

BORROWED FROM THE NIGHT

By Anna C. Minogue

CHAPTER XVIII—CONTINUED

"Yes, I've seen him," replied the cautious older woman. "He was out to our house, an' stayed over Sunday, an' she remembered that Teresa was there at that time. She also remembered that she had seen him gazing at the girl with an expression on his face which in some way reminded her of her master, and straightway she had felt the secret hatred and suspicion she ever entertained of George Martinez extend to his guest and friend. She could not reason why this should be, she only knew that such feelings existed; and when the words of her visitor fell on her ears, a deep curiosity took possession of her mind.

"Miss Creasy wuz dah at de same time; but I didn't tink she liked him at all," said Dilsey. "N'm, she didn't," exclaimed Martha. "She jus' natch'y 'spised him, an' w'en he kep' a comin', she sed to me, 'Martha, t'oh dat gem'in, I doan kear to see him, ez I'es not feelin' well.' Dat wuz a 'cause, t'oh she wuz well 'nough to go down stairs, ez dah wuz anny body dah she liked."

"Did you tell him?" "Y's m'm, I did, an' 'cause I sed he wuz a mekin' Miss Creasy mad a comin' dah w'en she didn't want to go bothahed wif him, I'es mighty glad to hev it to tell," said Dilsey. "W'at did he say?" asked Dilsey in a sudden surprise, for it was to her an unheard-of experience for a servant to have to inform a guest that his presence was undesirable.

"Oh, h! he looked jus' awful. I tell you, Aunt Dilsey, I ain't evah seed a pa'r 's eyes to snap like his'n done, less'n it wuz a snake. He didn't say anny 'ting foh a minit; den he sed: 'Yoh kin tell yoh Missus dat I'll see h'm, w'ethah she wants it or not!'" "Foh-evah-moh!" exclaimed Dilsey. "Did yoh evah heah uv such imp'tence!"

"I actually novah did!" returned Martha. "An' at'ah dat, Miss Creasy she 'peaked to be sotah skeert, an' I notice w'en she's 'way long wif h'm teachin', she's alius got somebody to come home wif h'm. But dat eben she wuz out alone, an' I doan know how it happend dat she went dat way, less'n 'cause it's c'losh dah enny uv de o'tahs. I wish to God, she could come to foh jus' a minit, an' tell us who hit Mr. Worwining, 'cause dah's goin' to be some innocent man kill, an' dat afho dis moon am wainin'. Dah's jus' awful 'titement. Missus is 'mos' a freed to let anny uv us go out."

Dilsey had now finished her tea and so returned to Teresa's bedside, but as she mused over the words which Martha had spoken she became convinced that the man who struck down St. John Worthington was none other than her master's one night guest. It became such an absolute certainty in her mind, and the knowledge hung so heavily over her, that she decided to see Preston when he next came and confide her secret to him. On the following morning she stole away from the room and waited for him at the gate. The sight of Teresa's nurse standing there seemed to give confirmation to the grave fear that she would not live until the day broke. He swung himself from his horse, and peered into the dusky face of the negro as he asked, "Has anything happened?"

"No, Marse Pres'un. She's jus' de same, no bettah, no worse. I'se ben up since twelve wif h'm, an' now yoh muthah's asleepin' a little bit, Mis' Boyle's wif Miss Creasy, an' I kem out to meet yoh."

"O Aunt Dilsey," cried the young man, "can't you let me see her? Just for one little minute? I haven't closed my eyes in this long night. My soul was there crying at her door."

Aunt Dilsey's tears were brimming her old eyes, which rested on the grief wrung face of her young master, and they saw there the confirmation of the pain his words had betrayed. But she shook her head, although sadly, as she said: "Mah po'r young Marse Pres'un! doan ax't old Dilsey to do dis! Doan yoh know, howev', dat de doctah he won't 'low nobody 't'ihn de room, 'ceptin' me an' Missus an' Mis' Boyle. An' w'en yoh ax't yoh muthah to let yoh go in, yoh know w'at she ses? 'No! No! yoh mustn't.'"

"But Dilsey, you will be kinder," he urged. "If some one you loved were dying, and you stood without praying to see her, I should not refuse you, though others would."

"Doan, Marso! doan!" she sobbed. "I won't harm her," he went on. "Oh! I wouldn't let a cobweb tangle her little feet, and do you think that I would do or say anything to hurt her when she is lying there helpless? I promise you, Aunt Dilsey, that I will not leave the doorway. All I ask is to look upon her living face once more. Just to her door, Aunt Dilsey, just to her door!"

He was beside himself with grief and anxiety, and worn out by his long vigils. He caught the old woman's hands and clung to them wildly; and she could not refuse him although she knew that she was breaking the doctor's most positive command. They went to the house, and entered by the side door which she had left open. With a soft creak Dilsey stole up the stairs, Preston following. The door opening to Worthington's room stood ajar, and as he passed, Preston caught the well-remembered Virginia accent, and the wounded man addressed his attendant, Teresa's door was un-

fastened, and Mrs. Boyle, sitting at the head of the bed heard nothing, although Dilsey entered the apartment and Preston stepped across the threshold. The beautiful dawn was finding its way into the sick room, and mingling with the wacher's low night-lamp, threw a peculiar light over the place. It seemed an unreal world into which he had entered, that room with its unfamiliar furniture, its solemnity, its silence; and of all this strangeness, the bed, with its white hangings and still occupant was the center. The black hair floated over the pillow, framing the beautiful face, and he could trace the lines of the slender figure under the light coverlid. Over still face and still form the angel of death seemed to be brooding in the unearthly quiet of that unfamiliar room. She was here yet, but in a very little while, he thought, the life frozen in that icy face and motionless figure, as he had once seen a blooming rose encased in a shroud of sleet, would be destroyed—and he would be alone. He made no outcry, nor moved an inch from the doorway, he only reached out his arms to the unconscious figure. When she made no response to his great unuttered longing, when no warmth tinged the pale face, no fluttering breath stirred the seemingly pulseless bosom, he dropped his arms, and suffered Dilsey to take his hand and gently lead him away.

They went down the stairs, out into the morning's light and dewy freshness, the woman muttering, "Mah po'r boy! mah po'r boy!" When they reached the gate where his horse stood, she paused and said: "Marse Pres'un, I'es got som'ing to tell you. But yoh mus' promise me yoh's not a goin' to do nuffin' rash w'an yoh heah it."

"You can trust me, Aunt Dilsey," he said, in a listless voice. She began to repeat the story which she had heard from Martha, strengthening it by her own suspicions against the stranger, and as Preston listened his brow grew dark, and when he heard the message which the man had dared to send to Teresa anger leaped into his eyes like lightning from a cloud. When she ceased, he asked, looking down on the brown face, that wore the stamp of prayerful patience.

"I think you think, Aunt Dilsey?" "I think Marse Pres'un, dat dat wicket man met Miss Creasy in de day, an' w'en she sed him, 'bein' skeert, she holler't, jus' like a gal 'ud do; an' Marse Worwining heerd an' wuz to h'uh 'stistance; den, dat man runned his knife into him, ez Marse Worwining sez. An' I t'ink, honey, dat's w'at Miss Creasy wanted to tell yoh, at'oh she los't de use uv h'uh tongue. 'Por, po'r chile! I n'eahly h'uh, out'eryin' ev'ehy time I look at h'm, sen'ce I heerd w'at Marth sed, 'bout dah bein' nobody to p'etech h'm."

"I am very glad that you told me this, Aunt Dilsey," said he, taking his bride. As he mounted, he said: "Tell my mother that I was here but did not want to disturb her."

"W'at's yoh goin' to do, Marse Pres'un? Is yoh goin' to tell yoh fathah?" "Yes, I am going to see my father first," he returned, and he thought that the brow of the woman showed disappointment. He knew that his negress did not like the man whom circumstances had made her master, yet she had no cause to fear him. George Martinez smiled himself upon a few lines, gentlemanly instinct to consider a thing so far below his position as the dislike of a slave, as he would likewise have scorned to punish it. The overseer was lord and ruler on the plantation, and as he had been appointed by Mrs. Martinez because of his known humanity and good principle there was no just cause for complaint among the Martinez slaves. It was with surprise, hence, that Preston saw the cloud darken Dilsey's clear brow as she received the answer to her question.

CHAPTER XVII

When Preston reached home that morning, his father was rising. He knew the futility of asking for an audience until after breakfast, so despite his anxiety and impatience, he must performe wait his parent's convenience. He went to the breakfast room and after a cup of coffee, returned to the library, and began to pace his length until the appearance of his father, an hour later.

"Good morning, father," said he. "Good morning, Preston. Sam tells me that there is no improvement in Teresa's condition?" "None," returned Preston, throwing himself wearily into a chair. Something like a sigh escaped the father's lips, whether of relief or regret, it was hard to tell. He drew back his chair and took his place before the table. There was a perplexed expression on his well-masked brow as he began to arrange his scattered papers. He was busy with his thoughts, half-forgetting the presence of his son, until recalled by his saying abruptly.

"It has been conclusively proven that John Fribble was in Frankfort the night of the attempted assassination."

"Indeed? Then I suppose we may expect another startling arrest in question is a Whig or Democrat, I cannot say. I can say, however, that no mistake will have been made this time."

"Who has made the important discovery?" asked he, the touch of the irony which his son detested, in his voice. "Aunt Dilsey"

The announcement took away George Martinez's breath. Aunt Dilsey had been Teresa's nurse before this time, and he knew that she possessed a remarkable shrewdness.

"Oh-h," he then said, recovering from the momentary surprise, and the irony of the voice was emphasized by the irony of a smile. It made his son draw himself upright straight and stern in his chair. Instinctively he knew that the hour which was to bring the certain and irrevocable severance between himself and his father had come.

"Yes," he said in his slow, dignified tones. "Aunt Dilsey's sentences has pierced the mystery in which Miss Martinez' illness and St. John Worthington's high sense of honor have enshrouded this foul attempt upon his life. I regret to say, sir, the man whom a singular train of circumstances points out as the author of this deed, which brought such suffering upon an innocent man and a delicate woman, such untold misery to us and others, threw such a cloud of shame and suspicion upon our honorable party, has been a guest in this house, in, I believe, your friend—Senator Rodrigo Martinez."

George Martinez heard the name without the quiver of a muscle or variation of color. He had felt, since the evening he had stood here with the bearer of that name, that the hour of his trial was near and he had been nerving himself to meet it, rising triumphantly out of it or perishing unflinchingly amid its wreck and ruin. Knowing that his enemy had only set himself to discover that cause. Perhaps his son's intelligence did not come to him wearing the face of newness. It may have been, further, that the arrest of the Spanish senator would conflict with some plan of his own; but of what he thought or felt, he gave no sign and merely said:

"Aunt Dilsey, being such a shrewd woman, has probably some ground for her suspicion. Am I asking you to betray any confidence, when I enquire what is the basis of her opinion?"

From another man tone and words would have been insulting. Preston Martinez remembered that the speaker was his father and so answered in his former undisturbed voice.

"Not at all! Aunt Dilsey felt that it was her duty to set some one on the track of this villain. She is too well-trained a servant to seek an adviser outside of her master's family." And then as calmly as he could, he repeated the story he had heard that morning by Mr. Boyle's gateway, and calmly his father heard it to the end. When his voice ceased a silence of several minutes hung between the two men. There was not the shadow of a doubt in the minds of either that the woman's story was untrue and both were thinking of that never-uttered message of Teresa's—"Tell Preston Martinez—"

"What had she to tell him, questioned the anguish-wrenched soul of the son, remembering her persecution and unprotectedness. "Ah! what had she to tell him!" cried the fear-tormented soul of the father, recollecting her unexpected companion's secret and knowledge. Then George Martinez said, the slightest of either that the woman's self-assumption of authority in his voice:

"It may be true and it may not, but Senator Martinez persisted in seeing Teresa, and upon her refusal used those words. We have only a slave's word for it. It may also be true that he did wait for her and frighten her and it may not. We have only a slave's suspicion for this."

"You forget, sir, that you have my belief in the first slave's words and the second slave's suspicions," replied Preston Martinez, looking steadily across the table into his father's face.

"And believe, even of Preston Martinez, is—only, believe," returned Mr. Martinez, bowing his head slightly, with his winning smile, but the hearer caught the mockery under the words.

"That is all we have against any criminal when not an actual eye-witness to his deed," replied he; "but that belief draws out the chain of facts which is powerful enough to drag him to the scaffold. And, springing to his feet, "the one who brought Teresa Martinez to her death and St. John Worthington to pain and misery shall not go unpunished, while life is left me to seek for him and bring him to justice!"

Mr. Martinez made no reply beyond slightly elevating one eyebrow, and his son continued:

"I felt that it was to you I should first speak. Perhaps it was in the hope that I might have the assistance of your advice at least, in helping to bring to righteous punishment this persecutor of women and assassinator of men."

"My son is the first one yet to suggest to me that I should fail to assist in this duty which every citizen owes to the commonwealth," remarked Mr. Martinez, with the dignity which so well became him.

"I beg your pardon," said Preston. "Still, I cannot but perceive that you are not inclined to take my view of this matter—rather the contrary one."

"That he should express that intention to a servant?" "Is Senator Martinez a reasonable man?" quietly inquired Preston. His father shrugged his shoulders slightly and said: "You should not allow national prejudices to fall into the scale when you come to weigh a man."

"I have no national prejudices, unless you so call our acceptance of history's verdict on the character of a people," he made answer.

"And your implication is that the Spaniards are an unreasoning race?" There was a shade of rallery in his voice, though in his heart he was glad that the drift of the conversation led away from the suspicious character of Senator Martinez.

"I imply nothing of the sort, although I doubt not Cervantes knew his countrymen," returned Preston. "But I question, is Senator Martinez a Spaniard?"

George Martinez felt his eyelids move, because of the unexpectedness of the question; but he returned indifferently.

"Oh! That was the reply his son made, but he recalled his own similar expression of doubt of the moment before."

"And his name confirms his statement, as does his personal appearance," continued George Martinez, more to draw out his son than to seek to overthrow the diabolical of the exclamation.

"His name proves nothing. It may not even be his name. Or it may be the English Morton or Irish Martin Spanishized. Nor does his appearance add to the truth of his statement. There is more red in his skin than olive; and not all the years of care, such as it is evident he gives it, can turn the natural wavy texture of his stiff black hair into the silkiness of the Spaniard's. He may be the offspring of Spanish and Indian, in which case, the boy out there walking upon my horse is more to be depended upon to act according to the white man's method of reasonableness, than is he, whom we know as Senator Martinez."

"Is he shooting at random?" asked George Martinez of his sinking heart, "or is hidden knowledge directing those shots?" But when he raised his eyes to the tall figure standing on the other side of the table, to the face, chiselled after the bold lines of Roman statuary, he knew that his lifetime estimation of the character of that son was correct. He was too proud to take advantage of an adversary; too brave to shoot from cover.

"You have not given me proof," he then went on, "why Senator Martinez may not do a thing contrary to what we expect of a reasonable man. I ask you now, does it appear reasonable to you that Mrs. Haglin's servant could manufacture a story which tallies so well with what Senator Martinez might be counted upon to do, when laboring under strong emotions? or that a woman of Aunt Dilsey's clear common-sense would accept that story as true?"

"You must remember the negro's imagination and unreliability," he said. "Permit me to recall to your mind your previous counsel to me about yielding to race prejudices when we come to deal with the individual. It is able to you that Mrs. Haglin's servant could manufacture a story which tallies so well with what Senator Martinez as we might expect to see him, when frustrated in his desires; a few days later, this lady who has refused to see him, is interrupted in her walk home by a man whose company evidently is so distasteful to her that she is forced to cry out for help; the man who goes to her rescue, familiar as he is with all the people of this community, states that the person who struck him down was not a negro, and yet was known to him. Mark Worthington has never said that he had never before seen his assailant, that he was an absolute stranger to him, but the qualified expression 'unknown' to him. This may simply mean that the man was personally unknown to him. I am of the belief that this is Mr. Worthington's meaning, and that his purpose in screening the criminal is because the similarity of their names, coupled with the circumstance of their being there alone, has led him into the delusion that Teresa and this man are related."

But the courtesy with them, and to hold them against him as evidence of his crime, until he has proven them to be false and groundless. Whatever responsibility comes with the performance of duty, I accept, nor do I ask another to bear for me."

A smile, not the familiar, winning smile he knew so well and which could soften the harsh sense of their separateness, but one, half-ironical, half-cunning and wholly hard, greeted the words; and Preston Martinez felt all his soul turn in revulsion from the soul of the man who was his father. This strange, powerful revision made him quit his place by the table and turn from the room. But the courtesy which was an inherent part of his nature, caused him to say, as he went:

"I know that you are busy, sir, so I will no longer detain you with this matter."

It is by little acts of our lives that character and disposition reveal themselves. A severe test is not at all necessary to find out the character of our companions—the slightest would do. Observe their common daily actions, and you will have all the evidence for safe judgment.

pleasions which may arise, complications which may embarrass not only us, but the Government. We are not dealing with a countryman, but with the wealthy, influential subject of a nation with whom our relations have not been entirely harmonious."

"We do not know that Senator Martinez is the subject of Spain," threw in Preston Martinez. "But if he is, is that any palliation for his crime?" Are the people of Kentucky to see one of their best men struck down by a Spanish intruder, and a countrywoman brought to death by his savagery, and yet remain passive through fear of a tricky, unreasonable king? No, sir! The fate which we would mete out to a citizen, were he the perpetrator of this foul deed, we shall give to this claimant of Spanish protection, even, though the troops of His Catholic Majesty were marshaling against us on the shores of the Mississippi!"

"Yet have you forgotten, my son, that he is a stranger among us, far from home and friends? St. John Worthington is not mortally injured; his recovery is assured. Teresa is dead, nor do I think she will die. Shall we not wait until they, the sufferers from this act, can throw their voices into the scale for justice or forgiveness?"

"And in the meanwhile, permit him, this stranger who deliberately and unprovokedly lifted his hand against human life, to enjoy freedom and secure his escape, while our own innocent citizens are being arrested for his crime, honorable members of our party branded with contumaciousness, or being accessory to this assassination? Never! If he were my own brother I would not spare him."

At the closing words, George Martinez' white hand, lying on his scattered papers, trembled perceptibly and a paleness showed for a moment on his brow. These signals of emotion did not escape his son, and the marvel of them, made him say:

"Father, what is this man to you, that you thus seek to screen him, even defeat the ends of sacred justice for his sake?"

"What I have been myself: a stranger in a strange land, without friends, unacquainted with its ways and its people."

George Martinez rose as he made that pathetic statement and gazed full upon his son.

"Again, he is the guest who has broken bread at my table—his claim on my hospitality being the claim of the son of one who was kind to me, when I was that stranger among strangers."

Dignity was now blended with pathos, and both sat well upon George Martinez. Words and voice and expression touched the noble heart of his son; but he did not hesitate to say:

"I am sorry that I cannot respond to the appeal of such sentiments which I appreciate and respect. But there are higher and holier sentiments; and the command of those admits of no wavering, no delay."

As he listened, the father rested his hand upon the back of the chair and thought of the other son who, not long since, had stood in this speaker's place also sending his defiance across the long table. With the thought there was borne in upon him with full bitterness the knowledge that the son he would not own would have been more loyal, more filial, more loving, had he the place of this one in his father's heart and home. He bent his head before the thoughts in his own mind not less than the words of the speaker. When he again raised it, he was the man who had entered the room half an hour ago, cautious, cold, ironical.

"Then, I have nothing more to say, except this: that you must do all this upon your own responsibility, I, as private citizen and public man, refuse to be associated with the ferreting out of criminals, the ground for suspicion against whom are the words of a negro. I will have no part in preferring the charge of criminality against a freeman on the advice of a slave."

"When Justice selects her instruments there can be no question of high or low, bond or free," said his son. "The brute instinct has been set up against and has confounded the williness of the human intellect in her sacred cause. Here I again assert my belief in the slave's words, and the slave's suspicion, and resist the cry of criminals, and confront Senator Martinez with them, and to hold them against him as evidence of his crime, until he has proven them to be false and groundless. Whatever responsibility comes with the performance of duty, I accept, nor do I ask another to bear for me."

A smile, not the familiar, winning smile he knew so well and which could soften the harsh sense of their separateness, but one, half-ironical, half-cunning and wholly hard, greeted the words; and Preston Martinez felt all his soul turn in revulsion from the soul of the man who was his father. This strange, powerful revision made him quit his place by the table and turn from the room. But the courtesy which was an inherent part of his nature, caused him to say, as he went:

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SISTER HELEN'S BEADS

By Caroline E. F. Corbin in Extension Magazine

The night lamp was burning low in the convalescent ward, and the faint early light of day cast wavering shadows of the lace curtains outside the window against the pane. The day had dawned at last when Regnier Bachs must leave the hospital. For six weeks he had been its inmate during the lingering, half-delirious phases of a dangerous fever, and now he must rise from this white bed, and face the world once more. Just now his mind was going back over a scene of the past night, and he was trying to decide whether or not it was wholly a dream, like so many which had visited his pillow in the past weeks. Almost he believed that it might be, but the silent witness which he held in his hands, a rosary of olive-wood beads, with olive wood crucifix bound with silver, was not to be gainsaid.

He went back in thought to the silent midnight hour when lying half asleep, half awake, in that state of suspended consciousness which is the borderland of dreams, he had seen with half-closed eyes a slight white figure, that might have been a spirit, but was not, gliding down the aisle between the two rows of beds. It seemed a familiar wraith, he knew it well; the face was that of the angel of those torturing dreams that had seemed, but for her gentle presence to be wrenching him out of his earth life and bearing him away to regions which he knew not, which he had, indeed, a deadly fear of knowing. The vision thrilled him, but some power which seemed not of himself held him silent. He even closed his eyes and waited with bated breath her coming. For it was not her usual hour and he longed with a longing that was of the spirit and not of the inquisitive flesh, to know what should bring her to his bedside in the deep night watches.

For that she was coming to his bedside was soon apparent. She knelt beside his bed, holding in her hand—he saw it all through his half-closed eyes—the rosary which he had often seen her hold as she prayed beside some sleeping soul that hovered between life and death, as though fearing that the larger chaplet which hung at her girdle might make a disturbing click as the beads slipped through her fingers. For minutes that seemed to be hours she prayed in inarticulate, soundless, yet invoking a spiritual presence which it seemed to him might be felt. Then rising she laid her hand soft and cool as a blessing upon his forehead which did not thrill at the impact, so pure, so spiritual was it, and then, with the touch of the wraith she seemed, she laid the rosary softly in his hand opened palm and again with her gliding spirit like motion slowly vanished toward the door.

It was not till she had utterly disappeared that he found strength to clutch the rosary, and hold it eagerly to his heart.

And now he lay reviewing his own past life, and wondering what strange new influence had been this night brought into it. For the giver of the rosary was no stranger to him. All these weary weeks, weeks that no calendar could count, but which took hold upon eternity, Sister Helen had been his faithful nurse, and he knew by the fragments of memory which remained with him, that he had laid bare to her many of the secrets, much of the agony, of his past life, and he felt with unspeakable gratitude that it was her sweet and tender sympathy that had warded off those threatening demons that but for her would have carried him outward to his doom.

He was glad he had not spoken to her. A single word would have broken the spell of this transcendent scene. Doubtless she would come in as usual with his breakfast tray and then he would converse with her. He longed for that hour, but when with the clear sunshine of the morning it came it brought only Sister Agnes and her cheerful, wholly terrestrial smile.

"Why," he said, "where is Sister Helen?" "Did she not tell you? She sailed for South America in the early dawn."

"For South America? How long to be gone?" "For the rest of her life, no doubt. It is a new station established there, and she is not likely to be soon recalled."

"Did she want to go?" "She was not asked that," said Sister Agnes with a gentle, inscrutable smile, which might have meant any one or all of two or three things, and the sense of a sharp discipline which makes heroic souls passed into his consciousness.

Regnier was silent then, reverting to the interior speechlessness of the night-watches.

Regnier Bachs was of an old French Catholic family. Saint Bachs, of revolutionary times, had, however, followed the fortunes of Napoleon and imbued the radical sentiments of the day, to a certain degree. After Waterloo, he had emigrated to America, where he had prospered, leaving behind him, however, his Catholic associations and traditions. The women of the family remained true to the old faith, and Regnier, like his father, had been baptized and confirmed a Catholic. But his mother died while he was in his early teens, and thereafter he had gradually fallen away from all religious beliefs and practices. He had married, while quite young, a very attractive girl, just out of school, but

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