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# SHADOWS

A PLAY OF THE SOUTH  
IN ONE ACT

BY

MARY MONCURE PARKER

AUTHOR OF

*"The Old Oaken Bucket," "Husbands is Husbands," "When Lucindy Goes to Town," Etc.*



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SHADOWS

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CHARACTERS.

PROLOGUE AND THE AWAKENING.

ROBERT ASHTON ..... *Virginia's Sweetheart*  
AUNT GERANIUM ..... *An Old Colored Mammy*  
VIRGINIA LEE ..... *A Southern Maid*

THE DREAM.

GORDON SANFORD ..... *A Soldier, in Love with Alice*  
HAROLD HALE ..... *The Successful Rival*  
MRS. HORACE FAIRFAX ..... *A Stern Mother of Long Ago*  
ALICE FAIRFAX ..... *Her Dutiful Daughter*

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TIME—*Today and a Dream of the Past.*

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TIME OF PLAYING—*About Thirty-five Minutes.*

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## STORY OF THE PLAY.

Virginia Lee's mother insists upon her marriage with a rich suitor, who has agreed to restore their impoverished estate. Virginia has a sweetheart of her childhood days and hesitates in making a choice, but finally decides upon wealth instead of love. At the opening of the play, Virginia has stopped at the cabin of Aunt Geranium, an old colored mammy, who has spent her life in the Lee household. Aunt Geranium understands the situation and tells Virginia of a similar episode in the life of Virginia's grandmother. Virginia stops to rest and in pondering over the incident and grieving over her own troubles, falls asleep. She dreams of the story just told and the dream characters enter and play their parts—in a dream which seems real. Virginia awakens, the shadows flee and she comes to her senses and her lover.

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## CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

AUNT GERANIUM—Old negro mammy. Calico dress, gingham apron and turban, which consists of red bandana handkerchief.

VIRGINIA LEE—About nineteen years old. Summer gown and hat or light tailored suit.

ROBERT ASHTON—About twenty-three years old. Modern summer suit and straw hat.

MRS. HORACE FAIRFAX—About forty-five years old. Costume of the Civil War period.

ALICE FAIRFAX—About nineteen years old. Civil War costume. Hair arranged low on neck with long curl falling over shoulder.

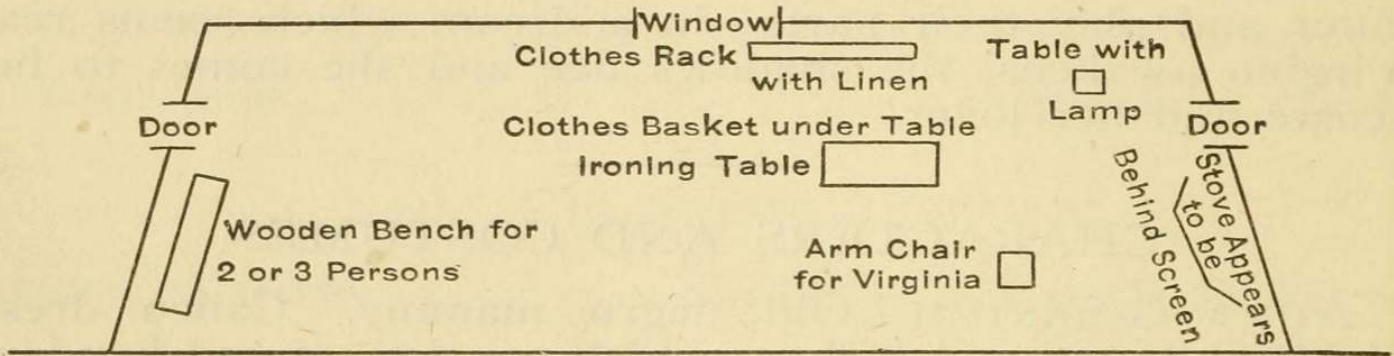
GORDON SANFORD—Twenty-four years old. Costume of Confederate army officer. If this is not obtainable he may wear long Prince Albert coat, riding boots, broad brimmed hat, high collar and stock.

HAROLD HALE—About forty years old. Light trousers, dark Prince Albert or cutaway coat, riding boots, stock and high collar.

## PROPERTIES.

Kitchen table, common chairs, clothes rack with white waists, towels and linen hanging on it. Flat iron and stand for iron, tin pail and dipper. Large, comfortable looking but worn-out chair. Basin filled with water used for sprinkling clothes. Lamp, matches, clothes basket, wooden bench, Revolver for Gordon. Letters for Virginia. Shelf at *L. C.* in flat on which is small can containing powder to give Virginia. Spoon, glass, etc. Rabbit's foot for Aunt.

## SCENE PLOT.



## STAGE DIRECTIONS.

*R.* means right of the stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *R. D.*, right door; *L. D.*, left door, etc.; *1 E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance up-stage, etc.; *D. F.*, door in flat or scene running across the back of the stage; up-stage away from footlights, down stage, near footlights; *1 G.*, first groove, etc. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.



# SHADOWS

## PROLOGUE.

SCENE: AUNT GERANIUM'S *cabin*. *Simple interior. Cheap furniture but room has a tidy appearance. Doors R. and L. Window C. in flat. See Scene Plot for stage setting. Dream characters, when on stage, remain at R. C., while VIRGINIA is asleep in the chair at the extreme L. C. of stage, near footlights.*

*Curtain rises disclosing AUNT GERANIUM standing at table ironing. She is singing an old negro melody and is interrupted by VIRGINIA'S entrance.*

*Enter VIRGINIA, R.*

VIRGINIA (*coming down R.*). Howdy, Aunt Geranium. AUNT GERANIUM (*pausing in her ironing and looking up*). My Lawd! Miss Jinny, you certain sho' looks pretty. Whar you gwine, honey?

VIRGINIA (*who has a troubled, absent-minded air*). Why—oh, just to the postoffice, Aunty.

AUNT. What's de mattah, chile? De sun's hidin' behin' a cloud. Does somethin' 'trouble you?

VIRGINIA (*hesitatingly*). No—o—nothing much.

AUNT (*shaking her head doubtfully*). Dat ain't de trufe, baby. An' what you gwine to de pos' office so late fur? Don't you know it will be dark before you gits back?

VIRGINIA. Oh, I wanted to post a letter—(*hesitates*) well, before I changed my mind.

AUNT (*looking up in excitement*). Look heah, chile. (*Pauses with iron uplifted as a sudden thought strikes her*). Don't you know you has to pass the holler on the way to de postoffice? (*Puts iron down on table.*)

VIRGINIA (*shrugging her shoulders and smiling a little for the first time since her entrance*). Oh, I don't mind that, Aunty.

AUNT (*in an excited tone*). Don't min' dat? (*Crosses to VIRGINIA in a mysterious way.*) Didn't you never heah of groanin's and moanin's and rattlin' of bones dat goes on in dat holler when de nighttime comes? (*Looks about her nervously and walks a step or two up-stage.*)

VIRGINIA (*somewhat amused, yet a trifle petulant*). Oh, Aunty, what nonsense. I don't care a snap of my fingers about ghosts. (*Crosses L. C. and stands in front of table.*)

AUNT (*in a loud whisper*). Sh! (*Comes down-stage quickly.*) Does you wan to make dem ghostes mad? Can't tell but dey might be roun' somewheres. Some of dem is mighty rambunctious. Dey has feelin's, chile. (*Looks around and takes a step or two up-stage.*)

VIRGINIA. I haven't any faith in that sort of thing. There is enough real trouble in the world without bothering about unreal spirits. (*Crosses R. again as though restless.*)

AUNT (*coming down-stage*). Dat's all de Gawd's trufe I'se been tellin' you, baby. I knowed a nigger onct an' he done laughed at ghostes an' he was plum hoodooed. Couldn't eat an' couldn't sleep, an' one night he went clean off de earf and nobody couldn't find hide nor hair of him no mo'.

VIRGINIA (*sighing*). If ghosts were all there was to fear!

AUNT (*looking at her quickly*). What you worryin' about, baby?

VIRGINIA. I am so very unhappy, Aunty. Life is just a twisted, knotted tangle and nothing ever does come out right. (*Sits down dejectedly on bench.*)

AUNT. Dat's so. Now we grees on dat. Kase I was spectin' to git married las' week an' de fool nigger went and bust de engagement jes' befo' de ceremony. But I got even wid him. (*Laughs aloud, holding her sides.*) I pretty near busted his fool head open. (*VIRGINIA sobs. AUNT is laughing softly and does not hear her at first. As the young girls sob again the old woman looks around in surprise.*) What is it, honey? (*Goes to VIRGINIA and pats her gently on the shoulder.*) Is you honin fur Mars Robert? (*Pronounced "hone-in," meaning longing—a negro expression.*)

VIRGINIA (*looking up but not at AUNT*). I am not going

to marry Robert—(*catches herself quickly*) Mr. Ashton, Aunty.

AUNT. Ain't gwine to marry yo' sweetheart?

VIRGINIA. No, Aunty. This letter tells him so. (*Holds up letter and crosses to L.*)

AUNT (*throwing up both hands in amazement*). Fo' de Lawd's sake, what's de matter?

VIRGINIA (*in a disheartened tone*). Oh, Aunty, we are so poor, so wretchedly, miserably poor, and I want money and pretty clothes. I'm tired of scrimping and saving and patching and turning this way and that, to make a dime do the work of a dollar. I'm sick of my little school and the daily grind. I want automobiles and furs and diamonds. Robert—Mr. Ashton—can't give them to me. He has a hard enough time to make a living for himself. And—oh, well, I've decided not to marry him, that's all.

AUNT (*crossing L. to VIRGINIA*). Look here, chile, dat's ole Miss talk through and through. She wants you to marry that old Mr. Thing-um-bob, whatever his name is, from de Norf, dat done bought de Scott place.

VIRGINIA. I intend to marry Mr. Cleaver, Aunty, and this letter tells him so. (*Holds up another letter.*)

AUNT. Well, you certain sho' has been writin'. Does you love this Mr. Butcher? (*Looks at VIRGINIA searchingly.*)

VIRGINIA (*correcting her*). Cleaver, Aunt Geranium.

AUNT. Well, Cleaver, den. I knowed it sounded kin of meat-axe-y.

VIRGINIA (*hesitatingly*). Why—I—I—

AUNT. No you don't, honey. I know you don't love no fat ole man, ole enough to be your father.

VIRGINIA. Well, he has money and I need money. Mamma is delicate and I could do so much for her.

AUNT. Money is a might convenience, chile, but dat's an awful fat ole man to take to git it.

VIRGINIA. No one is forcing me, Aunty. I have made up my own mind. (*Suddenly starting to cry.*) Oh, Aunty, I'm so miserable. (*Puts her head on AUNT'S shoulder and the old mammy puts her arms about her.*)

AUNT. There, now, baby, jes' set down an' rest in

Mammy's ole arm-cheer. Dem letters will keep 'til mawnin'.  
(*Pushes her gently down into the chair.*)

VIRGINIA. No, no. I must go. (*Starts to rise but AUNT gently presses her back into the chair.*) I might change my mind.

AUNT. No, you jes' keep still. You'se all tired out an' nervous. I'm gwine to give you one of dem sleep powders I makes. Dey'll do you lots of good. (*She goes to shelf and takes small can containing a powder, which she puts in a glass of water.*) You ain't de only pusson what has to wuk out dem puzzles. Member dem ole pictures, honey, of yo' gramma, wid de ruffled skirts? (*Mixes powder in glass.*)

VIRGINIA. Yes, Aunty, I must go. (*Sits up in chair.*)

AUNT. Here, take this, drink, honey. It's mighty soothin' an' you keep still. I'se gwine to manage you jes' as I did when you was a little baby. (*VIRGINIA drinks and settles back into her chair.*) Well, it was jest after de wah. I was a young nigger den and jes' stuck to the ole place. Lawd knows it was forlorn enough wid de trees cut down an' de fences burnt up. Ole Miss, yo' great gramma, was a proud one, an' when Miss Alice wanted to marry Mars Gordon Sanford, she jes' put her foot down. Dar want no sense in jinin' two paupers, she said. And when rich Mr. Hale done come from Europy after the wah an' asked for Miss Alice's hand, ole Miss was might pleased. Is you sleepy, honey? (*AUNT takes clothes from clothes rack and puts in basket which she pulls out from under table.*)

VIRGINIA (*yawning*). A little. There was something strange about it all. Wasn't there? I never heard the whole story. (*Yawns and stretches a little as though sleepy.*)

AUNT (*nodding her head slowly*). Yes, something mighty strange. You see, the Sanfords was blue-blooded and proud, but dey was poor, an' yo' great gramma was proud—um-m, but she was proud. Ole Miss backbone was stiff as ram-rod. It don't do to git mixed up in nobody's love affairs. Gwine to git yo' fingers burnt, sho'. But don't you bother yo' pretty head no mo', chile. Go to sleep. (*Looks at the*

girl and leans toward her as though to see the effect of the powder.) Go to sleep, an' when you wakes—(*Pauses.*)

VIRGINIA (*sleepily*). Yes, Aunty, and when I wake—(*does not finish. Drops off to sleep.*)

AUNT. Why, dream, dream, honey (*speaking tenderly*), and when you wakes maybe you'll come to yo' senses. (*Looks at her closely.*) She's plum gone. Po' tired baby. Well, I reckon I'll take dese clothes to the house and let her git a little res'. (*Exits L. with clothes basket, humming softly.*)

### THE DREAM.

*Lights go down. Spot light on Dream Characters all during the time they are on the stage. If it is impossible to arrange a spot light, leave the lights on, but in this case arm-chair must be placed at back of stage L. and turned so that VIRGINIA faces side view and away from Dream Characters. This arrangement of chair can be made before play begins. Time of dream supposed to be just at close of Civil War. The action of dream must take place between R. of stage and C.*

*Enter GORDON, R.*

GORDON. She promised to be here—(*pauses*) if her mother—

*Enter ALICE, R.*

ALICE. Gordon!

GORDON. Oh, my dear one. (*They embrace. GORDON draws her a step or two down-stage.*)

ALICE. I had such a time to get here. (*They hold hands.*) Mother keeps at me night and day to marry Harold Hale and she has forbidden me to see you. She is very changed since my brother died. (*Shaking her head sadly.*) Oh, Gordon, if she should separate us—

GORDON. She can't. She shan't. I'll hold you so that no one shall ever take you away. (*Draws her to him.*)

ALICE. Oh, my dear, it is so wonderful to have you again.

GORDON. Wonderful. Why, dear, it is splendid, glorious, just like the most beautiful dream in the world that has come to a reality. (*They sit on bench R.*)

ALICE. I was very sad when you went away to war, and now to have you here again, just as you were—(*she does not finish her sentence but just pats his hand gently*).

GORDON (*taking her hands in his*). Somehow, Alice, I have dreamed this meeting over and over again, just as it is. When we tramped on and on, cold and hungry, day after day, often in the drizzling rain, wet to the skin, I said, "I am fighting for the sake of the dearest girl in the world." And it spurred me on and made me forget the hardships—

ALICE (*interrupting*). Did you really think of me all the time?

GORDON. Yes, dear. I am afraid I put you before my country and the cause.

ALICE (*playfully putting her finger on his lips, as though shocked*). Oh, Gordon, what treason!

GORDON. A very harmless sort of treason. I was ready to die for my country, but I wanted most dreadfully to live for you. Every night I kissed the little miniature you gave me and I said, "God bless the sweetest, prettiest—"

ALICE (*interrupting*). Not prettiest. I don't believe you said that. (*Smiles playfully.*)

GORDON (*smiling back happily*). Yes, prettiest. I swear it.

ALICE. Let me see. (*With the same playful manner.*) I don't believe you have the miniature at all.

GORDON (*taking miniature from his pocket*). Here it is. A faint counterpart of the lovely original.

ALICE. Gordon, you are a flatterer.

GORDON. Don't say that, even lightly, dear girl. My heart and soul are bound up in the thought of you. You have meant more to me than life itself.

ALICE (*becoming suddenly serious—sighs*). I almost wish—(*pauses*).

GORDON. What is it, dear?

ALICE. Oh, I wish that you did not care so much.

GORDON (*in a quick, astonished tone*). Alice!

ALICE. Well, I mean it.

GORDON. Alice, you cannot mean—(*pauses and looks at her searchingly*).

ALICE. I mean—oh, Gordon, we can't marry. (*Rises and crosses to C.*)

GORDON. Can't marry! (*In amazement.*) What are you talking about, Alice? (*Rises quickly from bench.*)

ALICE. We are so poor and mother will never consent.

GORDON (*crossing to ALICE*). But, sweetheart, we love each other and nothing else matters. (*Takes her hand in his.*) What do you think carried me through all the long, hard days of the war? Why, dearest, it was the thought of you. Everything is swept away, but, thank God, I have my health and strength and two strong arms, and I'll work for you—hold you safe. (*Puts his arm about her.*)

ALICE. I know, dear; but there is mother, and I am powerless in her hands. She says it's my duty to preserve the honor of the house and to repair our shattered fortunes. We must have money. She'll never give her consent. (*She drops her head disconsolately.*)

GORDON. Nothing shall ever part us. Why, dear, I could not live without you in my future. Life would mean nothing. (*Takes her hands again.*)

ALICE. But there is mother—

*Enter MRS. FAIRFAX, R., followed by HAROLD. They are not seen by ALICE and GORDON. MRS. FAIRFAX motions HAROLD and he quickly exits R.*

GORDON (*interrupting eagerly and decisively*). I'll make your mother consent.

MRS. FAIRFAX (*coming forward at GORDON'S last speech, speaking sarcastically*). Indeed. Quite the dramatic hero. And so you intend to drive me. By what process, please, is this to be accomplished?

ALICE (*leaving GORDON and standing between the two*). Oh, mother dear, don't be angry with Gordon. He loves me so much, he does not realize what he is saying.

MRS. FAIRFAX (*scornfully*). Yes, he loves you so much that he is willing to drag you into a life of poverty.

ALICE (*eagerly*). No, no, mother. I am his gladly, willingly.

MRS. FAIRFAX (*with less scorn but in a determined way*).

Child, you do not know of what you are talking. Gordon is as poverty stricken as are we.

GORDON (*with determination*). My dear Mrs. Fairfax, I have my two hands. I am able and willing. I will work and win back everything. The good God has said, by the sweat of his brow man must win out, and I'll toil and toil. The earth shall give back all I've lost.

MRS. FAIRFAX (*dramatically*). Meantime my daughter starves and saves and scrimps and grows old and worn before her time. Oh, the inconsiderateness of youth! I have given all I possess, my son, my home, everything, to my country, and what has it profited me? I have devoted my life to this girl, and now, when she might repay me and return a little of my devotion—

ALICE (*interrupting*). Oh, don't, mother dearest. I can't bear to hear you call me ungrateful. (*Crosses to her mother.*)

MRS. FAIRFAX. I do call you ungrateful. (*ALICE stands with bowed head and drops both arms at her side as though very unhappy.*)

GORDON. It is true, Mrs. Fairfax. I have lost everything, but where there's a will there's a way. I will take care of you both.

MRS. FAIRFAX (*with sarcasm*). Indeed, and with what, pray? No, if you cannot see what is for your own good, Alice, I will compel you to see. (*Goes to door and calls.*) Mr. Hale.

*Enter HAROLD, R. He goes to MRS. FAIRFAX down C. ALICE meantime has crossed to GORDON.*

MRS. FAIRFAX. Mr. Hale has asked your hand in marriage and I have given my consent. (*Crosses to R.*)

ALICE (*starting forward*). But, mother—

HAROLD (*takes ALICE's hand and raises it to his lips as he bows*). My dear Miss Fairfax, your mother has done me the honor of consenting to our marriage. (*ALICE draws away her hand slowly as if she did not wish to be discourteous and yet as though the whole affair was most distasteful.*)



GORDON (*turning to* MRS. FAIRFAX). And has Alice no voice in the matter?

MRS. FAIRFAX. Have you? (*ALICE goes slowly up C. HAROLD follows her.*)

GORDON. Yes, madam, I have. I gave myself and all I have fighting for a cause I believed to be just. This man spent the years of war, when his country needed him, traveling about Europe, amusing himself.

HAROLD (*coming down C. and speaking in a very polite yet somewhat patronizing manner.*) I beg your pardon. I was looking after business interests, my dear young friend. Business must go on, you know, even if men will fight with one another. (*Turns toward* MRS. FAIRFAX.)

GORDON (*excitedly*). Liar is a nasty word, but I happen to know you were whiling away your time in Italy, Switzerland, Spain—

HAROLD (*raising his hand deprecatingly but with the same polite air*). Liar is a nasty word. Don't use it before ladies, I beg of you. (*Crosses R. to* MRS. FAIRFAX, *then goes up-stage.*)

ALICE (*coming down to* GORDON). Oh, Gordon, dear, don't have any words—don't.

MRS. FAIRFAX (*impatiently*). This is all idle talk. My daughter is to marry Mr. Hale, who will restore our home and give us both the position in life we formerly occupied. She will try to repay a little of the devotion I gave to her. You prate heroically. You have nothing to offer.

GORDON (*holding his head up proudly*). Nothing but my love and a spotless name. You know this man's reputation. (*Points to* HAROLD.)

HAROLD (*coming down-stage*). My dear fellow, Mrs. Fairfax knows that a man of the world is not an angel.

MRS. FAIRFAX. There is nothing more to be said. Alice does as I say or never will I lay eyes on her again. (*HAROLD goes up C. ALICE turns from him.*)

GORDON. And are you willing to sacrifice your daughter?

MRS. FAIRFAX. Indeed! Am I less selfish than are you? You offer her—what? An estate laid waste by the enemy, yourself—young, it is true; good looking, I grant—

GORDON (*interrupting eagerly but courteously*). I do not claim to be worthy of Alice. No man, perhaps, is quite worthy of a sweet woman. I only say, I am strong. I can work and I adore her.

HAROLD (*coming down C.*). I am strong. I do not have to work and I adore her.

GORDON (*ignoring HAROLD*). Oh, Mrs. Fairfax, have you forgotten your youth?

MRS. FAIRFAX (*with spirit*). Thank you for reminding me of my age. (*HAROLD crosses to MRS. FAIRFAX.*)

GORDON. Pardon me. I meant no discourtesy.

HAROLD (*lifting MRS. FAIRFAX'S hand to his lips*). October glory is more splendid than the daintiness of Spring.

GORDON (*taking a step or two toward them*). Let us have done with pretty pratings. The happiness of two people is at stake. (*HAROLD shrugs his shoulders and turns up-stage a step or two.*)

MRS. FAIRFAX. Two people? Am I not to be considered? I who have cared for that child from her birth?

ALICE (*coming down-stage*). Oh, mother dearest, you know I love you. (*Crosses to her mother.*)

GORDON (*crosses L. of C. to table*). Forgive me if I seem selfish. Alice means so much to me. (*Stands in front of table with hands resting on it in a dejected attitude.*)

MRS. FAIRFAX. You are thinking only of yourself. Is this your so-called love? Youth is fleeting, and must my child spend her young days and lose her beauty dragging out a hopeless existence?

ALICE (*putting her arms about her*). But, mother dear, I would be happy.

MRS. FAIRFAX. Happiness is a point of view. You would soon grow weary of the grind. You whose dainty hands were never made for rough work. (*ALICE drops into seat on bench as though discouraged.*)

GORDON (*turning eagerly*). I would shield her from every wind that blows.

MRS. FAIRFAX (*superciliously*). How?

GORDON. With my devotion.

HAROLD (*coming down-stage*). Rather airy protection against the wintry storms.

GORDON (*haughtily*). Wait until I ask your opinions ere you vouchsafe them.

MRS. FAIRFAX. Mr. Hale is quite in this discussion. He is as much interested as are you.

GORDON (*in a conciliatory yet spirited and manly tone*). Listen, I beg of you. I am not quite impecunious nor impractical. I can earn a living from the estate. The land is rich and will respond to my efforts.

MRS. FAIRFAX. It is useless. I will never give my consent.

GORDON. Alice, by the love we both hold sacred (*Turns*) Let me hear from your lips what you think.

ALICE (*rising and coming down-stage, stands before her mother and GORDON, clasping both her hands together*). Oh, Gordon, I love you, but I do not know which way to turn.

MRS. FAIRFAX. From the moment she married you, she would be dead to me. (*She crosses to extreme R. and HAROLD comes toward her.*)

GORDON (*to ALICE, who has turned to her mother pleadingly although she does not move her position*). Alice, don't turn from me, dearest. You have been the one thought of my life for so long. I will live for you, work for you, conquer every obstacle—come—(*puts his arms around her*).

MRS. FAIRFAX (*turning about and taking a step or two toward them*). Yes, go and starve and leave me to starve.

ALICE. Oh, mother, dearest. (*Holds out her arms to her.*)

MRS. FAIRFAX (*standing proudly and erect*). Choose between us. There is no other way.

GORDON. Alice, won't you come? (*GORDON is desperate, fearing her mother will influence her, yet he believes in her.*)

ALICE (*with hands clasped in front of her and looking straight ahead*). I—I—oh, what shall I do? (*Looks at GORDON, then takes a step or two toward her mother.*)

MRS. FAIRFAX (*drawing ALICE firmly to her side*). She stays with me.

GORDON. Alice, will you come?

HAROLD (*coming down C.*). It is possible Mr. Sanford does not realize the condition of affairs. His mother asked me to say nothing at present, but it seems necessary.

GORDON (*in amazement*). My mother!

HAROLD. The beautiful Sanford estate became quite hopelessly involved during the war; in fact—(*pauses, his manner is polite, cool and collected, with the air of one about to play a trump card.*)

GORDON (*impatiently*). Yes—yes—you—out with it.

HAROLD (*deliberately*). I became its possessor on yesterday.

GORDON. You! (*Starts as though to go toward him and then leans against the table as though overwhelmed.*) Good God! (*Turns quickly.*) Alice, you knew of this? (*HAROLD goes down R.*)

ALICE (*reaching out her arms to him*). Oh, Gordon, I—I—don't blame me.

MRS. FAIRFAX (*drawing ALICE firmly to her*). Alice has made her choice.

ALICE (*hesitates, then says brokenly*). Yes. (*Turns to her mother and drops her head on her breast.*)

GORDON. There is nothing more to be said. (*Starts down-stage, then turns.*) May God forgive you. (*Exits R. quickly. Outside a shot is heard. ALICE screams and rushes to the door.*)

ALICE. Gordon! Gordon! (*Lights go out.*)

### THE AWAKENING.

VIRGINIA (*awakening and crying out*). Oh, Aunty, Aunt Geranium!

*Enter AUNT, L.*

AUNT. Mah goodness, I done forgot that chile. Wait a minute, baby lamb, an' I'll git a light. (*Goes to table at L. and starts to light lamp.*)

VIRGINIA. Oh, Aunty, I'm so frightened. Where are they—all those people? (*Rises from chair.*)

*Enter* ROBERT, R., *unseen by* VIRGINIA and AUNT.

AUNT (*turning around*). All dem people? Look heah, chile, don't git spooky till I gits a light. Ain't nobody heah but me.

ROBERT. Yes, there is. I'm here. (*VIRGINIA screams.*)

AUNT (*shaking*). Oh, please, Mr. Spook, I ain't done nothin'.

ROBERT. What in the name of common sense is the matter? It is I, Virginia. It is I—Robert. (*Comes down C. AUNT succeeds in getting lamp lighted.*)

VIRGINIA. Oh, Robert, is it really you, and you are not hurt or killed or anything? (*Runs to him.*)

ROBERT. Why, Virginia, you are trembling like a leaf. (*Puts his arm about her.*)

VIRGINIA. Where are those men with pistols and things? (*AUNT comes down L.*)

ROBERT. There is no one here to hurt you. You are as cold as ice, and Aunt Geranium, you look almost white.

AUNT (*excitedly*). Look heah, boy, dis ain't no time to fool. I tell you, somethin's happened. Take dis rabbit foot, baby, an' wear it aroun' yo' neck. (*Gives VIRGINIA rabbit's foot. Goes up-stage and looks around nervously.*)

VIRGINIA. Oh, Robert, I think—yes, I know it must have been a dream, but it seemed so real. This room was full of strange people, and there was some one—oh, yes, I remember; it was my grandmother, just as she looks in her portrait, young and sweet. And then the shooting—oh, it was dreadful.

AUNT (*coming down R.*). Um-umph! I done tole you not to laugh at spooks. I knowed something was gwine to happen. Dat was Mars Gordon Sanford done killed hisself kase Miss Alice done give him de shake. It was jest about dis time of de yeah.

ROBERT. Don't say any more, Aunt Geranium. Virginia is nervous enough now. (*Turns to VIRGINIA and takes her hands in his.*) I came to find you, dear. You did not meet

me last night. I waited a long time. You know I was to have my answer.

VIRGINIA. I am so sorry, but (*hesitates*) I couldn't come.

ROBERT (*gently*). The answer, dear?

VIRGINIA. I—I—oh, Robert, perhaps—(*drops letters. ROBERT picks them up, but AUNT reaches out her hand and takes them quickly before he can see the addresses.*)

AUNT. Dem's some letters Miss Virginia done writ for me, but I'm gwine to post 'em mahsef.

ROBERT (*laughing*). Love letters, Aunt Geranium?

AUNT. Go way, boy. I ain't tellin' all I knows. You jes' look after Miss Jinny. (*Goes to kitchen table and straightens things on it.*)

ROBERT. What is it, Virginia—yes or no?

AUNT (*quickly*). Lawdy, boy, can't you see it's yes?

VIRGINIA. Oh, Robert, dear. I'm so glad to have you here. It's yes a hundred times. (*He takes her in his arms.*)

AUNT. Clar out of her and do your spoonin'. (*Makes a move as though driving them out, playfully. ROBERT and VIRGINIA exit R. gaily. AUNT goes to door and watches them.*) Dat chile don' want money. It's just love she wants. (*Still watching them.*) Der dey goes an' der two shadders follerin'. (*Turns and comes down C.*) Dis heah ole worl's jes' full of shadders. (*Goes to big arm-chair and sits down.*) Fokes comes an' dey goes, ripens and drops like the fruit on de tree. Ole Mars is gone, old Mistis gone. De substance melts and fades away. Ain't nothing left but shadders. (*Drops off to sleep in arm-chair.*)

CURTAIN.





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