


TAKE IT FOR
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DIARRHOEA**

APPLY IT FOR
**BRUISES—SPRAINS
— SORE THROAT**



PERRY DAVIS
Painkiller
The Home Remedy

Happiness At Last; —OR— Loyalty Recompensed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Yes," he said, as calmly as before; "I loved you. Why else should I have married you? I should have loved you to the end, while life lasted, if I had not learned what you had been. Even then I would have fought against that terrible knowledge and—remained with you, if I had not learned also that you were without a heart, that you had married me for a place in the world—for money."

He paused and looked gravely at her. All the while he had been talking to her, looking at her, he had been thinking of Decima; had been contrasting this woman, his wife, the adventuress with her vile past, contrasting her with the pure-minded girl who had just left him. It was as if an angel of light had flown from his side and a fiend in woman's shape had taken her place. His heart felt numbed with the misery of despair, with the utter hopelessness of the situation.

It was as if he had been suddenly awakened from an exquisite dream of bliss to find that his hours were numbered; or, worse still, that the rest of his days were to be spent in a darkness and anguish beyond words to describe.

He had touched the key of the door behind him, and, half mechanically, he locked it and moved to the fireplace and looked at her again.

"I am sorry that you have compelled me to say all this," he said, with a courtesy more galling than any vituperation, any reproach, would have been. "Will you tell me what, having found me, you intend to do? I suppose you and your brother have made some plans."

She raised her eyes suddenly.

"Did Morgan know who you were, that you lived here?" she demanded.

Gaunt looked faintly surprised.

"Yes," he said, quietly. "Was it not he who betrayed me? It would be like him, worthy of him. I did not bribe him, he would be my ally."

"You—you bribed him? Then he knew all the time, and kept it from me. Kept it from me all the while he was pretending to look for you."

"Yes," said Gaunt, indifferently; for what did it matter now? "I bribed him, as you put it. I paid him to keep the secret of my identity. He discovered it."

She sprung to her feet.

"You are a pretty pair!" she exclaimed, with a hard laugh. "So he has been taking money to—help rob me of my rights! Oh, I'll be even with him!"

"I have no doubt you will," said Gaunt, wearily. "But may I ask you to answer my question. What do you intend to do?"

"What am I going to do?" she said, mockingly, tauntingly. "Can you ask?"

I am going to have my rights! I am going to live with you!"

He made a slight gesture of dissent. "You can not do that," he said, gravely. "I could not live with you."

"You can't help it!" she said, jeeringly. "The law is on my side, and it shall help me. I'll go to law. I will go to a solicitor directly—I leave here. He shall claim my right, to have your name—my proper name—Lady Gaunt."

"I can not withhold that from you," he said, with perfect calm.

"No; and I mean to hold you, too," she said, defiantly, gloatingly. "Where a husband is, there a wife has a right to be. You can't cast me off, and you shall not! I'll have my title, and—and half your money!"

"Ah, yes," he said, almost to himself.

"Yes; and I'll go into the world, the society my rank is entitled to, and I'll go as your wife, by your side. You shall take me and introduce me to all your relations and friends."

He smiled bitterly, coolly; and the smile seemed to madden her.

"You refuse?" she said.

"I refuse, yes," he said, grimly. "You may have all else you demand. The title, the money—far more than half of that which belongs to me; but no more. I could not face the world by your side."

She laughed stridently.

"Could you not? We will see! The law will help me. I will avail myself of it. I will enter an action—compel you, yes, compel you to acknowledge me and live with me."

"You can not," he said, as if he were stating a simple fact. "I leave England in a few hours; I shall be beyond the reach of even your malice."

She sprang from the chair, upsetting it in her violence, and it fell against the small table, overturning it.

It came to the ground with a crash, and the bric-a-brac was strewn upon the floor.

As she rose to her feet she uttered a cry, a cry like that of a wild beast balked of its revenge.

Gaunt looked at the overturned table and curiously, and he said, "Did you call, sir?" asked the maid outside.

"No," said Gaunt; and she went away.

"Take care!" said Laura, hoarsely, as she pushed the hair from her forehead. "You don't know what I can do! You talk of your name—the disgrace and shame! I can drag it in the dust for you—and, by Heaven! I will, too! I'll tell the whole story! I'll fill the papers with 'Lord and Lady Gaunt's Case.' I'll make you a laughing-stock throughout England."

"Yes," he said, with a terrible calmness. "You can do that; and I have no doubt you will. But you can not compel me to live with you. And the world will understand why I do not."

Her face went white, and she ground her teeth.

"What do I care?" she said. "I shall have had my revenge. You won't be able to show your face in England again; and I—I shall live here, shall be Lady Gaunt, your wife, your ill-used wife!"

He smiled.

"Yes," he said. "Let that thought console you; let it content you. I shall say no word, utter no denial."

The calmness of his acquiescence startled her. She went closer to him, and looked at him keenly.

"You are going away—out of England. Are you going alone, I wonder?"

For the first time his calmness broke down. It was as if she had found the chink in his armor through which she could thrust an envenomed dagger.

She saw the change in his expression, and uttered a cry.

"Ah, you are not! There is some woman!" She laughed discordantly. "Don't deny it! I can see it in your face! So, that's it! I can understand now!"

She stood before him, her face flushed, her eyes glittering.

"What a fool I was not to have hit upon it before! There's another woman!"

He had regained his old calmness, and met her furious, taunting gaze with impassive sternness. No man could be more impassive, more stone-like than Gaunt when he chose.

"You don't deny it!" she went on, scanning his face. "Ah, I know that look! There is some one else!"

She came and stood beside him, so close that the perfume he hated seemed to suffocate him. He caught his breath, but said never a word, and his silence increased her fury.

"You to talk of shame and disgrace!" she said. "You hypocrite! You—you liar! Shame and disgrace, indeed! Yes, you shall have them, and not you alone, but she, whoever she is! I'll find it all out, drag her through the divorce court!"

He did not move a muscle, but stood regarding her with perfect calm.

"Who is she?" she demanded. "You may as well tell me. One of your great lady friends—a woman of rank, or some common girl?" She paused for breath and looked round the room.

As evil chance would have it, her eye fell upon Decima's veil. It had come unfastened from the side of her hat as Decima had entered, and she had taken it off and laid it on the top of a cabinet.

Laura sprung to it, and seizing it, held it out to him.

"Whose is this?" she demanded, hoarsely. "Why, she's here now—this moment—in your rooms!"

She sprang to the door of the inner room and tore at the handle. Then, when she found it was locked, she turned upon him.

"She's here—in that room. Unlock that door! Unlock it! I'm your wife, and I order you—" Her voice broke and faltered chokingly. Gaunt watched her—or say, rather, that his eyes were fixed on the veil. Remember how he loved Decima, how devotedly he worshipped her innocence and purity. He pictured this fury dragging out the girl he loved and covering her with vituperation and abuse. Remembered this, and bear with him, for he needs all your charity and clemency.

He sprang forward, and seizing her by the arm, flung her on to the couch.

"Silence!" he said, as he tore the veil from her fingers. "Silence! You—desecrate—" He thrust the veil in his breast, and stood over her, panting and struggling for the mastery of his passion. "Do what you will," he said at last, when he had regained something like calm. "Do all you have threatened; but—but go now; leave me! It is not safe!"

His voice rose at the last words; they could have been heard plainly by any one who happened to be in the corridor.

She leaned back, rubbing the arm he had gripped.

"Go! go!" she retorted, defiantly, tauntingly. "No, I will not go? Why should I? This is your house, and I am your wife! My place is here! I shall not go! And you can't compel me! I am your wife—your wife! It's that other woman who is hiding here, the other—"

She uttered a word that can not be written, and as it struck his ears, Gaunt raised his hand as if to silence her mocking, taunting lips. Then the hand fell to his side, and he said, hoarsely:

"If you will not go, I will! Stay where you are! Do not attempt to follow me! I—I can not answer for myself!"

He strode to the door and unlocked it, and looked at her for a moment.

"Go!" she cried, with a strident laugh; "go to her, I say! This place is mine—mine! I am your wife! As for her—Shame and disgrace. You shall have enough of it—both of you—and to spare. I'll—"

Gaunt took up his hat, passed into the inner room, locking the door as he did so. He looked round wildly. The room was empty. Decima was not there.


His brain was in a whirl; he scarcely knew where he was, what he was doing. All his thoughts were of Decima—to get her out of the place, out of reach of the demon he had just left.

He looked round the room again. Her hat and jacket were not there. He went hurriedly into the next room—a bath and dressing-room. She was not there, nor was there any trace of her. The room adjoining was a kind of "den" in which he kept his guns and fishing-tackle—a bachelor's litter-room. She was not there. He looked round, and drew a breath of relief. She must have gone. It was just possible that she had not heard a word of what had passed between him and—his wife. Oh, God, his wife!

(To be continued)

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