

It was now my summer vacation. I did not have to go back to the school for several weeks. I walked on the hills and enjoyed the views and the fresh air. I often met Richard Benning and the two girls walking on the hills too. They seemed to be very happy together. Then I remembered the strange words that I had heard one of the sisters say. "*Do you mean that you'll murder us?*" Why had Eva Maynard said this?

For a short time, I forgot those frightening words. Then one morning, the people of Brownville were all talking about a tragedy. Something terrible had happened in their town. Pauline Maynard, the elder sister, had died. Many people came to the boarding house to say a few kind words.

I went into the sitting-room. Eva Maynard was standing beside the body of her dead sister and she was weeping. Pauline Maynard was lying in a wooden coffin³⁹. Her face was extremely pale. She looked as if she were asleep. A crowd of people stood in the doorway of the sitting-room and stared at the scene.

Suddenly, Richard Benning pushed his way through the crowd and entered the room. He tried to hold Eva's hand, but she pulled it away. She stood up and cried out.

"It's you!" she shouted. "You've done this. You—you—YOU!"

"She doesn't know what she's saying," Richard Benning said in a soft voice. "She's had a terrible shock. She's upset."

Benning moved toward Eva, but she stepped away from him. He did not try to touch her hand again. Instead, he moved his hand in front of her face—slowly—once. Immediately Eva's eyes closed and she stood still. Then Benning held her hand and put his other arm around her



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