

**A SEARCH FOR A  
SECRET: A NOVEL. IN  
THREE VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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A search for a secret: a novel. In three volumes. Vol. II by G. A. Henty

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**G. A. HENTY**

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SECRET: A NOVEL. IN  
THREE VOLUMES. VOL. II**



# A SEARCH FOR A SECRET.

A Novel.

BY

G. A. HENTY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A FAMILY CONCLAVE.

FOR some little time after Dr. Ashleigh's carriage drove off from Harmer Place, not a word was spoken. The scene through which its occupants had passed, had left a deep impression upon them — even upon Mr. Petersfield, who was by no means of a nature to be easily moved. Dr. Ashleigh felt greatly the words he had spoken, the wrong which had been committed, and the thought of his children's altered future. Harry felt more indignant than hurt; he was too astonished and angry to reflect yet how much it would affect himself. Perhaps if he had one wish more predominant than

another, it was that the Misses Harmer were but men—men of about his own age, and that he could get them into some quiet spot—by Jove, would not he find out where the will was hidden!

But Robert Gregory felt the disappointment with all its force. To him the blow had been so overwhelming and crushing, that his fierce temper was beaten down and mastered by it; and he had borne it with a sense of dull despair, very unlike the passionate outburst of wrath which might have been expected from him. Only when Miss Harmer had turned upon him so fiercely, had the blood rushed to his cheek, and had not Dr. Ashleigh interposed, he would doubtless have given way to a burst of passion; but with a great effort he had checked himself; desperate as he was, he knew that Dr. Ashleigh stood in a far higher and better position in the case than he did himself; it was to his interest that the doctor should take the lead, for he felt that what hopes remained rested solely in him.

Dr. Ashleigh was certainly favourably impressed with his conduct throughout this trying interview; he knew that to this man the loss of the will was a terrible blow, the de-

feat of all his plots and schemes, and he was surprised and pleased that he had behaved with so much self-control, and had avoided creating a stormy and violent scene.

"Mr. Gregory," he said at last, breaking the silence for the first time as they were entering Canterbury, "I know that this is a grievous blow to you, as it is to us all. I think you had better follow out your original plan of returning this evening to your wife in London. You can safely leave the matter in my hands; I am, for the sake of my children, interested in this affair equally with yourself, and you may rely that I shall spare no pains to come to the bottom of it. What search and stir is made, will come with a far better grace from me than from yourself, and you may depend upon my letting you know, the instant the slightest clue is gained to the mystery."

Robert Gregory in a few words thanked the doctor, agreed that such a course was best, and that at any rate until Sophy was perfectly recovered, he would leave the affair in his hands.

Dr. Ashleigh then turned to Mr. Petersfield and asked him if he would come on to Ramsgate, and stay the night with him, to