

Shale Preston

## The Late Rain

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Mademoiselle Hortense  
walked barefoot through  
the Chesney Wold wet grass

slighted and dismissed from service  
she nonetheless  
peacefully picked her way  
through the sodden stalks  
as a light wind blew and bird song  
broke through the dancing branches

Mr Jarndyce thought  
the walk would lead  
to the death of her

but a little water never did  
anyone any harm and a good  
villainess-in-waiting  
will always opt  
for a shoeless wade  
across a shining estate  
before embarking on  
a course of revenge

