

MR. DARLING (*depressed*). I sometimes think, Mary, that it is a mistake to have a dog for a nurse.

MRS. DARLING. George, Nana is a treasure.

MR. DARLING. No doubt; but I have an uneasy feeling at times that she looks upon the children as puppies.

MRS. DARLING. Oh no, dear one, I am sure she knows they have souls.

MR. DARLING. I wonder, I wonder.

MRS. DARLING. George, we must keep Nana. I will tell you why. (*Her seriousness impresses him.*) My dear, when I came into this room to-night I saw a face at the window.

MR. DARLING (*incredulous*). A face at the window, three floors up? Pooh!

MRS. DARLING. It was the face of a little boy; he was trying to get in. George, this is not the first time I have seen that boy.

MR. DARLING. Oho!

MRS. DARLING. The first time was a week ago. It was Nana's night out, and I had been drowsing here by the fire when suddenly I felt a draught, as if the window were open. I looked round and I saw that boy—in the room.

MR. DARLING. In the room?

MRS. DARLING. I screamed. Just then Nana came back and she at once sprang at him. The boy leapt for the window. She pulled down the sash quickly, but was too late to catch him.

MR. DARLING. I thought so!

MRS. DARLING. Wait. The boy escaped, but his shadow had not time to get out; down came the window and cut it clean off.

MR. DARLING (*heavily*). Mary, Mary, why didn't you keep that shadow?

MRS. DARLING. I did. I rolled it up, George; and here it is.

*(She produces it from a drawer. They unroll and examine the flimsy thing, which is not more material than a puff of smoke, and if let go would probably float into the ceiling without discolouring it. Yet it has human shape. As they nod their heads over it they present the most satisfying picture on earth, two happy parents conspiring cosily by the fire for the good of their children.)*

MR. DARLING. It is nobody I know, but he does look a scoundrel.

MRS. DARLING. I think he comes back to get his shadow, George.

MR. DARLING I dare say. There is money in this, my love. I shall take it to the British Museum to-morrow and have it priced.

MRS. DARLING. George, I have not told you all; I am afraid to.

MR. DARLING. Cowardy, cowardy custard.

MRS. DARLING (pouting). No, I 'm not.

MR. DARLING. Oh yes, you are.

MRS. DARLING. George, I 'm not.

MR. DARLING. Then why not tell?

MRS. DARLING. The boy was not alone that first time. He was accompanied by—I don't know how to describe it; by a ball of light, not as big as my fist, but it darted about the room like a living thing.

MR. DARLING. That is very unusual. It escaped with the boy?

MRS. DARLING. Yes. *(Sliding her hand into his.)* George, what can all this mean?

MR. DARLING. What indeed!