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For Her Sake;

The Murder in Furness Wood.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"There is an unwritten code of honor to which all girls subscribe," said her ladyship—"that is, all honorable girls—and the first article of it is that no girl shall deliberately set herself to snare the lover of another. This you have been guilty of."

"I am answerable to myself," replied Diana, "if I do a base deed, not to you, Lady Cameron."

"To me in this case," opposed her ladyship, "because your base deed affects my daughter;" and over the face of Lady Cameron, who had been so reckless of the suffering she inflicted on Diana there came a quiver of pain. "I repeat that the engagement is shameless," she continued. "Not only do you not love Lord Clanronald, but unless I am greatly mistaken, you like Sir Lisle."

Diana pressed her lips tightly together lest they should open and say, "Like a Scarsdale!" If she uttered that, it would give her enemy the clew to her actions.

"Whether you like him or not, you have given him a shameless amount of encouragement," her ladyship went on. "You have allowed him to believe that you cared for him—I am quite sure of that. You are very reckless in your conduct, Diana. You care little what you make others suffer; you do not care if you break Evadne's heart and make Sir Lisle miserable for life."

"You are right," said Diana; "I care little; others have cared less for me." And Lady Cameron saw that her step-mother's lovely young face grew prouder as she defied and irritated her interrogator. Evidently this sort of treatment was useless, so her ladyship decided to try what she had never really tried with Diana before—kindness. She drew nearer to her, and laid one hand on her shoulder. Diana shrank from her touch; but her ladyship was not daunted.

"Diana," she began, "I am sure you have not a bad heart. I beseech you to think over this matter. I do not know why you are going to marry Lord Clanronald. It cannot be for money—you have plenty of your own; it cannot be for his title—you could choose one higher; it cannot be for his birth or descent—you despise such things."

"I do, indeed," said Diana, loftily. "Then, if you have no especial motive, why persist in it? You and I have not always agreed very well; but, if you will concede this point, if you will decline this marriage, I will do everything in my power to render your life happy."

"It is too late," said Diana. "Besides, I would never bargain for kindness."

"You could do so much better," declared her ladyship. "You have everything in your favor; you have the whole world to choose from."

"I have already chosen," said Diana. But Lady Cameron ignored the remark.

"Evadne has always liked Lord Clanronald," she continued. "I plead to you, Diana, because I cannot bear that my daughter should suffer. I have not been driven to plead; and, when a proud woman asks a favor, it is more bitter than death for her to be refused. I am a proud woman, Diana. I ask a favor; you will not refuse me."

Diana felt that that one sweet moment of revenge repaid her for all her pain; for the humiliation she had in-

dicted on Lady Cameron, for the pain she had caused Evadne in taking her lover, she felt that she could have suffered far more deeply than she had.

"I am sorry," she said, in a cold, hard voice, "that I cannot change my plans."

Then Lady Cameron's pride and courage seemed both to break down. "Diana," she said, in a low voice full of emotion, "think of Evadne. She is truly fond of him. I know he is not clever or intellectual, or anything of that kind; Evadne loves him; poor child, and you do not. You will not spoil her life?"

"Mine has been spoiled," returned Diana. "It is useless, Lady Cameron, for us to discuss the subject any further. You must consider that my marriage is settled."

But Lady Cameron had Evadne's face before her eyes—her face as it had been when she heard the news. "I cannot take that answer, Diana," said her ladyship, making a final effort to induce Diana to abandon her engagement. "I make one more appeal to you—to your good heart, to your generosity, to your nobility of mind. Do not enter into marriage which will bring misery to my daughter and misery to you—surely to yourself. I cannot tell you how much depends on your 'Yes' or 'No.'"

This was her supreme appeal, and it was followed by a moment of anxious expectation. In this moment Diana fancied she enjoyed her revenge. With one word spoken now she could scatter the hopes of both her enemies; she could wring the daughter's heart, she could avenge every insult the mother had offered her. The last spark of goodness seemed to die in Diana's heart when she uttered the word "No;" and the girl's refusal changed Lady Cameron from a pleading, suppliant woman to a fury.

"You refuse?" she said. "You could do what I wish if you would. It would not affect you in the least. You refuse? Let the consequences be on your own head. From this day I am your enemy. Now, at this moment when you have set the seal of despair on my daughter's life, I curse you."

"It would not hurt me if you did," said Diana. "I would as soon have your curse as your blessing."

"I have no more to say. You are a hardened, shameless girl. You are beside yourself with pride and arrogance. Heaven will punish you. I shall yet see you weeping bitter tears for this day's work. When that happens, do not come to Lady Cameron for sympathy."



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"You may be sure I shall not," replied Diana. "If you have finished, I will go."

"Yes, go!" said Lady Cameron.

And with great dignity Diana quitted the room, and sought the welcome privacy of her own chamber. She tried to rejoice over the sweetness and completeness of her revenge, but Diana could never quite kill her noble nature. She did not care to remember the pain on Lady Cameron's face; she did not like to think of Evadne's grief. It served them right, she argued. They had insulted her grossly and without mercy; they had enjoyed one long triumph over her since they entered her father's house, and, what was still worse, they had lessened her father's love for her; and now they expected her to yield to their wishes.

"No," said Diana to herself—"An

eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Yet there came to her the memory of other words—"Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay."

It was not without a hard struggle with her conscience that she persevered in her evil design. She knew the course she was pursuing was a despicable and a wicked one, and she was fully cognizant of the fact that she was not reaping all the pleasure from it that she anticipated.

The home life at Ferness was not much improved by this last exhibition of willfulness on the part of Diana. Evadne looked ill and miserable, whilst Thea resented the wrong done her sister by treating Diana with scorn. Her ladyship was as frigid as her position of step-mother permitted, and Peter Cameron nursed his sorrow in silence.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Diana carefully avoided coming in contact with Sir Lisle. In vain his wistful eyes followed her; in vain he sent message after message, imploring that she would grant him an interview; in vain he waited, hoping at some time to find her alone.

No one had told him directly of Miss Cameron's engagement. He heard rumors that bewildered and amazed him; but he could not credit them. He would not believe such a monstrous thing, he said to himself, unless he heard it from Diana's own lips.

He knew Lord Clanronald well; he had seen him the worse for wine; he had heard him in the stables, amongst the grooms, using language that even they resented; and that sweet imperious Diana, with her beautiful face and exquisite dainty grace, should marry this man was a complete mystery to him. He resolutely refused to believe it until he had heard it from her own lips. She seemed to be always on the watch to avoid him. If they were together in a room full of people, she never even looked in his direction, never addressed a word to him, never listened while he spoke to others. If the numbers dwindled, and there seemed to be any fear that they might be thrown together, she quitted the room. If by accident they met in hall or corridor, Diana passed on quickly. If he spoke, she made no sign of having heard.

"I might as well be living in Russia for all that I see of Diana," he said to himself bitterly.

In the meantime the news of the heiress' engagement spread. Sir Lisle was soon assured of the truth of it. There was an unusually high tide one afternoon; the wind was blowing from the sea, and the whole company had assembled on the terrace to watch the break of the waves on the shore. The wind was cold, and Sir Lisle, always thinking of Diana, always watching over her, with grave, loving, anxious eyes, saw that she looked pale. He fancied that she felt chilly, and went in search of a shawl for her. He found one, and took it to her. She was standing between Lord Clanronald and her father.

"I thought you looked cold, Diana," he said; "I have brought you a shawl."

Diana turned abruptly to him, and he was just going to wrap the shawl round her shoulders, when Lord Clanronald stepped forward and took it from his hands.

"It is my privilege now," he said, "to attend to Miss Cameron's wants, a privilege I cannot concede to another."

Sir Lisle made no answer to him; but he looked straight in Diana's face. "It that true, Diana?" he asked. The question was embarrassing; but Diana, without bestowing a glance upon her interrogator, answered: "Yes, perfectly true."

Sir Lisle left them without another word, with deep anguish and pain depicted on his face. He believed all now. But he little knew how in that same moment Diana wished herself dead. Nor did he imagine how during the remainder of that day she could not endure the sight of Lord Clanronald or the sound of his voice.

It was not long before the whole country was apprised of the fact that a marriage had been "arranged" between Lord Clanronald and Miss Diana Cameron of Ferness. It was a nine-days' wonder. It was discussed in the clubs and draw-rooms; it was severely commented upon by match-making mothers who had thought Lord Clanronald easy prey.

One morning—it was the third after the announcement of the event—Diana went to the library in search of a new novel. She found Lady Cameron and her father in deep and earnest discussion.

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