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The Nanny Jack Evans

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Jack Evans

THE NANNY

You have to love the children. God knows they are our only hope. For thirty years I cared for them. When they burped up deathly odors. When I had to wipe away every imaginable liquid and solid from their little bodies. Even in the dizzy contagion of the sickroom I never turned my face away from the face of a child. But this boy whose face was clear and bright as the sun made me change my mind. "Here Nanny," he said, holding out his two sweet fists. "Pick a hand." How cute he looked, then. I chose the right, and he handed me several small round objects. At first I thought they might be tiny buttons, but there was something about them—a kind of vibration that disturbed me. Then he opened the other hand to display a tangled bunch of skinny lines that jumped and twitched like the nerves that were beginning to move beneath my skin. "Daddy Longlegs," he said, smiling up at my stricken face as my heart put on its little white hat and shoes and ran from that green park to a quieter place where children are forbidden to enter. I did love the children, but now I care for the sick and aged. There are no surprises and they so appreciate the touch of a gentle hand.