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REMORSE and REPENTANCE.
OR
For Daisie's Sake

CHAPTER IV.
FALSE.

"Why, Mr. Bain, this is a surprise! I did not know you were acquainted with Miss Bell," she broke out, in dismay and alarm.
"Dallas was a trifle disconcerted, but he rallied himself and answered lightly:
"I was not until yesterday, when my horse knocked her off her wheel and nearly caused a fatal accident. So I came this morning to beg her forgiveness."

Mrs. Fleming gave a grating laugh, and answered maliciously:
"Perhaps Daisie may forgive you if she is very kind-hearted, but I am sure my Cousin Royall never will."
"Royall!" he exclaimed, in bewilderment; but she flattered over Daisie's sofa, cooling in her most gushing way:
"My dear girl, may I kiss you? Royall told yesterday of his engagement to you, and that he was going all the way to New York to get a splendid diamond ring for you. We shall be cousins, you and I--and, I hope, great friends. Why--why, what is the matter? The girl is fainting!"

Dallas had heard every word in surprise and horror, and suddenly he clutched the young widow's arm in a steady grasp.
"What nonsense are you talking to Daisie!" he exclaimed, "She is nothing to Royall! She has promised to marry me!"

"Impossible, Mr. Bain, impossible; for only the night before last she accepted my cousin, and he has gone now to buy the most magnificent engagement ring in New York," cried the young widow, in defiance and amazement at his claim.
"He has lied to you! She belongs to me!" repeated Dallas hoarsely; and she answered:

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"Then she is a wretched little flirt, for she surely gave her promise to Royall. Ask her--see, she is reviving--and she cannot deny it."
He stooped down to look into the girl's white face, his own just as pallid and startled, crying, with passionate incredulity:
"Is it true, Daisie Bell? Are you indeed so false and wicked?"
"Dallas! Oh, my love!" she sobbed, in strange afright, covering her face with her hilly hands as if in shame.
"Is it true? Are you engaged to him--to us both?" he thundered wrathfully.
"Oh, Dallas, yes; but--but--hear me!" she wailed imploringly; but he threw off her hand as if it were a serpent, and rushed from the house.

CHAPTER V.
A CRUEL COQUETTE.

A cry of the bitterest grief and yearning burst from Daisie's lips as Dallas angrily shook off her hold and rushed from the house.

"Oh, Dallas, my love, my darling, come back--come back, and I will explain everything!"
She would have followed him, but as she sprang erect a terrible twinge of pain in her sprained ankle made her fall back on the sofa, sobbing with pain; and meanwhile Dallas had rushed from the place in a dazed condition of mind, in which surprise, anger, and wounded love all blended in confusion.

The feelings of the gay little widow, Mrs. Fleming, may better be imagined than described in finding out that the man she adored was madly in love with another.
Grief, rage, and jealousy struggled in her mind, but she gave vent to neither, holding in her emotion firmly while she said, in a cold voice, to the sobbing girl:
"Miss Bell, this is the strangest scene I ever witnessed. I came here this morning to offer my good wishes on your engagement to Royall Sherwood, and find another man making love to you in his absence. Is this fair to my cousin?"

Daisie's only answer was a heart-broken sob behind the lovely white hands that hid her face, and Mrs. Fleming continued reproachfully:
"I could not have believed that such an innocent face hid the heart of a cruel coquette, playing fast and loose with true men's hearts."
"Oh, don't!" sobbed poor Daisie, finching as from a blow, and lifting tearful eyes, like violets drowned in rain, to the angry face of her accuser.
"You deserve all I have said, and worse," retorted the widow vindictively, longing to shake the girl because she had wiled away the heart of Dallas Bain.

With all her money and all her advantages, he had remained cold as ice to her blandishments; but she had seen for herself that he was devoted to Daisie Bell.
And she knew that his acquaintance with her dated only from yesterday, because only last night she had met Annette Janowitz at a dance, and the excitable little thing, not knowing the harm she was doing, had blurted out the story of Daisie's accident and the apparent devotion of Dallas Bain.
"Oh, isn't he grand and handsome! Just the match for lovely Daisie Bell! I declare, if I were not already engaged to the dearest and most jealous fellow in the world, I should have been trying to flirt with Dallas Bain!" added Annette, rearranging the bunch of red roses at her belt, and so failing to see the jealous wrath on the little widow's pink-and-white face.

She was fairly wild with annoyance, but ever then she did not comprehend the full extent of the mischief, for Royall Sherwood, on leaving for New York that day, had confided to her that he was engaged to Daisie Bell, but that she had not wished to make the engagement public yet.

while, dreading village gossip and curiosity.
"Now, Lottie," added Royall, "I do think you ought to do the fair thing by Daisie."
"What do you mean?"
"Why, call on her and invite her to Sea View on a visit. Of course, I understand that you've been jealous all the while, and wouldn't have her here on account of Dallas Bain. But now we're engaged, you needn't mind."
But an unerring instinct made Mrs. Fleming persist in her refusal.
"You ask too much, Royall. I won't have the girl here till I'm sure of Dallas Bain," she protested, in alarm.
"You're still determined to marry him, if you can get him, coz?"
"Yes, I am; and I don't care to bring him and that girl together, even if she is engaged to you. She's dangerous, I tell you; and he's in love with her, I'm certain, though they've never spoken a single word to each other. No telling what might happen if they got together."
"Perhaps you're right," said Royall, looking uneasy and remembering that Daisie had betrayed such interest in Dallas that he had been forced into no end of fibs to destroy the romance with which she had invested him. "Perhaps you're right. Better let well enough alone," he agreed, and went away to buy the engagement ring.

But chance or fate is above us all, and our petty scheming, as she found out that night at the dance, and in consequence she altered her plan of ignoring Daisie Bell.
What Annette had told her about Dallas going the next morning to beg Daisie's pardon for the accident made her wild; hence her early call at the cottage and her malicious blurring out of the engagement.
When she found out how far matters had progressed between the lovers, she realized that she had scarcely called soon enough, but she was thankful, anyway, that she had driven Dallas ed soon enough, but she was thankful, man's wit to make the breach final.

Daisie's wet eyes and quivering red mouth did not make her the least sorry for the wretched girl; she only persevered in her denunciations:
"What will Royall say when he hears of this shocking situation? He will want to break the engagement."
"That is what I wish him to do!" returned Daisie courageously.
"Well, I never!" sighed the little widow; and added: "Why did you accept him, then, if you didn't want him, Miss Bell?"

"I will tell you the truth, may I, Mrs. Fleming?" cried Daisie timidly, dashing the tears from her eyes, and blushing with shame as she continued: "I was persuaded into that promise when my heart wasn't in it, because--because--first, Aunt Alice was wild with foolish joy because I had caught such a rich beau, and kept begging me over and over to accept him. And then, too, Mr. Sherwood was so much in love with me, and begged me so hard that I would marry him. At first I wouldn't think of it, for--well, I had fallen in love with Mr. Dallas Bain at first sight, and as long as there was any hope of winning him I wouldn't have listened to any one else--never! But he--Mr. Sherwood, I mean--must have suspected my preference, for he told me things that I found out to-day weren't true--for instance, that Mr. Bain was engaged to you; but when I asked him about it to-day he laughed at the very idea!"
Mrs. Fleming winced with rage and pain, but the unconscious girl went on eagerly, pathetically, in her earnest self-exculpation:
"But before I knew how he had deceived me, I thought Mr. Sherwood very nice, indeed--for he is very amusing, really, and very good-looking, too--only, of course, not as handsome as Mr. Bain, who is perfectly grand, and no one else is worth looking at when he is by. But he did not seem to care about me in the least, although I found out that he had sent me an anonymous love poem; and I began to get piqued, and then hopeless, thinking he really did mean to marry you. And Aunt Alice kept coaxing and firing my ambition with your cousin's riches, and he kept teasing and making himself agreeable--perhaps you know how a sore, aching heart may sometimes take comfort in the devotion of one it does not care for, and find in it some balm for wounded love and pride--so at last I consented, hoping I might learn to love him after, but stipulating that the engagement be kept secret a little while, for I feared that I might change, and wish to break it, and did not want to make such a sensation public."

She paused, and fixed her pleading eyes on the other's face, but it was cold, white, and stony, betraying no sympathy.
Clasping her little hands piteously, Daisie Bell continued nervously:
(To be continued.)

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