

A DESIGNING WOMAN OR, THE Plot for Alhambra Court

CHAPTER XIX. CRAIG GRAHAM AND MRS. URGHART.

The elements favored Madame Juliette's secret purpose. Soon after tea a storm gathered and burst with a fury almost unprecedented in this season.

Nor was Craig altogether selfish in his desire to remain at Alhambra Court. An anxious impatience in respect to Madame Juliette pressed upon his mind, and he determined to seize the opportunity to speak to Mrs. URGHART.

With Madame Juliette's able co-operation they found themselves alone in the library. Craig plunged into his subject with anxious haste.

"My dear Mrs. URGHART," he exclaimed, "as they stood at one of the windows looking out upon the sheeted lightning, 'you have known and indulged me from boyhood.' Will you kindly convey my salutations to a most disagreeable communication which I esteem it my duty to make without the least of my favour. Let us hope, perhaps I ought to leave the task to Mr. Pinar, to whom I have already spoken."

The library was dimly lighted, and Mrs. URGHART stood with her back to the light, her hands clasped behind her. Her face was a study of surprise and indignation.

"You know it, then?" she asked, her voice a voice of stern and unyielding determination.

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saying, her eyes wide with anxiety on Craig's face. Suddenly she made an almost impatient effort to shake, as if by magic, the fog of the day's sufficiency.

"How foolish," she exclaimed sharply. "The evil of the day is sufficient. Why come you to the future? Come, Craig, let us join the others."

She rose as she spoke, and Craig followed her from the room.

Alma, Madame Juliette, and Mr. Udy were still in the drawing-room, where they had left them.

Craig glanced at Madame Juliette with anxious eyes.

"Yes," he thought, "I have promised silence, and I must keep the promise. It were to broach the subject to Alma. Another thing is certain: Respect for Mrs. URGHART forces me to treat her cousin with some attention. But when Alma is here—"

His eyes wandered from Madame Juliette's beautiful face to Alma's purely lovely one, and the concluding thought was lost.

The fierce, harrowing anxiety with which Madame Juliette had secretly waited the termination of the interview was at rest at her first glance at Mrs. URGHART's countenance.

With a sharp look, the shadow of a smile just touching her lips.

Without other comment she entered into an account of the events of the afternoon and evening.

Mr. Udy listened in rapt attention. As she brought her narrative to a close he looked up at her with an earnest expression of admiration and contempt, and opened his lips for the first time.

"You are his Black Majesty's very own," he said, with a look of scorn.

"That declaration seemed to exhaust his vocabulary, and he sat gazing at her with the same unaltered expression, looking but countenance."

Madame Juliette's eyes blazed ominously, but she said nothing.

"If Pinar goes to Baden-Baden—what then?" she asked.

"I promise you—HE SHALL NOT GO!" she cried, with a look of stern determination.

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little eyes glaring wildly into vacancy and his hands unceasingly clenching themselves.

Through all her own deadly fear and anxiety, Madame Juliette was conscious of a keen sense of satisfaction in watching him.

Presently, in seeming forgetfulness of her presence, he muttered in awed tones: "Can he be the end, and so soon?"

The sound of his own voice aroused him. He started up, and his chair again uttered a disturbing creak of wood, as a consequence of the doubt, brought Graham here and the concluding thought was lost.

Nevertheless, she waited impatiently the opportunity to speak with Mr. URGHART, just as they were separating for the night she gained it. Mrs. URGHART briefly recounted the details of the evening's events.

"You are right," she said in low, soft tones. "I am glad to hear of your success. We have cause to be thankful that so much has been gained. A thousand things may be done for our favour. Let us hope, perhaps I ought to leave the task to Mr. Pinar, to whom I have already spoken."

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stored, her injured feelings forgotten. She had something to tell.

Mrs. URGHART observed the change, and with a look of surprise transferred her hand to the back of her chair.

Presently, in seeming forgetfulness of her presence, he muttered in awed tones: "Can he be the end, and so soon?"

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once before," interposed Madame Juliette, composedly.

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