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Sweet Eva!

CHAPTER XX.

Philip himself drove Calligan to the station. He grumbled and growled the whole of the way down. He knew that something he had said was driving his friend from the Highway House.

"There's no earthly reason why you need go back to town," he said for the fiftieth time, as they neared the station.

"If you only knew how glad we are—all of us—to have you."

"It's very decent of you, old chap. I'll come again."

"Stay now—we can just get back in time for dinner."

For a moment Calligan was sorely tempted. He thought of the dining-room at the Highway House, with its long table and oak-paneled walls, and he thought of Eva sitting there in the shaded light in her black frock, and of his own vacant chair . . . but he shook his head vigorously.

"I can't. Thanks, all the same."

They were at the station now. Philip left the car, and the two men walked together on to the platform.

"And if you could get a few days' holiday," Calligan said diffidently as the train steamed in.

Philip laughed.

"Is it for my sake you're urging this—or Eva's?" he said.

Calligan's honest eyes met his squarely.

"Perhaps—for both," he said.

He got into the carriage and slammed the door. He let the window down with a run and looked out.

Now it had come to the point he hated going. He hated the memory of the sadness in Eva's eyes as she had said good-bye to him. He ventured a last admonishment as he gripped Philip's hand.

"Good-bye, old son, and—I say, back up you know. There's lots to live for yet."

Philip scowled. He had got into a habit of scowling lately.

"I know you think I'm a sweep," he began.

The train was moving swiftly now, a moment, and Calligan was carried beyond reach.

Philip drove home moodily; he was angry because his friend had gone, and angry because he knew that he had driven him away.

He dreaded the thought of the house without him, and now if his mother went away also, as she had talked of doing, it would mean that he and Eva were left entirely alone.

With each passing day life seemed more crudely impossible; with almost every hour young Winterdick realized more acutely that he could not continue to live as he had done during the past fortnight.

He drove home the longest way; he felt sorely tempted to stay out altogether; what was there to go home for? The old house was no longer what it had been; he missed his father bitterly; perhaps nobody had ever guessed what old Winterdick's death had meant to his son.

He came home through the village; as he passed the Arlingtons' house he

made a family supply of cough remedy.

Really better than ready-made cough syrups, and saves about \$2. Easily and quickly prepared.

If you combined the curative properties of every known ready-made cough remedy, you probably could not get as much real curative power as there is in this simple home-made cough syrup, which is easily prepared in a few minutes.

Get from any druggist 2 1/2 ounces of Pinex, pour it into a 16-oz. bottle and fill the bottle with syrup, using either plain granulated sugar syrup, clarified molasses, honey, or corn syrup, as desired. The result is 16 ounces of really better cough syrup than you could buy ready-made and saves easily \$2. Tastes pleasant and never spoils.

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keep up the wretched farce of pretence any longer; he broke out passionately:

"I thought you didn't know—I hoped you didn't . . . I've made a mess of everything . . . It's all I can expect, I suppose . . . She—Eva—she doesn't care a hang about me . . . that's the truth!"

"Not care! Phil!" He laughed wretchedly.

"I suppose you think it's impossible for anyone not to care for me," he said bitterly. "They're not all like you, mother. She told me—on our wedding day as we drove away from the house that she didn't care—that she never had, that . . . oh, what's the use of going into it all? I deserve it—"

"But she looked so happy—every one remarked how happy she looked—oh, there must be some mistake! Besides—why did she marry you if she didn't care?"

"Because I'm a Winterdick—for what it's worth."

"But . . . but . . . oh, I don't understand . . ."

Philip strode the length of the room and came back.

"Look here," he said suddenly. "We thought we were jolly clever, didn't we? We thought—you and I and the gunner—that we'd fixed things up so that nobody except ourselves and old Dennison would ever know about the . . . the bargain . . . Well—"

He passed a hand over his eyes. "She knows—too," he said.

"Eva! There was a tone of sharp distress in Mrs. Winterdick's voice.

"Oh, no, Phil! Oh, I hope not."

"Well, she does—she knew all along, and was just playing up to us . . . It's just been a case of 'When Greek meets Greek' . . ."

He drew a long breath. "So you see, the laugh went all on our side after all."

There was a long silence; Philip walked away to the window and stood staring out into the gathering darkness.

"Well," he said then, "haven't you anything to say? What are you thinking?"

"I'm thinking," Mrs. Winterdick said slowly, "how terrible it must all be—for her!"

He wheeled round.

"For—her?" Somehow it had never struck him in this light before; his thoughts and pity had hitherto been chiefly for himself.

"Why for her?" he asked again harshly. "She's all right—she knew what she was doing . . . after all—"

He laughed mirthlessly.

"Why is it any worse for her than it is for—me?"

"She's younger than you, Phil; she's little more than a child, and an unsophisticated child at that. Until they came to Apsley she'd never been about or seen anything of the world. If it's true that she married you, knowing what you say she did, I can only pity her; I can't blame her. Poor child! she didn't know who she was throwing away—she didn't realize that some day she might meet a man whom she would care for . . ."

Her voice quivered and she stopped a moment, only to go on brokenly: "Oh, Phil, I always thought that she did love you! I haven't seen you together a great deal, but I watched her, and I was sure she cared—so sure! It made me happier to think that she did. I tried to think that in time you would get to love her too, and then . . ."

Philip laughed dryly.

(To be continued.)



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