

**THE HAUNTED
FOUNTAIN; HETTY'S
REVENGE; A NOVELS**

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The Haunted Fountain; Hetty's Revenge; A Novels by Katharine S. Macquoid

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KATHARINE S. MACQUOID

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FOUNTAIN; HETTY'S
REVENGE; A NOVELS**

THE HAUNTED FOUNTAIN.

and

Betty's revenge.

A NOVEL.

BY

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THE HAUNTED FOUNTAIN

PROLOGUE.

THE sun had had his own way all day long ; not so much as a cloud had ventured to dispute his possession of the deep blue sky. The cracks on the parched ground seemed to widen under the scorching blaze ; the chestnut-trees in the park of the château drooped their great leaves as if the August day had been too much for them ; the slates on the cottage just within the park looked many-colored in the sunshine. In the small field behind the cottage the fragile stems of white buckwheat blossoms gleamed like threads of blood. It seemed surprising that the bunches of green filberts, nestling in the hedge round the little homestead, had not browned under so much heat.

A large chestnut-tree threw broad masses of shadow over the hot clay front of the cottage. A boy with a sunburnt face stood leaning against the chestnut trunk, as if he found the leaf-shelter welcome. The lad was thirteen, and well grown ; but he was thin and plain. The earnestness of his face, and a certain resolute look, made it remarkable, and one forgot his sallow complexion and irregular features. A child sat on a little stool beside him, in every way a perfect contrast to her companion. She was only nine

years old, and she looked like a little fairy; tiny, delicate features, eyes of golden hazel, looking up through shadowy, auburn lashes, with seemingly a tear ready to fall from them; a skin like a pale rose-leaf; hair, as much of it as her close-fitting linen cap allowed to be seen, bright auburn. She kept her eyes fixed on the boy's face, and two hot, bright tears fell on her lilac pinafore.

His eyes had not left her. "Why do you cry, Liline?" he said, tenderly.

"If you were a girl you would cry too."

There was archness in the sweet voice. Liline had sharp eyes, and she knew that Gustave had hard work to keep his tears back. She went on, however, sadly:

"It is so much better for you, you know; you are going back to Paris, and in the holidays you will come to the château and be happy; but I shall never see you again, never"—she shook her head.

"I shall not come back," the boy said, firmly. "I shall not care to come when you are not here; but it is nonsense to say that you will not see me again; you are my wife, Liline, and I am your husband. When I can make a home for you, I shall find out where you are, and I shall marry you."

He was not looking at Liline now, his eyes were fixed on the great fan-like leaves overhead; for all his manful determination there was real tears in his dark, sunken eyes.

Liline moved her stool closer to him, and then she nestled her lovely little face against the sunburnt hand that hung down beside him.

"Dear Gustave," she murmured, "dear Gustave"—she rubbed softly against him.

He pinched her cheek; but after that he stood silent. He had nothing to begin life with but a determined will, a strong power of self-control, and a warm love for all that seemed to him good and true; but Gustave Chauvin was an orphan, and he owed his education and his entire support to his mother's cousin, the Marquis de Vougay. The marquis was dead, but he had invested a sum of money to be applied to the education and placing in life of his cousin's son, Gustave Chauvin.

Many people said that when they were young, the marquis and his cousin, Marie de Vougay, had been deeply attached, but that as the house of De Vougay had lost much of its former wealth, the young marquis had been compelled to make a wealthy marriage; and that his cousin, Mademoiselle Marie, had remained single ten years for his sake; then, being of age to do what she pleased, she married Gustave Chauvin, a young cavalry officer, who died when his son was an infant, and before he had time to make a suitable provision for him. Marie Chauvin soon followed her husband, and the Marquis de Vougay took the charge of her child upon himself.

Gustave had been brought up with his second cousin Lucien. Since her husband's death, the Marquise de Vougay had tried to follow out his wishes by treating the orphan as if he really were her second son. Gustave was so steady and truthful, so honorable, and so persevering, that she really found more comfort in him than she did in her own handsome

Lucien. Without any decided vices, Lucien was a scapegrace; his love of amusement led him into frolicsome escapades, that more than once had nearly caused his expulsion from college; and he was never trusted, as Gustave was, alone in the old château in Brittany, under the joint care of the steward, Étienne, the curé, Monsieur Édouin, and the garde champêtre, Basil Grignan, Liline's maternal grandfather.

It was not from any neglect that Madame de Vougay had sent the young fellow to the château these last two summer holidays. She had been warned by Lucien's tutor that although there was affection between the cousins, there was no sympathy, and that Lucien's example was very bad for Gustave. So in the holidays the marquise had paid visits to her friends, and had sent Lucien and his tutor on their travels. She had never visited the old Breton château since her husband's death; but Gustave loved it, and in sending him there she considered that she had cared for him in all ways; Monsieur le Curé would be his companion, Étienne would provide for all his bodily comforts, and old Basil would help him to make war on the rabbits, and in any outdoor sport he had a wish for. She did not know that little Liline Vivier was the attraction that made Gustave's life so happy at Vougay.

Liline was only a child, but the boy was fascinated by her. He used to stand watching her exquisite little face, now sparkling with sunny smiles, or else pensive with tearful eyes, though the sight of Gustave usually brightened her into content. Then her talk was so quaint and pretty, and all her little ways

were as dainty as her face was. When he went back to Paris, Gustave used to dream about the bewitching little creature. Sometimes he fancied he could feel her tiny hand in his, or see her flying like a little fairy as they played hide-and-seek beneath the chequered light and shade of the chestnuts in the woods at Vougay. He never spoke of Liline to any one, but the quiet boy said to himself: "Yes, I have only to work and to do right, and when the time comes I shall marry Liline, and I shall see her always."

She was his aim in life, and, young as he was, she was the mainspring of his diligence and of his success in his classes. To him Liline was perfect; he longed to take her away from the old grandfather who often scolded her, and to help her in the care required by her invalid mother.

Her grandfather had lately died. A new garde had been appointed, and in a few days Liline and her mother were going to an aunt near Rouen. They would stay there, Monsieur le Curé said, till Liline's father, Baptiste Vivier, had served his time in the army, then, perhaps, they would go elsewhere; but Baptiste would not get his discharge for eight years or so.

"Can you write, Liline?" Gustave said, presently. "You said you were going to learn, you know."

Liline shook her head.

"The road was so bad all the winter I could not go to school. My aunt will teach me herself she says."

"Has your aunt any employment?"

Liline hung her head.