

As she made her way out of the carriage, Pamela looked all around her, but the old woman was nowhere to be seen. The girl took a deep breath and followed the quickly disappearing forms of her parents into the steps at the side of the building. The opera house was impressive, with large columns in the turnabout for the horses and oversized doors. Mr. Smith took his wife's arm as they made their way to the door. An impressive Sergeant Barry was posted at the entrance, reading a newspaper on the little desk before him, his long legs stretched out in front of him.

He eyed them up and down. "What can I do ya for?" he asked in a strong Irish accent.

Mrs. Smith stepped forward with a coy and spirited step. "Miss Ellen Terry has invited us to see the stage canvases being painted in the paint room. She said she would leave word. We are the Smith family."

The sergeant stood to his great height of six foot five, and his tone changed instantly.

"Ah, *the* Miss Terry. Now she's the love of the town, ain't she? She said you might be here. Ya see those stairs right there? Just follow 'em up one flight, and there's the paint room. Mr. Craven and such are in there now, and they like a bit of silence while they work. Keep that in mind, or they'll toss ya out."

Pamela's eyes widened. Sergeant Barry gave her a wink and she almost laughed, but her grandmother grabbed her elbow and guided her up the flight of stairs. At the top, they made their way past a dressing room with sections of seating, and then a reception room. Next, they came into a room of enormous height, open and airy, with a lean-to roof and three skylights shored up by trussed rafters.

In the diffused light of the muted fog outside, the motes of dust fell in the air, and the quiet of the whole room gave the hush of a cathedral. Two fifty-foot canvases were propped up

while ceramic pots of paint lay on the floor next to three large tables, covered with a drawing of a castle and moat. Four men worked in silence painting different sections of the castle on a hill. Carpenters entered carrying pieces of canvas, already smeared with a prime coat, waiting for the painters.

One man had a long pole with a brush at the end, and he painted the trees surrounding the castle. He wore a white shirt with a dark vest, and the small globs of paint traveled down the pole toward his hands. At the far end, a man in a three-piece suit stood before a table, surveying the sketched-in stones on the canvas; he picked up brush after brush, seemingly lost in the choices. Before the middle canvas stood a very large man with a bandana tied around his head like a pirate. He wore a suit with a watch chain that dangled far down and swayed back and forth as he weaved to and fro, dabbing bits of paint on the light in the castle's window. He kept one hand in his pocket, and often refilled his brush on a large palette smeared in small globs of paint.

Pamela and her family stood to the side, watching as the hiss of the small strip of gaslights on the walls emitted a faint sour scent. The man examining the paintbrushes finally picked one up.

The pirate painter exclaimed, "So, Harker, did ye find the magic brush yet?"

The other men in the room smiled and grimaced, and went on with their work. Harker blew on the bristles and shouted back, "Ah, Craven, we don't all have your talent for going to Germany to see the castles firsthand."

Pamela tugged on her grandmother's arm. "He's been to Germany to see real castles!" she whispered in her ear.

The pirate turned and saw them. He took a wiping cloth from the table, cleaned the brush, then strode toward the group.

The other painters stopped their work; one of them groaned.

“A tight deadline and dilettantes in the paint room,” someone muttered.

“And who’s this, disturbing us?” he demanded in a loud voice.

Charles Smith stepped forward and extended his hand to Craven. “Mr. Craven, Mr. Smith and family. So very sorry to disturb you. Miss Ellen Terry said we might stop by and see your magnificent work. We are leaving the country, and wanted one last chance to see your artistry.”

Mr. Craven stopped before the group, both hands in his vest pockets. He caught Pamela’s eye, tilted his head sideways, and smiled. Pamela smiled back.

Pamela walked past him to the giant canvas and held her hands on either side of her face, transfixed.

Craven watched her, then addressed her parents. “So, Mr. Smith and family, which of you is the artist in the family?”

Before anyone else could answer, Pamela, still enraptured with the canvas, said, “Mr. Craven, I make miniature theatres and am told I have a promising career.”

The group chuckled at her announcement. Craven came over to Pamela. “Ah, promising career. What is your name?”

“I was christened Corinne Pamela Colman Smith, but you may call me Pamela.”

“Well, Pamela, would you like to come closer and see some of your contemporaries’ work?”

“Oh, yes! Please! It’s all we talk of in Manchester!”

The laughter only grew at that. Craven nodded to her family as he guided her to stand in the center of the activity.

Pamela stepped forward to devour the huge landscape with its hundreds of flowers, trees, castle walls, and windows.

As she stood totally captured by the canvas, her head started to slightly sway. She moved her finger along the castle walls and banners. Behind her closed eyes, she saw them: the four figures that were to be on the banner of King Arthur. She opened her eyes and they were still there, floating in space before her, moving to the music in her head. She knew the magic was here, waiting to be set in motion.

Craven looked at her for a minute. “Are you seeing the secrets in the castle?” he asked her kindly.

Pamela smiled at him and edged closer to the canvas. “I’m hearing the colors. But the secrets need something. I’ll show you what it needs.”

“You’ll show me what the scene design for *King Arthur* needs?”

Pamela quickly moved to a sketch pad on the floor. She picked up a piece of charcoal and started sketching. Mr. Smith and the others came over to protest her use of his materials, but Craven lifted his hand. Pamela drew first an oblong flag, then started to fill in the corners. “Yes, the banners need a tetramorph.”

Craven hung over her, watching her sketch. “Do you even know what a tetramorph is?”

Pamela continued sketching. “Yes. We need a man, lion, ox, and eagle in the four corners. And they shall all have wings. There! That’s the sketch. Shall I paint it in?” She gestured toward his palette.

The other painters in the room stopped what they were doing and came over to watch.

Craven looked at her, astonished. “You want to paint on the banner that I’ve started?”

“Yes, please, sir. I know what to put there.”

As the others whistled at her comment, Craven handed her a palette from the table and a brush from behind his ear. He then placed a small ladder near the canvas and motioned for her to climb up. Pamela quickly scaled the stairs and painted a man with wings. She painted quickly, roughing out the shape, then moved on to paint an ox, eagle, and lion, all with wings. She bobbed and weaved, responding to a music only she could hear.

Harker walked over and put his glasses on to watch what she was doing. “Be careful, Craven—she may be replacing you!”

The men all laughed as everyone stood a little closer to the canvas. Pamela was unaware that the room had now gathered around her, observing her work, while some of the construction workers made signs of derision and snickering.

Mr. Smith moved closer to Mr. Craven. “You must forgive my daughter, Mr. Craven. We’ve always given her free rein.”

Craven contemplated the parents, registering the fact that while they were probably not artistic themselves, they were proud of their daughter. He sighed. “Well, if I end up painting over it, at least I know it was over free rein.”

Pamela reached the higher section of the canvas and sketched a banner with different objects in the middle: swords, cups, stars, and wands. A slight, startled murmur went through the room as the men saw what she was painting.

Craven stepped forward to see what she was doing. “What are you adding in there?”

Pamela turned and looked at him—they were around the same height, with her on the ladder—while continuing to paint. “The magician will have his tools: swords, cups, stars, and wands in the middle. May I?”

The whole room stood at attention. Mrs. Smith coughed slightly.

“How did you know to put those in? Those are the secret symbols Henry Irving has us put in every scene design!”

The painters laughed among themselves. Craven crossed over to Harker. “All right, Harker, you’ve had your joke. You arranged this, didn’t you?”

“I assure you, Craven, I’ve never seen this child before.”

Craven looked at her in amazement. Pamela smiled and continued painting as conversation among the others grew. The music inside her head helped her to find the next image. Her brushstrokes became bolder, and the smell of paint, linseed oil, and turpentine swirled in her nostrils as her flying hand moved with a life of its own.

A broad-shouldered, bearded red-haired man wearing a three-piece suit entered the room, looking at his pocket watch.

Craven looked up and called, “Bram, we’ve found the artist to create the artwork for the Lyceum tour!”

Bram Stoker squinted and made his way over to the young girl, painting away on one of the canvases, surrounded by adults. He pulled himself up when he saw the symbols she was painting: the tetramorph as seen in the Sola-Busca tarot deck. *The Golden Dawn should see this!* he thought.

“Sure, this could be talent here,” Bram said, his Irish accent showing through with hard *r*’s and upward inflections.

Bram escorted the Smith family across Strand Street; they were keen to see Waterloo Bridge, the finest stone bridge in the world, while there was still light. Bram wanted to see who this Smith family might be. He walked with Mr. Smith as they trailed behind Pamela, flanked by her mother

and grandmother. As they crossed the Embankment and neared the bridge, Pamela gasped and pointed at every horse-drawn car and woman with a hat. They approached the riverbank of the Thames in the lowering light. Waterloo Bridge looked majestic and powerful; the Cornish granite gleamed through the gathering fog, its nine arches hunched over the outgoing tide.

Pamela ran to the nearest railing and leaned over the balustrade's edge, looking at Somerset House.

"They've cut Somerset House off from the river! Where is the water gate?" cried Pamela.

As the group lined up against the rail to take in the sight, Mr. Smith gave Bram a slight smile. "You see, Mr. Stoker, we had only outdated art prints of Somerset House to school our Miss Pamela."

"But the barges would sail right into the palace, wouldn't they, Mr. Stoker?" Pamela pointed her finger and mimicked brushstrokes in the air with her finger, filling in the missing arches.

"That's right, Miss Smith," Bram answered. "It was a palace on the river."

As Pamela painted the missing palace entrance in the air, hearing music only she could hear, the adults turned to take in the view on the other side of the bridge. The sun had begun its descent behind the skyline; they crossed the road through a gap in the traffic to the other side to take in the stunning sunset.

Grabbing the bridge's railing, Pamela looked down at the water, seeing the double Doric stone columns rising up from the river's mouth. "Look, Mother!" she called, leaning over the railing. She stood and called across the street, "These are columns like the ones in my Manchester Theatre!" She extended out still further into the gathering dusk, twisting her head to

look at the bridge's underbelly. Her hat strings slid off her upside-down cheeks, and Pamela saw the inside of her hat float downward into the darkening water of the Thames.

"My hat!" she blurted out, reaching for the disappearing strings. She felt herself pitch forward.

Bram turned just in time to see a flash of her petticoat under the blue wool coat and dark-soled shoes disappear over the sides of the parapet. The screams of the women let him know this was not a nightmare but a tragic accident. They reached the side of the railing in time to see Pamela's face bobbing in the whirling waters.

Suddenly, a man ran next to them, tore off his wool coat, climbed over the railing, and dived into the water. The dive was effortless and seemed to go on and on, despite only being a forty-foot fall. Later, Bram would reflect that he and the rest of the people on the bridge were paralyzed while the swimmer seemed to be floating, free and unencumbered.

A splash of water broke the spell. In the thick mist around the surface of the water, the man's blonde hair stood out like a beacon. The wailings and cries of the women drowned out any hope of hearing what was passing between the man and Pamela.

The man approached the struggling girl in the black water, held up one hand to motion for her to be still, and disappeared. He resurfaced with the girl clinging to his back. When she flailed about, he moved her clutching hands from his shirt to securely around his neck, then churned through the brackish water. His arms sliced through the water as he swam, his head slowing down its beat from side to side.

Pamela's eyes burned, and she tried to keep the terrible water out of her mouth, her hands clasped around the man's neck. Every time his head dunked underneath the surface, she had to



arch her head back. Over her rescuer's head she saw the dim outline of St. Paul's Cathedral. The golden dome's glint was quickly draining away, a palate of grays and blacks replacing it.

Victoria Embankment's wall soon loomed in front of them, and he managed to aim for a ladder embedded into the wall. When the strong current of the cold water lessened for a moment, he reached around and lifted Pamela out in front of him.

"Reach!" his deep voice commanded.

Pamela obeyed and grabbed the rung above her, her cold legs trying to steady themselves on the wall so that she could pull herself up. Her wet, heavy coat strained against her lifting, but soon she felt herself hoisted from below as the man gave her an added push. When the second rung was firmly in her grasp, she turned her head to see the man treading water below her. She scrambled up another rung and he lunged from the water to follow her. The entire ladder shook as he landed on the rung. Soon he was below her, clutching the steps and shimmying up with her.

Mother, Father, Grandmother, and Bram were still a block away running down the Embankment as Pamela crawled against the parapet wall. The man steadied himself on the edges of the promenade's wall, heaving as water dripped from his clothes. He stood, took a deep breath, and bent down to examine the girl. Pamela's head was flopped over, her hair covering her face. Her small body jerked with short, spastic motions. He pushed her hair back and lifted her chin. Her head was still limp, but her eyes opened wide and focused on him. Life came back into her arms and she beat him with her fists.

"We're alive?" she cried.

He stopped her fists with both hands and looked straight into her eyes. "So alive," he said softly.

Bram ran up carrying the coat the man had dropped on the bridge and crouched down to the child. “Mother of God, she’s alive!” He wrapped the coat around Pamela.

“Hello, Miss,” Bram said.

Pamela’s eyelids fluttered but remained closed as she mouthed “hello.”

“Can you open your eyes?” Bram asked. When there was no reply, he stood and steadied the wobbling, drenched man. “Terriss, you devil! That was no stage jump!”

Terriss reached down and picked Pamela up from the ground, holding her in front of him.

“Enough heroics,” Bram said as he took Pamela from Terriss’s arms. “We need to get you both to a doctor.”

Terriss waved a hand as though to dismiss the idea.

“William Terriss, until you work for the theatre’s competition, your broken bones are my business!”

The Smith family finally caught up to them. The mother and grandmother clamored over the girl, the father looked pale and helpless, and the girl’s eyes remained closed.

Terriss turned around and took in his surroundings.

He motioned to the stunned-looking father. “There’s Bow Street, I know a street doctor there. We can try him,” Terriss said. He rushed ahead, and the group struggled to keep up. Bram lurched uphill as he carried the girl, taking care not to drop her.

Pamela’s head swirled. She opened her eyes—ahead of them, the man who rescued her was leading the way.

The red-haired man from the paint shop was carrying her. He grunted, “He’s a damn fool.”