

# IN THE WINGS

A Dramatic Monolog

by  
Marjorie Benton Cooke



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CHARACTERS: Jane Gray, an old actress.  
Jane Gray, her namesake.  
The Nurse.

PLACE: The Actor's Home.

(Jane Gray, bent and feeble, hobbles out onto the porch of the Home, leaning on the Nurse's arm, and on a cane. Makes her way to a chair.)

She speaks:

Slowly, Nurse, slowly--these old bones of mine are nearly worn out. (Leans on back of chair, panting: then gets slowly around and into chair) That's better--that's better. (Looks about her) It's a beautiful day, Nurse; a beautiful day. Visitor's day, you say? Ah, yes, I had forgotten. There was a time when my day at home was famous throughout the land--but now--yes, I'm very comfortable, Nurse. Is the bell where I can reach it? That's all, then, Nurse; thank you.

(Nurse exits)

I hear you, Robin Redbreast, singing up there so blithely. You won't sing so gaily when you're as old as I am. There never seems to be any old age in Nature, on the surface all is so young and gay--but underneath there is decay.

(Turns face to right and peers at someone approaching) How do you do? Yes, this is Jane Gray, or all that is left of her--a sort of ruins--a magnificent monument. (Laughs brokenly) You came out from New York to see me? Why, that was very kind of you. Can you find a chair, or shall I ring for someone? Ah, that's right--bring it close, my dear; I don't hear very well. And now, what is your name, dear? (She starts and faces visitor) Jane Gray! My namesake? Why, that's very sweet--(Pats girl's hand) That's very sweet. How did it happen, dear? Your aunt, Rosa Dane, named you after me? Rosa Dane--Rosa Dane--why, I remember Rosa. She supported me in one of my plays; I remember her well. And how is your aunt, child? Dead? Ah, yes, I might have known. They're all dead, and I am living on after my time.

(She lapses into reverie, coming back with a start) Where do you live, dear? Pleasant Meadows? That has a peaceful sound! Your father and mother are living? Ah, yes, your father is pastor there. Pastor of the flock at Pleasant Meadows! (Lapses into reverie) Do you go to school, dear? (Starts) What? Going on the stage? You don't say? My namesake, and on the stage?--That's why you've come to see me.--Your father objects does he? Well, you can't blame him. Pleasant Meadows has a very protected sound. Yes, dear, I know it seems unreasonable to you--how the caution of maturity galls youth!--But you must look on both sides of the picture before you decide.

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