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LOST!

BY WAIF.

CHAPTER IX.

Early in November—scarcely a month ago, in fact,—Harriet Percy was again seated in her boudoir, with the false hair that had so much astonished Mr. Frost streaming around her white shoulders, and the green goggles across her pretty nose. This time the metamorphosis was not for the tutor, but his pupil.

She had not long to wait, for hardly had his quick tread increased the pulsation of her heart, before Guy Sinclair stood in her presence.

He cast one rapid, searching glance around the room, which finally rested with something very like a stare upon the lady, who had arisen at his entrance.

"I have the honor of addressing Miss Percy, I believe," said Guy after a moment's hesitation, and rather dubiously, I fear.

"Certainly sir," was the reply in a remarkably high key, and not a very dulcet one either. "I have been expecting you according to agreement with Mr. Blair, in order to receive my *Connell* from your own hands."

Guy produced the Stamp, which must have been the first impression of that disloyal species, and consequently the "Wandering Jew" of the whole Stamp tribe. Assuredly the poor waif seemed destined to "move on," for as our young traveller advanced to lay it at its owner's disposal, she held up her hand with a commanding gesture and exclaimed authoritatively:—

"Stay where you are young man! I will not receive that *Connell* yet. When you feel inclined to ratify the engagement made by your father and mine years ago you may tender it again, until that hour arrives I wish you to hold it in right of a gage."

Hattie sank back among the cushions in her old-fashioned chair, and Guy, as in duty bound, in obedience to the commands of a lady, replaced the *Connell*, and was soon in the street again.

But the *Connell* had changed its character. He had cherished it as a talisman; now it must be as jealously guarded as a feud that might burst at any moment. The ex-Postmaster General smiled as complaisantly as ever; but instead of encouragingly, Guy now fancied there was something sinister in his expression.

If he could have taken time to analyze this change, he might have discovered it to be only a shadow from his own eyes. But no! people won't stop in the midst of a fancy—which for this very reason often loses its shadowy outlines and assumes a tangibility.

Guy carried his fancy so far that he now felt a sense of injury burning in his breast. Of course, all the social and natural laws one ever dreamed of warned him against one solitary act of self-defence, so far as the lady was concerned. It only stimulated in him a rash desire for an encounter with the bodily presence of which this tiny gage was but the representation.

"After to-night," he muttered mentally.

Now "after to-night" was very likely intended as a threat, though of what precise nature Guy had not determined.

The fact was, Guy had engaged to meet his father at a fashionable party that very evening. Mr Sinclair had avoided all public display of the vanities of this world since he had buried his young wife so many years before. But to-night, his ward—whom he persisted in styling a lovely girl—was to make her *debut*, and he intended to sanction it with his own and his son's presence.

Alas! Guy had no eyes for lovely girls, for he had lost sight of the one to him supremely so, immediately after their arrival in New York. If the analysis I suggested had taken place perhaps this loss would have proved itself the base on which every other aggravation had been heaped.

However, he had agreed to his father's earnest solicitations concerning the party, and after that—well he would settle that *Connell* affair one way or the another.

When Guy arrived at Mrs. Lovejoy's aristocratic mansion he found it all ablaze with beauty. Beauty animate and inanimate greeted his eyes