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TORONTO, CANADA MONTREAL  
WINNIPEG

**The Old Marquis;**

OR,

**The Girl of the Cloisters**

CHAPTER VII  
A CHAINED HEART.

"LET us go by the stream by all means, if that is the longest way," says Lord Edgar; and Lela, with a little, almost unconscious, thrill of pleasure at his reason for choosing it, takes the path that winds alongside the babbling little river.

The innocent remark of the miller's child has produced a slight shade of shyness in her that makes itself manifest in her lowered lids, a faint color in her face, and a slight tendency to silence, and Lord Edgar is so frightened lest she should take alarm that he strides on beside her, humming the last of the comic opera airs rather vaguely and out of tune.

But presently the shyness, to his infinite delight, wears off, and he takes courage to remark that he hopes she is not tired.

"Tired!" she says, flashing around at him with one of the glances from her soft brown eyes that twenty times this morning have made his heart leap. "Why, we have not walked any distance to speak of. I often come here—to the mill I mean—and back before dinner."

A wild, awful fear seizes him, and he puts it into a word.

"Alone?"

She nods.

"Yes, of course, alone! Why, grandpapa wouldn't walk so far from his beloved library—to save his life!"

"Mr. Temple? No," he says. "I thought—perhaps that is—that there might be some one else."

She looked at him with grave surprise.

"Whom else could there be?" she asks.

"I didn't know," he rejoins, meekly, but with an inward throb of satisfaction.

"I know no one," she continues.

"Grandpapa and I are quite alone. This is the first time," she adds, innocently, "that I have had a companion."

He draws a little nearer.

"Don't you find it dull—walking alone, I mean?" he says.

"Oh, no! There is always something to amuse one: some bird to listen to, a squirrel running up a tree—I saw three once!—and there are always the trees to talk to me. Oh, I am never dull—never, in the open air. He looks rather disappointed.

"Trees—I didn't know they talked," she laughs.

"Oh, yes, they do. Listen!" and she stops and puts her hand on his arm. He stops dead short as if he had been shot. "Don't you hear them? That is the leaves rustling against each other in the summer breeze. That is what I call talking. If we were poets we should understand them and be able to tell the world what they said."

Lord Edgar tilts his hat back and shakes his head despairingly.

"I'm afraid I'm not much of a poet," he says, ruefully. "And you come here all alone? And you don't find it dull? I'm always dull if I'm alone. I hate being alone. That's why I hate my rooms in town."

She looks up at him sympathetically and with unconcealed interest. She is curious as to how the heir to the marquise lives and spends his time.

"You live alone?" she says.

"Of course," he says, taking out another cigar. "You don't mind, you're sure?"

She shakes her head.

"Yes, quite alone. Of course I've got a man, a valet, you know; but a fellow can't make a companion of him. He never speaks unless he's spoken to, but he's a decent fellow. My rooms are up west, near the clubs, you know."

"Clubs?" she says, doubtfully, then the quick, intelligent light flashes into her soft brown eyes. "Ah, yes, I know!"

He nods.

"Yes, I mostly live at them, you know. Always dine at one of them. But my rooms, they're awfully desolate. I've done all I can to make them comfortable, but they are frightfully dull. I'm always glad to get away from them. There never seems anything to do; fancy eating your breakfast with no one to speak to—not a soul. Sometimes my cousin, Clifford Revel, drops in just after on his way to the office, but not always, and I'm left to the paper, which I hate."

"When you've done your breakfast?" she asks, with all the curiosity of an innocent country girl.

"Oh, then, I have the nag around, and take a turn in the park."

"Hyde Park?" she says, hesitatingly.

Lord Edgar stares.

"Yes, I didn't know there was any other—oh—ah, yes! Yes, Hyde Park. Then I come back and send him to the stable and go down to the club and look at the paper."

"You've done that," she says, naively.

He nods and laughs.

"Yes, but I do it again; then some fellow you know drops in and you get to talking about anything—nothing; more often nothing; then lunch-time comes, and you get a chop or a cutlet and a glass of the Boy—"

"The Boy?" she says, puzzled.

"Champagne, you know," he says; "and after that I go for another trot in the park, and perhaps I meet with some one who asks me to dinner, and I go and meet a lot of people I never saw before and never want to see again, and then I look in at the theater, and then I go to the club and somebody proposes a game at backgammon—"

"What's that?" she asks.

"A game with cards; and I play, and lose, and then I go home to bed, and there's an end. It is awfully dull."

She ponders a moment, her long lashes sweeping her cheek.

"It doesn't sound so," she says, demurely.

"But it is!" he says, emphatically. "You try it for a week, and you'll get awfully sick of it! I hate it. I like the country."

She thinks a moment, then she looks up at him.

"This is the country. Why do you not come down here?"

He colors, and examines his cigar with more than needful scrutiny.

"Why? Because I am not asked. My father is—peculiar. I haven't been here for three years. I don't come unless I am asked, and he doesn't wish me to stay when I am here. He doesn't want me to stay now."

"Why do you stay, then?" she asks, innocently.

He flings the cigar into the river, and makes a great pretense of choosing another from the costly case, marked with his initials and crest.

"Oh, because—because—it's such beautiful weather, you know."

"So it is," she says, accepting the reason in the best of faith—"beautiful."

"But I can't stay long; no fellow can stay when he isn't wanted. I must go to-morrow."

A sudden thrill—a cold thrill runs through her, a chill that surprises and puzzles her.

"To-morrow!" she says, vaguely.

He nods.

"Yes, to-morrow. I expect if I stayed longer I should get a polite intimation from Mr. Palmer that I wasn't wanted at the Abbey."

"To-morrow!" she echoes, in a low voice, looking around at the trees and the stream as if she expected them to echo the words. "It—it is very soon."

"Yes," he admits; "and I don't want to go. I assure you I don't. But I can't stay in a house where I'm not welcome, though it is my father's."

"No," she admits, but faintly. "Perhaps—with a sudden start—"your father, the marquis, would rather that you stayed with him to-day than than walked with me?"

He laughs with a half tone of bitterness.

"My father doesn't care where I go or with whom I walk, so that I don't trouble him."

"I am so sorry," she murmurs, sweetly, so sweetly that he draws a little nearer. "I thought that rich people, lords especially, were always happy, and that the world was made for them!"

"You were wrong," he says; "I am an instance of the contrary."

She looks up at him sympathetically.

"I shall think differently in future," she says.

"Do!" he says. "When you think of a lord, like myself, picture a solitary young fellow living by himself, with scarcely a friend to come to, and finding life a bore. There is no music in the trees for me—not a note. Can you hear it still?"

"What?" she asks.

"The music of the trees."

She listens.

"I can hear the music of the stream. And that reminds me that we ought to cross here. Dear me!"

"What's the matter?" he asks.

"Why, the river is awfully swollen. It is the rain of last week! The stepping-stones are almost covered!"

He looks down at the river and nods assent.

At the point at which they stopped there is a rude and rough ford made of stepping-stones, which the swollen river has nearly obliterated.

"Here is where we ought to cross," she says, her brows knitted with perplexity.

"Not half of the stones are visible," he says. "We shall have to go back."

She pulls out her watch, and consults it thoughtfully.

"Go back!" she says. "Why, it will take a couple of hours! And by that time grandpapa will be in a fit! We must cross it!"

"You will get wet," he says.

She laughs.

"I can't help that! We must cross here," and she runs down the bank, and stands looking at the brawling stream that breaks noiselessly over the stones.

"Let me give you a hand," he says; and standing in the water he extends both hands.

She shrinks back with an exclamation of dismay.

"You are standing in the water!" she says.

He laughs carelessly.

"What does it matter?" he rejoins, looking at her as she holds back from his extended hand. "It won't hurt me, but you must not get wet. Put both your hands in mine, and come slowly."

She hesitates a moment, then puts her small hands into his strong ones, which close over them firmly, and steps onto the first stone.

"Now, then," he says, wading half way toward the next one, "be careful to step firmly. Don't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid!" she says, feeling the firm grip of his hands, which seem to swallow hers and yet to hold them so tenderly.

"Bravo!" he exclaims, as she reaches stone No. 2. "That was first-rate!"

"How deep the water is," she says, ruefully, looking down at his legs, against which the stream is rushing angrily. "How terribly wet you will get."

"Please don't think of me," he says, pleadingly. "It will do me good. Now for the next one."

"It is rather a long way!" she says, doubtfully; but she manages to reach it, and no sooner has done so than she utters a faint cry of dismay.

"What's the matter?" he says, holding her hands tightly and pressing a little nearer.

"Don't you see!" she says, nodding in front of her. "The next stone is under water!"

"By Jove! so it is!" he says.

"What's to be done?"

"I don't know. And I feel as if I were going to fall," she adds, laughingly, but with a little dash of nervous color in her lovely face.

"Lean your arm on my shoulder," he says, coming closer. She does so.

"Lean hard," he insists; "you will feel steadier."

"Thank you—you are very kind; and the water is almost up to your knees!"

"Never mind me!" he repeats.

"What's to be done? Will you go back?"

Even as he makes the suggestion, he knows that it is a useless one, as she could not possibly turn around on the sloping, slippery stone. He knows, too, the answer to that last question—the only way of solving the difficulty. If she were his sister, he should make no more ado but take her up in his arms and carry her across. He could do it as easily as carry a baby. But he dare not even think of it, even to himself! It would be sacrilege. But still, what is to be done? Every moment he feels the arm resting upon his shoulder grow more uncertain and unsteady.

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**ARLY CABLES**

WILL PAY IN INSTALMENTS.

PARIS, April 9.

The text of the reparations clause as approved by the Council of to-day, specified that enemy

tries must admit responsibility for all loss and damage to Allied and neutral nations and their citizens to unjustifiable aggression. In

however, of the inability of the enemy countries to fully make reparation for these losses, an international commission will assess them

on a just basis for thirty years, beginning May 1, 1921, when Germany must pay an initial payment of five million dollars. Germany is to pay the expenses of their commission staff during the thirty years.

POOR PROSPECTS.

PARIS, April 9.

The mission to Hungary, headed by General Jan Christian Smuts, has received the prospect of the payment of Hungary of her debts. The mission gained by the commission report states, was that there is some chance of adjustment through friendly negotiations, other than it was added it was difficult to say chance whatever.

OFF FOR ARCHANGEL.

TILBURY, England, April 9.

The first transport bearing the British relief force for the Archangel will sail to-night. The members of the contingent began embarking to-day. The new force comprises veteran officers and men who have served in various theatres during the war. It is an army in miniature, every man of the service being retrained. Recruiting for further reinforcements for Northern Russia is proceeding satisfactorily.

DEMobilIZATION.

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