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The Twin's Daughter

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Reading Level: Grades 7+

When the doorbell rings one day at the Sexton household, thirteen year old Lucy answers it herself, grumbling that her household servants never do much around the house. Standing on the doorstep is her mother, dirty, disheveled, and looking wholly not herself. But the woman is **not** her mother.

It seems that Lucy?s mother has a twin sister who, after being separated from both her parents and her sibling at birth, was sent to an orphanage and then a workhouse. Her whole life, Helen Smythe never knew she was meant to be a society woman, living in rich luxury and with an identical twin sister.

Aunt Helen is quickly adopted into the Sexton household, and lessons begin to change her into the woman she was meant to be. Despite her lack of any formal education, Helen learns very quickly and soon is deemed ready to be presented to Society by Lucy?s parents.

After Aunt Helen?s arrival into Society, life begins to change very much for young Lucy. With her aunt an official member of the household, Lucy is no longer allowed to think of her as a younger sister who needs to be shown the simplest things, or a schoolmate. Still, their relationship is much more open than Lucy?s with her mother, and Lucy is pleased for her aunt?s presence in the Sexton household.

A rousing New Year?s Eve party brings Lucy further into adulthood as she receives her first kiss from the boy next door, Kit, and on New Year?s Day the budding couple goes for a cold stroll in the park. When Lucy arrives home, her house is uncharacteristically silent and she immediately knows something is wrong. Making her way from room to room calling for her parents and aunt, Lucy becomes more and more worried about the silence in the house. When she opens the door to the back parlor, all she sees at first is red.

Mother and Aunt Helen sit in straight-backed chairs, tightly bound to each other. One of their throats is cut.

Lucy?s mother raises her head and looks, terrified and confused, into her daughter?s eyes, and nothing is ever the same again.

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