

Sweet Eva!

CHAPTER XLII

There was nobody at home except the servants, Mr. and Mrs. Dennison had gone out driving, and the boys could not be found.

Eva was disappointed.

She told the maid that she would come over again that evening, "perhaps to dinner," she added.

Philip was frowning as they walked away.

"You can't go to dinner," he said, as soon as they were out of earshot. "What do you suppose my mother will think—your first night here."

"I don't suppose she'll think any worse of me than she does already," she answered, recklessly. "Why, even Peter told me this morning that he was ashamed of me." Her voice broke a little.

"Peter! Young Winterdick flushed crimson. "Young puppy! What the devil..."

Eva laughed extravagantly.

"Oh, Peter was sticking up for you; you need not look so angry. He seemed sorry for you, I think—sorry that you had got such a wife as me..." she stood still suddenly. "Oh, I'm so tired," she added, piteously.

"Tired!" Philip looked at her sharply.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" he asked angrily. He tried to take her arm to steady her, but she would not let him; she began to walk on again.

"I'm all right now—it's just... I suppose I'm not used to walking. We always had a taxi everywhere in London."

Philip smiled grimly.

"I never knew Calligan had so much money to chuck away," he said brutally.

...

Philip was changing for dinner that evening when a maid came to the door. "If you please, sir, Mr. Dennison wishes to speak to you."

"Mr. Dennison—oh... well—just tell my wife, will you?" He opened the door and stood there, one arm in his coat.

"I'll be down in a minute—just tell her," he called.

"If you please, sir, Mr. Dennison said that it was you he wished to speak to, and very particularly."

Philip started.

"Oh, very well." He put the other arm in, gave his tie a twitch and went slowly downstairs.

Something was the matter, of course! Probably the old man had already heard about Rhodesia. Philip looked a trifle nervous as he walked into the library.

Mr. Dennison was standing back to the fire; he had not taken off his overcoat, and he held his hat in his hand;

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her while she stood there in the doorway. She had had no intention of saves-dropping. She had known that her father was there and had come in quite naturally to see him, and then she felt that what was left of her pride had been dragged in the mire while she listened to his blustering words. He had come to bully Philip into staying with her; to date him to go!

Would Philip, have consented? She rejoiced that he had not had the chance—that she had come in time to spare herself this last humiliation.

Philip had turned away without answering. The whole scene was a nightmare to him. His father-in-law's coarse, blustering anger, Eva's intervention and the strained, sick look on her flushed face.

He had never been a very discerning man. He was content, as a rule, to take things at their face value; if anyone said a thing, he believed it. He did not know enough about women to know also that, when a woman is lying, she often appears to be the most truthful.

Eva had said that it had been her wish that he should go to Rhodesia! Very well. He believed it and accepted her words as a final dismissal. He walked over to the fire-place, keeping his back turned to his father-in-law.

Mr. Dennison spoke to him sharply: "You hear what my daughter says! Is this the truth?"

"Yes," Mr. Dennison was nonplussed. He had not expected so tame an acquiescence.

"Humph! Well, I call it disgraceful! Abominable! I've never had a smirch on my name till now. I've always walked upright, and kept my name clean." His face grew apoplectic once more. "And to think that I ever thought it an honour for my daughter to marry a Winterdick!" he broke out in sudden passion.

"Father!"

Mr. Dennison shook his daughter's hand away. "I'm not talking to you, my girl, but to Philip here. I've kept my share of the bargain like an honourable man, which is more than he has done, or is likely to do from what I can see of it."

Philip swung round; his eyes blazed in his white face.

"You shall apologise for that!" he said hoarsely. "Apologise, I say, or..."

"Philip!" Eva was between the two men. "Philip! Your mother will hear—and the servants! Everyone! Oh, father, please, please go away and leave us alone."

Mr. Dennison looked at his daughter.

"That's right! Turn your father out of the house now there's nothing more to be got out of him," he said in an injured voice. "I can go, now I'm no more use." He picked up his hat and strode to the door. "It's the last time I shall trouble either of you," he said melodramatically as he opened it.

Eva had sunk down into a chair, her hands clasped in her lap. Every now and then a great shudder shook her from head to foot.

She wondered daily what Philip would say, if he at all realised what it had cost her to so defend him, or if he would be at all grateful to her, or sorry for her.

She was past hoping for a kind word from him, but there was still a sort of faint curiosity in her mind as to what attitude he would take now.

(To be continued)

there was an air of antagonism about him which Philip recognised at once, for he just said "Good evening" and waited.

Mr. Dennison cleared his throat; the fact that his son-in-law was in evening dress made him feel at a disadvantage. He wished he, too, had the protection of a white shirt front. He was a man who was always greatly influenced and impressed by externals.

Philip shut the door and came forward.

"Anything wrong? Won't you take off your coat? You'll find the room rather warm. Eva will be down in a minute."

"I haven't come to see my daughter, but you," said Mr. Dennison, bluntly.

"Yes," Philip waited. "I hope nothing is the matter," he ventured, after a moment.

"I hope so, too," Mr. Dennison twisted his hat and coughed. "I hope so, too, Philip. But I've heard a most extraordinary thing this afternoon—about you! Of course, it may be absurd, but on the other hand, it may not." He twisted his hat again, but it did not seem to help him; he said, with a sort of burst:—

"What's all this tommy rot about you going to Rhodesia?"

Philip sat down on the edge of the table, hands thrust into his jacket pockets.

"It isn't rot," he said, rather shortly. "It's the truth—I am sailing in a fortnight." He raised his eyes. "We were coming over to tell you this evening, sir."

Mr. Dennison lost his temper.

"Don't stir me!" he said, with a roar. "I've come here to talk to you as man to man, and I'm going to say what I think before I go. But, first, perhaps you'll tell me what you propose to do with my daughter."

"She is not coming with me, if you mean that," Philip said. "For one thing, I did not ask her to do so, because I knew beforehand that she would refuse."

He looked the elder man straight in the eyes.

"You know as well as I do that this marriage we arranged so cleverly has turned out the failure it deserved to be," he said quietly. "I am not altogether to blame, except for having been bound enough to lend myself to the scheme which you and my father..."

Mr. Dennison interrupted furiously: "You were glad enough to 'lend' yourself to it, as you call it, and

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enough to keep a roof over your head at my expense—glad enough to marry my girl to save your own skin. And now you've got all you want out of the deal you throw her over, you clear off and leave her to face what will be said as best she can. But it won't do, Mr. Philip Winterdick—it won't do!" Mr. Dennison always lost himself when he lost his temper. The self-made man showed unpleasantly through the carefully cultivated veneer of gentility. He took out his handkerchief, now and mopped his crimson face. "You've got me to deal with, you know!" he said loudly. "It's not many weeks since I saved you and your family, remember—saved you easily, too, thanks to the money I've made with honest work—and, by God, if you leave my girl, as you seem to have made up your mind to leave her, I'll break you—I'll break you if I have to break myself as well!"

"He stopped, breathing hard. In their mutual excitement neither of the men had noticed the opening of the door or seen that Eva had been standing there for some moments listening.

Mr. Dennison made a valiant effort to recover himself. He tried to smile. "Come in, my dear—come in. I'm just having a little chat with Philip."

She came forward.

"I'm afraid I've been listening," she said composedly, though there was a hectic flush on her face and her eyes looked feverish. "And, father—you're quite wrong if you—if you think that Philip is leaving me. It is my wish, too! We—both think it is the best thing—that we should both be free—quite free—for the present, at least..."

She turned to her husband.

"That is so, isn't it?" she asked, raising her voice a little. "Tell father that it is the wish of us both that you should go."

The moments had been terrible to her.

Martin Luther did not die a natural death, but was ex-communicated by a bull.

Chaucer wrote in middle-class English.

The River Rhine flows horizontally until it reaches Basle, and then it flows vertically.

Phillips was a brave queen; she married Edward I.

The larynx is a voice-box, and shuts when we swallow it.

Henry met Becket on the altar steps, and severely massacred him.

Isosceles triangles are used on chairs to join up places with the same weather.

The death of Julius Caesar was foretold by a shower of meteors.

In his journey to Mount Zion, Christian had a fight with a polygon.

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NEIGHBORS.

When Fitzjack's auto ran me down, and spoiled my Sunday hat up on a tree, and Smith and Jones and Brown, and bore me to my flat, and people from all over town around my bedside at they fussed to r o w, and fed me wiserwort, and borrowed milk from someone's cow, to stay my rising throat; when I recall their kindness now, the salt tears from me bury, and criticize them all; we don't approve of yonder jay, because he is too tall; another's whiskers look like hay, and to his midriff fall. We're not mashed on Gaffer Jones because his feet are splayed, and Smith is but a group of bones in hand-me-downs arrayed; Brown talks in harsh, and nasal tones that keep our nerves all frayed. Their pants are patched on knee and shin, and ancient hats they wear, their cheap red neckties are a sin, to make an artist avar; the cars they drive are made of tin and don't get anywhere. But when the day of doom appears, and autos squish us flat, and lacerate our legs and ears, and spoil a priceless hat, our neighbors show that they are dears, and doubly dears, at that. They gather round the martyr's bed and feed him chicken soup, and they ally his feet

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The death of Julius Caesar was foretold by a shower of meteors.

In his journey to Mount Zion, Christian had a fight with a polygon.

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