



The Dead Secret [with Biographical Introduction]

Wilkie Collins

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William Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) is best known as the innovator of the English detective novel, whose sensational novels, plays, and short stories were hugely popular in the Victorian era. Today, readers enjoy Collins' intricate and suspenseful plots, and his penetrating social commentary on the plight of women and domestic issues of the time. Unfortunately Collins suffered from rheumatic gout, for which he took the opiate laudanum, and which eventually led to paranoid delusions and the deterioration of his health. The first full length novel by Collins, "The Dead Secret", was originally written for serialization. A tale of unrelenting suspense and penetrating characterization, "The Dead Secret" tells of a mystery surrounding an untold secret of a dying wealthy woman. This woman's secret is shared only with her servant. Despite the woman's dying wish, the servant does not expose this secret but ends with an unpleasant result. Eventually the secret is revealed and all is understood in this blend of romance and Gothic drama.



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