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**REMORSE and REPENTANCE.**

For Daisie's Sake

CHAPTER XXXII.  
 THE SPIDER'S WEB.

She got up, with a corpse-like face, and dragged herself out into the hall, thinking that she would go back to her own room and lie down, she felt so strangely ill; but with her foot on the first step she reeled and fell backward to the floor, crushed by the weight of her soul's despair.  
 Patrick was just admitting some callers—Mrs. Hill-Dixon and her cousin, Lord Werter—when the sound of the fall drew their attention, and the gentleman rushed to the prostrate form.  
 He saw her lying there like one dead, his life's love, and, with a wild rush of tenderness, lifted the beautiful form in his arms, exclaiming:  
 "Oh, heavens! what shall I do?"  
 "Just carry her up to her own room, Dallas. Patrick will lead the way," said Mrs. Hill-Dixon, who had a very practical mind, and saw that Daisie had fainted.  
 Who could tell what thoughts rushed through his mind as he mounted the stairs with his lovely unconscious burden? The strongest one was a longing to crush her fondly against his breast and fly with her to the uttermost part of the earth, his beautiful love, of whom he had been so cruelly cheated.  
 He could not bear to lay her down, when the frightened maid came to his assistance, but his cousin reminded him of the proprieties by gently whispering in his ear:  
 "Go down, now, and wait in the drawing-room for news."  
 He was loath to obey—he longed to rebel, to cry out fiercely:  
 "I will not go until she opens her blue eyes and smiles on me, my lost love, of whom I was cheated by cruel lies!"  
 But at that moment Annette entered and touched his hand warningly, as she exclaimed:  
 "I am so glad to see you both. But now let us go down and leave Emma to care for Daisie. It is only a simple fainting fit. See, she is already opening her eyes."  
 It was true; and as they left the room Dallas could not resist the temptation of looking back. Yes, her

eyes followed him with a wistful pain that pierced his heart to its center.  
 CHAPTER XXXIII.  
 LOVE THAT WOULD LAST.  
 A very interesting party were grouped in Royall Sherwood's drawing-room.  
 First, there was the host, who had insisted on being wheeled into the room when he learned of Lord Werter's call.  
 "And there was Mrs. Fleming, who had entered with him, looking like a little girl in her jaunty bicycle suit, her fair locks gleaming under a seal-skin cap, her eyes beaming and her cheeks rosy, as she declared that she must go directly, it was really getting too cool to ride the bicycle home, but she really could not resist stopping a minute for a chat with dear Mrs. Hill-Dixon. That lady knew quite well that her titled cousin was the real attraction, but, of course, she was too polite to say so.  
 Then there was Reed Raymond, who had returned just a moment ago, and was watching Lord Werter devote himself to Annette with a sudden secret heart pang at what might possibly happen. To him, Annette was a queen among women. What if Lord Werter's heart wound should be healed by the glance of those saucy black eyes? What if he won her for his cherished bride?  
 The man's heart stood still a moment in its agony.  
 Then pride and despair came to the rescue, giving him:  
 "Hush! What is that to you? She was yours once, and you could not trust her true heart! You outraged her loving faith. Now she hates you. It is the part of some nobler man to make her happy."  
 He sighed, and tried not to watch them talking over there in that friendly undertone, nor to wonder what they were saying.  
 And there was Daisie, who had entered a little while ago very pale and lovely, making light of her sudden attack, and saying it was nothing but a swimming in the head, not a real fainting spell; she had scarcely been unconscious a minute, and she thought perhaps she had stayed out too long on her wheel, et cetera, all very vivaciously to Mrs. Hill-Dixon, but never once meeting the anxious glance of a pair of dark eyes that she felt burning on her face.  
 She could not meet his look, lest the crimson should fly to her face, for her form thrilled yet with the "close pressure of the arms that had borne her so tenderly upstairs while consciousness was returning swiftly enough for her heart to recognize him, even if she had not heard Mrs. Hill-Dixon address him familiarly as Dallas.  
 Yes, she knew him now for her lost love, her true love, and she longed to cast herself on his broad breast and die there of her mingled joy and despair—joy that he had never been false, but had loved her truly—despair for the bond that held them asunder, the tie that made her Royall Sherwood's wife.  
 But she must not yield to her longing—she must not let them know the fire that consumed her heart. Her part was silence and patience—patience even at the cost of heartbreak.  
 What could anything avail now? They were parted forever. Perhaps he could console himself with the little witch Annette, who was smiling so sweetly on him now; and at the thought she, too, felt the arrow of love's jealous pain pierce her heart as it pierced that of Reed Raymond sitting yonder so pale and self-possessed, like a soldier under fire.  
 Yes, it was a strangely assorted group, and there was an element of tragedy in the very air. All felt it except Mrs. Hill-Dixon, the handsome, middle-aged woman who did not happen to be in the secret.  
 But they had all been talking for half an hour on careless society subjects quite as if everything was as it seemed on the surface, when suddenly the lady exclaimed:  
 "My dear Dallas, we must be going."  
 Instantly a quick tremor of excitement ran through the group.  
 Dallas was not a common name, and, coupled with his startling likeness to Dallas Bain, carried instant conviction of his identity to all.  
 Lottie Fleming uttered a little cry of surprise and dismay, and Royall Sherwood, paling to the very lips, exclaimed:  
 "Dallas—Dallas Bain! Is it possible—my old friend?"



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Every face wore such a look of dismay that Mrs. Hill-Dixon cried in wonder:  
 "Why, what is the matter?"  
 No one heard her, for all were looking at Lord Werter, waiting for his answer.  
 They saw him give Annette one swift, deprecating look, then he turned to Royall and said:  
 "I meant to preserve my incognito among you all, but I forgot to caution my cousin not to call me Dallas, so she has betrayed me unwittingly—yes, I am Dallas Bain."  
 "But what does it all mean? I am in the dark?" cried Mrs. Hill-Dixon.  
 Her cousin explained:  
 "Last year, when I crossed the sea, I made Mr. Sherwood's acquaintance, and was afterward his guest at Mrs. Fleming's summer home. Just for a whim I kept up a mystery about myself, and it rather amused me to find that my new friends believed me ashamed of my origin, on the principle that 'where there is secrecy is guilt.' So when circumstances terminated our friendship so abruptly that when we met again, after my brother died, and I succeeded to his title, I did not think it worth while to enlighten them as to my identity."  
 His voice was cold, proud, almost stern, and for a moment no one could find a word to say.  
 The weight of a guilty conscience kept Mrs. Fleming speechless, and Annette was struck dumb with fear of what might happen next. It was a tragic moment for all, even Mrs. Hill-Dixon, who began to see, from all those blanched faces and frightened eyes, that there was something uncommon in the air.  
 Royall Sherwood, his wan and wasted face as ghastly as a dead man's, stole a furtive glance at his wife.  
 Daisie did not return the anxious glance. She was lily-white, and her great blue eyes, dark with suppressed emotion, dropped to the little hands that were tightly clasped in her lap. The quivering red lip was held in by the convulsive pressure of pearly teeth.  
 Reed Raymond, pallid and alarmed, looked on in silence, like the rest, dreading, like Annette, what might happen next.  
 The silence was so profound and embarrassing that Mrs. Hill-Dixon had to come to the rescue with a tinkling little society laugh, as she exclaimed:  
 "Well, you have certainly given our friends a great surprise!"  
 Mrs. Fleming gasped, and recovered herself, twittering sweetly:  
 "Lord Werter, I saw through your flimsy disguise last night, and was only waiting for you to declare your identity and renew old friendships."  
 He laughed absently, without answering, and she saw that he was stealing a furtive glance at Daisie, who still did not look up from the little hands she seemed to be inspecting beneath her lowered lashes. She appeared indeed cold and indifferent.  
 But it was not hard to guess that she was putting the sternest restraints on herself, fighting down her rebel heart, lest she should cry out before them all that she had been tricked and deceived, torn asunder from the love of her life, and the cruel truth was breaking her tender heart.  
 Again Mrs. Hill-Dixon, seeing and wondering at the strange pallor on every face, came to the rescue, rising, with a rustle of silks and laces, and saying:  
 "Indeed, Dallas, we must be saying good-by, for I am due at a reception within ten minutes."  
 Every one rose with suppressed sighs of relief to see them go, and then Lord Werter said quietly:  
 "Give me five minutes of your time, Cousin Elinor, to shake hands with my friends, for I am leaving to-morrow for California, and shall not see them again before my return to Europe."  
 It was a promise to go out of their lives forever, and all understood it so; but did they guess that he touched hands with all just for the privilege of holding one minute in his own those cold fingers of his dear lost love, sweet Daisie? If they did, who could grudge him that small boon, when he had been cheated of so much?  
 She was the last one to whom he spoke, and his farewell words to her were brief as to the rest. Only the lingering handclasp, close and meaningful, told to her own heart a story plain as words of a love that, though hopeless, would last forever, and their swift farewell glance had in it all the pathos of life's despair.  
 (to be continued.)

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