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The Sound of Wedding Bells

— OR — Won't After Great Perseverance!

CHAPTER XIV.

"Nonsense, nonsense," he retorts, with his most gracious smile. "You shall. You shall dance with me."

"Really!" with a glad light in her dark eyes.

"Well, when I say dance," he says, gratified by the sudden pleasure in her voice. "I mean you will have to mark it with me, as you know I know no more of dancing than a bear. Will you—"

She rises, then she hesitates.

"Hugh, is it safe? I mean, is it the right thing? Aren't there other people you might dance with first? I'm sure there are!"

He looks around; he knows his duty. There is a stout, middle-aged duchess in the room—the county duchess, who still dances—and it is she with whom he should caper if he should caper at all.

Dulcie sighs.

"Never mind," she says; "perhaps we can get another chance. Hugh, don't choose the prettiest girl in the room!"

"Yes, I shall!" he says, "you shall see," and in a few minutes he is struggling through the mazes of the quadrille with the fat duchess, and Dulcie is content.

Half an hour later, when the ball is rolling, as Sir Archie says, he comes for her. A waltz is just being played, and couples are promening.

"Haven't I been self-denying?" he says. "You told me to go away, and I went, and now you will reward me, won't you? You will give me this waltz?"

She looks up at him. She has not danced as yet, and conversation, though it be made with ears and honours and ladies of county families, is a poor substitute for the glorious dance; she has been watching and longing, and now—here comes the best dancer in the room!

"Thanks, no," she says. "I don't think I shall dance at all—at any rate not a waltz."

"Not—a waltz!" he echoes, aghast and incredulous. "Why, it's like Mil-lis saying that he sha'n't paint—at least, in oils; or Adelina Patti that she won't sing—at least, in opera! You won't waltz?—then, we'd better put the shutters up. We had, indeed! Really—I don't say it is preposterous, but it is wicked. Come!"

"I shall not," she says, with a smile that is a little wistful.

"Why not?" he asks, persistently, his face blank with disappointment.

Now Dulcie, speak out, and say plainly—"I have promised my lover, your friend, Sir Hugh Falconer, that I will not!"

But she does not; instead she laughs:

"If you must have an answer, then, I've broken my leg!"

"Broken your leg!" he retorts, with a disappointed and reluctant laugh. "Well, I should think it would want some such reason to cause you to refrain from waltzing. Seriously, don't you mean to dance?"

And he looks down at her with eager imploration.

"Seriously, nary dance!" she retorts, smiling but impatient. "Please go away. There are heaps of people who are dying to waltz with you."

"But there is only one I am dying to dance with," he says, in a low voice.

She colors with annoyance. Hugh, though he is talking to Sir Giles Fitz-Giles, the county member, is looking her way, and looking with curious watchfulness.

"That is nonsense," she says, energetically. "Please go away. If I don't intend to dance, I want to see; and you are not tissue-paper, Sir Archibald."

He moves off slowly, and reluctantly, but though he goes, others come—others to whom she can scarcely assert that she has broken her leg. But she is firm; she will be good to-night—there shall be no pain on the handsome, noble face she loves so well.

But though they cannot get her to dance, she cannot refuse to talk; and before many minutes have passed, Lady Falconer, peering across the room under her haughty eyelashes, has the pleasure of seeing a group of men—her best and most distinguished guests—gathered round the vulgar and middle-class girl whom she so heartily dislikes.

And from this group rises little murmurs of laughter and appreciation. Dulcie cannot play or sing or work crew, but she can talk—talk with a freshness and originality which even raises a smile of approbation on the grave face of the county duke who stands beside her, his hands folded behind his back, his stately head wagging with enjoyment.

No other woman in the room has succeeded in getting such a little court, and a murmuring question runs round:

"Who is she?"

Hugh, promenading the room with Lady Fitz-Giles on his arm, hears the question, and hears the answer by a thin young lady with an acidulous countenance and bony shoulders.

"Who is she? Oh, a Miss Dorrmore. She is staying with the Falconers. No one knows where they picked her up; but it is said that she came on Sir Archibald's account. He has really been caught this time, poor fellow! I am afraid she is rather a flirt! Do you see him standing there, gnawing his mustache and glowering at her? I suppose they have had a tiff; I heard her send him away just now."

Hugh looks in the direction indicated, and sure enough there is Archie, eyeing the center of the group with wistful envy and jealousy, and the frown comes to Hugh's grave face.

At the same moment he sees another face—that of Lucy Fairfax. She is sitting on the music-stool, with a meek, patient smile in her green

eyes, a little neglected droop in her small figure. There is no admiring group of men round her; a touch of pity, compunction, and indefinable sympathy moves him, and making some excuse to fussy Lady Fitz-Giles, he deposits her rather summarily in a chair, and goes to the drooping figure.

The green eyes look up with a little start, though they have been watching him closely for the last ten minutes, and smile sympathetically.

"Aren't you tired?" he says, abruptly. "You have been playing for a long while. Is there no one else in the room who can relieve you? They take advantage of your good nature; because you do not dance is no reason why you should be chained like a galley-slave to the piano. Will you take a stroll with me?"

She shakes her head.

"No," she replies, in a low voice. "I am going to play another dance now. What shall it be?"

"I don't care," he says. "Let some one else play."

She shakes her head, and laughs softly, sadly.

"No. I am going to play this for you—and Miss Dorrmore. You have not danced with her yet," she adds, in a low voice.

He glances at the group, from which rises a burst of suppressed laughter.

"No," he says, "I don't think it matters. She is well enough amused."

"Oh," she says, softly; "you don't understand! I am sure she would like a dance with you. Go and ask her."

"I should be in the way," he says, moodily.

"Nonsense," she laughs. "You don't make allowance for her. Don't you know that all beautiful women are a little vain and proud of admiration? Lucky girl, she is getting enough homage to-night. Why, she is the talk of the room! You ought to be proud of her."

He shakes his head. There is another ripple of laughter, amidst which that of the stately duke can plainly be heard.

"Why should a woman be proud of admiration?" he says grimly. "It is a contemptible weakness," and an angry flush rises to his face.

The green eyes watch him with hidden eagerness.

"Now that is hard and cruel!" she says. "Come, go and dance with her; I—should like to see you."

He is too courteous to refuse; he is also dying to go, and he smoothes back the black fit of jealousy and crosses the room. As he gets nearer the group he can hear Dulcie's fresh, clear voice, and it goes to his heart.

Almost abruptly he makes his way through the group as the music commences.

"I think you promised me this, Miss Dorrmore," he says.

Instantly a volley of reproachful glances are levelled on her by the circle of admirers.

"Sorry for you, Falconer, but Miss Dorrmore won't dance," says the duke.

Dulcie colors.

"Oh, but," she says, with a bright laugh that barely hides her eagerness. "I promised Sir Hugh early in the evening, and I mustn't break my word," and she rises and puts her hand on his arm.

"See what awkward thing promises are," she whispers, pressing his arm with a little caressing gesture. "I shall get into fearful scrapes in consequence of that rash vow I made for you."

"Why did you make it?" he says, grimly. "At any rate up till the present it does not seem to have cost you much; if you have not danced, you have kept all the dancing men round you."

"No, Hugh," she pleads, almost meekly, "don't be angry. I have really been good. I sent poor Archie—I mean Sir Archie—away, and I couldn't help the rest coming and talking. You are not jealous of that old man with the grizzled whiskers?"

He laughs.

"That's a nice sort of way to speak of a live duke!" he says.

"A duke, is he?" she says. "He seems a very affable kind of a duke. Now, do you know, I took him for a banker or one of the county squires."

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A duke! Hugh, I had an idea that dukes never laughed!

"He doesn't often," he says, his grimness melting; "it is only a certain young lady of my acquaintance who can fetch a smile from him."

She laughs.

"I don't care for that, Hugh," she murmurs, "if—I can make you smile. If you knew how I had been waiting and watching for you all the time they were chattering—"

"Have you?" he says, eagerly, "and I thought that you had forgotten me?"

"Forgotten!" and she presses his arm again, "and that is why you look so stern! Oh, Hugh, Hugh! will you never understand! There, not another word. Let us dance—or pretend to!"

"That will be about it," he says, with a smile; "my performance is something very awful."

"Never mind," she says, "I give you leave to dance like a bear—you may tear my dress, jump on my toes, bang me up against the wall, if you like. I'd rather suffer all that than with you than dance with—with Sir Archie even, and he dances like an angel."

The light comes back to his eyes and he puts his arm round her.

"Thank Heaven!" he says, his lips close to her ear, "that a wife doesn't expect her husband to waltz with her."

If he does not sin in any of the outrageous forms mentioned by Dulcie, Hugh, alas, waltzes vilely, and after a turn or two he stops.

"I won't inflict any more on you, Dulcie," he says, with a laugh, but holding her arm close to his side, and looking down on the beautiful face with passionate eagerness. "You shall go now and dance with your angel—yes!" with generous eagerness. "I insist! See, here he comes with an aggrieved countenance and a volley of reproaches."

Sir Archie makes his way toward them. Dulcie pouts and turns her head away.

"I don't want to dance with him; let me be good for to-night, Hugh! He—he is an idiot, though he does dance like an angel."

"But from pure charity it is your duty to humor the idiot," he says. "Now, Dulcie, do as I ask you, to show me that you have forgiven me for my sulkiness."

Sir Archie is upon them before she can reply.

"I've come at the exact moment to congratulate you upon the marvelous cure of your broken limb, Miss Dorrmore," he says.

(To be Continued.)

Waist—2217. Skirt—2218. Satin, velvet, serge, mixed suiting, checks, plaids or Jersey cloth could be used for this model. The waist has the new cap shoulder to which the sleeve is joined. The Waist Pattern, 2217, is cut in 6 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44 inches bust measure. The skirt is cut in 6 sizes: 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 and 32 inches waist measure. It requires 8 yards of 27-inch material for a medium size for the entire dress. The skirt measures 2½ yards at the foot.

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War News

Messages Received Previous to 9 A.M.

FRENCH STEAMER TORPEDOED WITH HEAVY LOSS OF LIFE.

LONDON, Oct. 15.—Two hundred and fifty lives were lost when the steamer Media was torpedoed on Sept. 23 in the West Mediterranean, says a Reuter dispatch from Paris. The explosion of the torpedo detonated the mines in the ship's cargo. There were more than 500 passengers aboard the steamer, including soldiers and members of war. The Media was a French vessel of 4,470 tons. She was built in 1912 and her home port was Marseilles.

BRITISH NAVAL LOSSES.

LONDON, Oct. 15.—The British armed mercantile cruiser Champagne has been captured and the mine-sweeping sloop Bala is overdue and regarded as missing, says an official statement to-day. The text reads: His Majesty's mine-sweeping sloop Begonia, Lt.-Commander Basil S. Noake, R.N., is considerably overdue and must be considered lost with all hands. The armed mercantile cruiser Champagne, Acting-Captain Percy Brown, R.N., in command, was torpedoed and sunk. Five officers and 11 men were lost.

RUSSIAN OFFICIAL.

PETROGRAD, Oct. 15.—The text of to-day's state reads: On the northern, southern and Rumanian fronts there are no changes. On the Caucasus the situation is unchanged.

Baltic Sea—Fighting yesterday.

the possession of the Island of Oesel, continued. After the repulse of the enemy at 7 p.m. Advanced detachments were observed the distance from four to six miles from town. Enemy naval air forces supporting the land operations are attacking the north and south of the Island. The south squadron of our cruisers, torpedo boats and the 17th Channel. Its further movements into the Gulf of Riga covered by our long range arm from the Island of Oesel. The northern group of enemy warships, patched a squadron of torpedo boats between the islands of Oesel and go, which pressed back our boats in the direction of Moon. Our naval forces reinforced the

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