

# THE BARONET'S BRIDE.

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## CHAPTER I.

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“AND there is danger of death—for mother and child?”

“Well, no, Sir Jasper—no, sir; no certain danger, you know; but in these protracted cases”—Dr. Parker Godroy paused, and coughed behind his hand—“it can do no harm, Sir Jasper, for the clergyman to be here. He may not be needed—let us hope he will not be—but your good lady is very weak—very weak, I am sorry to say, Sir Jasper Kingsland.”

“I will send for the clergyman,” Sir Jasper Kingsland said, not looking at the grave little London doctor. “Do your best, as I know you will, Doctor Godroy, and for God’s sake let me know the worst or best as soon as may be. This torture of suspense is horrible.”

His voice was sharp and harsh with inward pain. Dr. Parker Godroy looked sympathetically at him through his gold-bowed spectacles.

“I will do my best, Sir Jasper,” he said, gravely. “The result is in the hands of the Great Dispenser of life and death. Send for the clergyman, and wait and hope.”

He quitted the library as he spoke. Sir Jasper Kingsland seized the bell and rang a shrill peal.

“Ride to the village—ride for your life!” he said, imperatively, to the servant who answered, “and fetch the Reverend Cyrus Green here at once.”

The man bowed and departed, and Sir Jasper Kingsland, Baronet, of Kingsland Court, was alone—alone in the gloomy grandeur of the vast library; alone with his thoughts and the wailing midnight storm.

For it was midnight. A clock high up in an ancient turret pealed noisily forth the weird hour when “church-