrs. Kenyon, but the words had scarcely died on her lips before a dark body lashed the surface of the water and disappeared. What it was we none of us had the slightest idea; we all watched spell-bound.

Still the net moved slowly on, and now the agitation of the water became great. The creature, whatever it was, lashed and lunged to and fro, now breaking back against the net, and now attempting to spring up the smooth rock and so escape into the stream.

The next instant Rupert raised the gun, and fired.

As we caught a glimpse and yet another glimpse of the long coiling body I wondered if there was a snake in the pool.

"Come on, quicker now," shouted Rupert to the men, and they pressed forward, holding the creature in the net, and, drawing it every moment nearer the rock. The next instant Rupert raised the gun, and leaning over the water, fired down. There was a burst of spray, and as the smoke cleared we saw that the water was stained with red blood.

Seizing the lower end of the net and exercising all their strength the men now drew the net up. In its meshes, struggling in death agony, was an enormous eel. The next moment it was on the grass coiling to and fro. The men quickly dispatched it with a stick, and then we all bent over it. It was an extraordinary looking creature, six feet in length, yet it had none of the ordinary appearance of the eel. I had never seen anything like it before. Rupert went down on his knees to examine it carefully. He suddenly looked up. A terrible truth had struck him—his face was white. "What is it?" gasped poor Mrs. Kenyon.

“You were right, Diana,” said Rupert. “Look, Mrs. Kenyon. My sister was absolutely right. Call her power what you will, she was guided by something too wonderful for explanation. This is an electric eel, no native of these waters—it was put here by someone. This is murder. One stroke from the tail of such an eel would give a child such a dreadful shock that he would be paralysed, and would drown to a certainty.”

“Then that explains the mark by lightning on the dead child’s hand,” I said.

“Yes,” answered my brother. “The police must take the matter up.”

Before that evening Mr. Harman was arrested. The sensational case which followed was in all the papers. Against my will, I was forced to attend the trial in order to give the necessary evidence. It was all too damning and conclusive. The crime was brought home to the murderer, who suffered the full penalty of the law.

etext prepared by Joe Harvat