

**AN  
ELUSIVE LOVER**

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An Elusive Lover by Virna Woods

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**VIRNA WOODS**

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# AN ELUSIVE LOVER

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VIRNA WOODS

AUTHOR OF "THE AMAZONS," "A MODERN MAGDALENE," AND  
"JASON HILDRETH'S IDENTITY" 1



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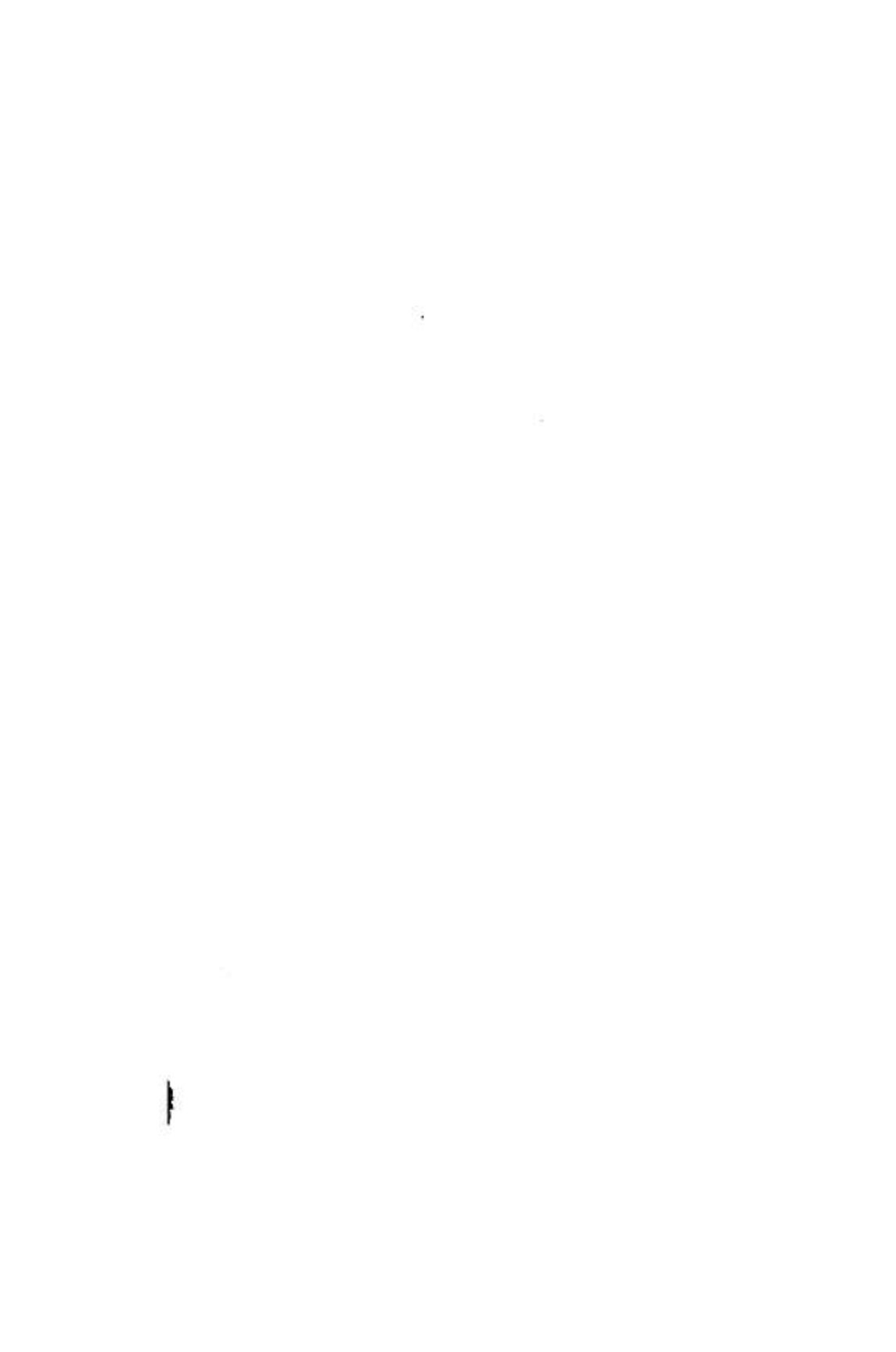
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### I

#### AN UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

THE clock struck eight and he had not come. Constance rose and walked impatiently to the window. She was dressed for the street, but had thrown her heavy cloak across a chair till she should be ready to go out. She looked down the sidewalk, and began to scan the faces of the passers-by, that flashed a moment under her window, lit up by the glow of the electric light on the corner. Her smooth brow was gathered in a frown, and the sweetness of the thin lips was marred by a pout that was not natural to them. She wore a bonnet that showed a golden-brown circle of hair brushed back from a broad brow, and the full con-

tour of a face that Gottfried had said was shaped like a heart. Nor was the resemblance altogether fanciful, for it sloped from the broad brow to a somewhat sharp chin, the severity of whose expression was modified by the great sweetness of the mouth. A little point of hair growing lower at the middle of the forehead completed the general outline of a heart. The skin was fair, the cheeks a delicate pink, and the eyes a deep azure. The figure was slender, but well rounded, and of medium height. It was a face and a form that Gottfried had used as a model for his painting of the Madonna.

This thought passed through Constance's mind as she stood waiting at the window, leading to other thoughts that centred chiefly about the evening before, when Gottfried had been with her.

It was then he had first told her that he loved her. Only twenty-four hours had intervened, and already it seemed to her that she had known the sweet truth for years.

He had told her of his ambitions and his plans, and she had promised to wait for him until he had made a name for himself and won a home for her. At last, just before he left her, as he held her face between his hands, he had told her he would come the next night to take her to a concert. A great violinist was to be in the city, and she had been thinking of it for weeks; but she was only a poor music-teacher with an invalid mother, and she had not thought she could afford to go. But at his words her eyes had lit up with pleasure, and she had thanked him with a shy kiss, which he had passionately returned. Now she turned from the window and glanced at the inexorable clock. It was a quarter past the hour for the performance to begin; and he had said he would come at half-past seven. She sat down and tried to restrain the tears that welled up in her eyes.

"Constance!" called a voice from an adjoining room.

"Yes, mamma," the girl replied, as she