

**HELENA GRAHAM,**  
—OR—  
**THE BRIDE'S SACRIFICE.**

CHAPTER X.

Here the hour had passed, Evan's prophecies proved true. The heavens rapidly darkened, as dense, black, threatening clouds rolled over them; the sea became of an inky hue, crested with white, ghastly-looking foam, as it heaved and groaned, "like a strong heart in strong agony." The wind rose, and crashed with terrific force, through the woods, bending strong trees like reeds before its might.

"Eh, sirs, how it blows!" said Mrs. Ben, as she blustered in and out. "I declare to heaven, it's almost took me right off my feet. I ain't heard such a wind these five years come Christmas, and then two ships were wrecked right out from the shore, and every soul perished. Dear, dear! what a sight it was next day, when all the drowned corpses were washed ashore. It was the most awful sight I ever saw. Fritz, don't sit lyin' there in the corner all night, toastin' your shins like a singed cat. Get up and pick the penfeathers out of that fowl."

"I heard Evan saying there was a ship in view about an hour ago," said Clinton. "Lord have mercy upon them," said Mrs. Ben; "for if they touch the shore they'll every one go to the bottom!" "Oh, how dreadful!" said Jessie, turning pale with pity and horror. "It's goin' to be an awful night. Just listen to the wind roarin' through the trees, and that rain. I never heard the waves boomin' on the beach as they're doin' now, that a wreck did not follow. It's blessin' Captain Malcolm and Miss Helena ain't on the sea this dreadful night. When they were away, I used to think of them in every storm. Lord preserve us! look at that!"

And with a piercing shriek she started Mrs. Ben sprang to her feet, and a fierce gust of wind threatened to bring down the roof about their heads; a tempestuous dash of rain, as if the flood-gates of heaven had opened for a second deluge; a blaze of blue, livid lightning, as though the whole firmament were one sheet of flame; a crash of thunder, as though heaven and earth were rending asunder.

With a wild cry of terror, Jessie sprang up, pale, trembling, horror-struck. Fitz crouched into a ball in a remote corner. Neither dared to speak or move. Mrs. Ben, forgetting her first involuntary alarm, sprang to close the shutters and make fast the doors. And Herbert, amazed at the suddenness with which the storm had arisen, buttoned up his coat, preparatory to starting for the lodge ere it should further increase in violence.

"Oh, do not go—do not leave us!" cried Jessie, springing forward, pale, wild, and terror-stricken, clinging to him, scarcely conscious of what she did. "Dearest love, do not tremble so—there is no danger," he whispered, encouragingly, encircling her slight waist with his arm.

But Mrs. Ben turning suddenly round, and beholding them in this position, in spite of her panic was scandalized and indignant. "Lord's mercy 'pon us, child, sit down—no, kneel down, and say your prayers. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to do such a thing. Mr. Clinton, I'd be obliged to you not to keep your arm round her that way—it doesn't look nice, nor likewise respectable."

But here Mrs. Ben's words were abruptly cut short, for across the stormy, raging sea, high above the roar and shrieking of the storm, pealed the minute-gun of a ship in distress, like an agonized cry for help.

"Heaven be merciful! Listen to that!" exclaimed Mrs. Ben, turning pale. Another fierce, tempestuous burst of wind and rain—another blinding glare of sulphurous lightning—another appalling peal of deafening thunder rent the air—and then again boomed the minute-gun over the sea.

"Something must be done—something shall be done!" cried Herbert, excited beyond endurance at the thought of so many perishing almost within a dozen rods of where he stood. "Fritz, my boy, come with me, and with the assistance of Evan we may be able to save some of those perishing wretches."

"It's too wet," said a terrified voice from the corner, as its owner crouched into a still smaller ball. But Mrs. Ben—who never forgot the practical, no matter what the alarm might be—went over, and taking the unfortunate youth by both ears, lifted him, with a jerk, to his feet.

With a howl of pain, Fritz extricated himself from her hands, and clapped both his own palms over the injured members.

"Now, go this minute, and get your hat and overcoat, and go out with Mr. Clinton, and do whatever you can. And if he goes lazing round, Mr. Clinton, just give him a pat 'long side o' the head, and make him know he's got to mind you. Come, be quick."

Fritz, whose dread of the storm was far inferior to his dread of Mrs. Ben, donned his coat and hat with amazing alacrity, and having tied the latter under his chin, with a red handkerchief to keep it on, stood ready to depart, wiping the tears from his eyes, first with the cuff of his sleeve and then with the other.

Herbert cast one look at Jessie, who had sunk on the floor, her face hidden in her lap; and then turned to depart, followed by the unwilling Fritz. The blinding gust of wind and rain that met them in the face nearly drove them back; but, bending to the storm, they resolutely plunged on, and it required all the strength of Mrs. Ben to close the door after them.

The Ladies' Aid Society in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Palmerston, intend holding a series of socials during the present winter.

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JOHN BUNYAN, Macdonnell Street Guelph, Proprietor, Oct. 28, 1874. d1w-w

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