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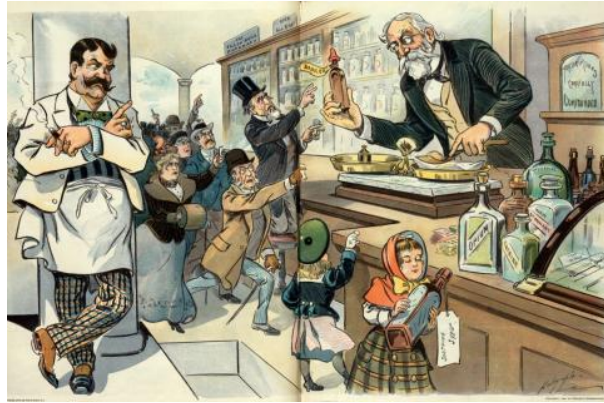
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Making a trip to the local drug-dispensing store was nothing new for Florie Maybrick who had lost her arsenic-based cosmetic prescription in the spring of 1889. In this illustration, online via the Library of Congress, we see a 19th-century pharmacist who “compounds medicines, including opium, cocaine, and arsenic, for customers.” Online via the Library of Congress, LC-DIG-PPMSCA-25463. Click on the image for a full-page view.

Just before her husband became desperately ill, Florie lost her arsenic-based cosmetic prescription. In Mid-April, 1889, she decided to make-up the concoction herself by soaking flypaper to distill-out the arsenic.

Not making any effort to hide what she was doing, Florie and her flypaper were spotted by all the Maybrick's house servants. Unknown—at least initially—to Florie, Nurse Yapp's tongue started to wag: Was the mistress trying to poison Master Maybrick?

By early May, as Maybrick's condition deteriorated, Nurse Yapp talked to a family friend. Mrs. Briggs telegraphed Maybrick's brothers with the words:

*Come at once; strange things going on here*

Michael Maybrick soon took charge. By all accounts, he saw to it that James changed his Will. With Michael handling his brother's affairs, Florie was all but cut out (including from her husband's estate).

It never was completely clear—and still isn't to this day—whether Maybrick's last Will was a forgery. The certified copy of the Will is hard to read, but contemporary newspapers published transcriptions of it.

Florie was essentially banned from her husband's sick room, although she was able to see Maybrick occasionally. She continued to see Alfred Brierly and, to her everlasting regret, Florie wrote a note to Brierly which she asked Maybrick's nurse, Alice Yapp, to mail.

When things go wrong, they often go *really* wrong, and such was the case with Florie's ill-conceived letter to Brierly:

- Little Gladys Maybrick, walking to the post office with the nurse, was holding the letter and dropped it into a mud puddle.
- Instead of returning the letter to Florie for a new envelope, Alice Yapp opened it.
- Instead of simply putting the letter - unread - into a new envelope, the nurse studied what was inside.

These are some of the words which Alice Yapp read.

*Dearest*

*...I cannot answer your letter fully to-day, my darling, but relieve your mind of all...fear of discovery now and in the future. M. has been delirious since Sunday, and I know now that he is perfectly ignorant of everything... Excuse this scrawl, my own darling, but I dare not leave the room for a moment, and I do not know when I shall be able to write to you again. In haste, yours ever. Florie*

Florie's words to Brierly were never read by Brierly. But within hours her words were known to everyone at Battlecrease Mansion.

What better way to fan the flames of rumor? Florie had set herself up for bad things in the event her husband died.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/FLORIE-S-MISTAKES-Florence-Maybrick-Death-Sentence-Commuted>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/FLORIE-S-MISTAKES-Florence-Maybrick-Death-Sentence-Commuted>

## Media Stream



Florie Maybrick

Image online, courtesy the [Liverpool Daily Post](#) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Florie-Maybrick0>