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**"KYRA,"**  
OR,  
**The Ward of the Earl of Vering.**

CHAPTER XXXIII.  
A Woman's Resolve.  
"I thought you were asleep, but you were only thinking—on the sly—a penny for your thoughts."  
"You shall have them for nothing," said Kyra, bending forward slightly, and fixing her with her dark, dreamy eyes: "I was thinking of you! If I were but a man, how happy that sentence would make me—of you and Lord Percy."

A slight flush rose under her gaze. "What of us, dear?"  
"Why does he not come to the Grange?" asked Kyra, as if the question were but a prelude to something further.

Lillian shrugged her white shoulders, and drew her china shawl round her.  
"Am I Lord Percy's keeper, my child?"

Kyra smiled slightly, but did not remove her gaze which had deepened into one of scrutiny.  
"Are you not?" she said. "I thought—Lillian, will you tell me? Were you not once?"

There was a pause—a beat of silence profound and tragic.  
Lillian Devigne raised her eyes; her face was pale and, for once, truthful. What if she said yes?

"Why do you ask such a question now, so suddenly?"  
"Is it sudden to you? It is not to me. I have been thinking of you and him since—my great fortune"—and here a little curl of the sensitive upper lip—"I have little else to think of, you see. It has grown upon me the last day or two strangely, that you and he had once been more than friends, before—he came and took my life in his keeping. To-night I am sure of it; but will you tell me?"

Lillian looked at her, and then out of the window.  
"Percy Chester and I were once more than friends," she said, in a low voice; then, turning her eyes to watch the effect, "we were to have been married."

A little shudder ran through Kyra's frame, but she smiled faintly.  
"I thought so," she said, in a low voice. "Why did you not tell me—why is it so great a secret—what came between you?"

"My falsestness," said Lillian Devigne, with a genuine pang of selfish remorse and reproach. "I lost him by my own fault and treason."  
"Lost!" said Kyra, dreamily. "You are very beautiful—yes, very. And you love him still? Oh, yes," she added, for over Lillian Devigne's fair face had rushed a crimson flush of passionate longing and desire.

"Why do you say this?" she said, almost fiercely. "You!"  
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"I know," said Kyra, wearily; "I know what you would say; but you are wrong. It is not I who have stood between you and happiness; not I. Why should you not trust me? You see, I have found out your secret without help; perhaps, I, who have divined what is past, can read something of the future—we Indians are sometimes gifted with the power of prophecy. I think Percy's wife will be fair, with blue eyes, and with soft, golden hair—like yours."  
Lillian was too startled to utter a word. Candor is a phenomenon as bewildering to the schemer as any supernatural appearance could be. With her eyes cast down, she leaned back; and Kyra, after regarding the pale face for a moment, closed her eyes again.

A few moments afterwards the lodge gates swung open, and the spirited horses dashed up the drive.  
Lady Devigne woke with a start, and the three passed into the hall, attended by three or four servants in the Vering livery. Kyra paused, with her hand upon the balustrade, and said:

"I am tired and will go to my room, I think, Lady Devigne;" then she turned, kissed Lillian Devigne with a grave, sweet smile, and passed on.  
Her maid met her at the door of the room, which had been prepared for her boudoir, but Kyra, with her usual gentleness, told her that she might go to bed, and then entered the room and closed the door.

The room was small, but had been tastefully and luxuriously furnished, for a great part with articles from Wold which Kyra had chanced to admire. Conspicuous in one corner there hung some Indian furs and curiosities, among them the fur which Kyra had worn, and a small Indian dagger which she had carried hidden in her belt.

Two or three wax candles threw a soft light round the room, and a mirror, set in Venetian glass, reflected dimly the beautiful face and lithe form of Lord Vering's daughter. With a weary sigh, Kyra threw open the casement and looked out. Outside the wind was swaying the trees and blowing the clouds across the moon, a slow, heavy rain was falling; the night was weeping for the summer that had fled and left it unprotected from the rude, rough advances of the savage winter. The whole scene—sounding clouds, weeping trees, and dreamy darkness—was in harmony with the young girl's soul.

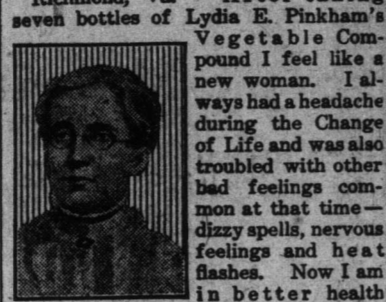
She looked and looked until her dark eyes were glistening with tears; then she turned from the window, and throwing off her cloak and hood, sat with her head resting on her hand; her eyes fixed on the long, sweeping cloak of fur, that looked, in the dim light, as if it covered some Indian warrior looking grimly down on her.

"Yes," she murmured. "I came and robbed him of his wealth, but I can restore him his happiness. She is very beautiful; she is fitted to be his wife. She is not a wild, half-taught Indian girl; she loved him—she loves him still, and he will love her again. They will be a handsome, noble pair; it is all as it should be, and I—!" She sprang to her feet, white and trembling. "Oh, Great Spirit, why did he take me from the hunting-grounds and the lodges of my people? Why did he abduct me from the wind and snow, and the rain and the cold, cruel death? This is worse than death—this that tears and gnaws at my heart—this dreadful, cruel longing to see, to hear, to touch him! Oh, my brave, my chief, my warrior lord, I shall die and you will never know how I loved you. You will be happy with the fair English woman, and never know that the little Indian girl, who slept upon your bosom, gave you her heart and her love! Yes!" she cried, with a long breath, "I will not live! I cannot live to see him happy with her; to know that his lips—that once touched my hair—are pressed to hers! Great Spirit, take me to my fathers, who fell fighting and bleeding that cold winter's night. Great Spirit, take thy child!" and with a low cry of anguish she glided to the end of the room and caught up the Indian dagger.

As she did so her hand swept aside the fur cloak; with a passionate cry she caught it up and pressed it to her lips.

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The action, so swift and despairful, dislodged the cloak from its nail. With a cry, she took it from the floor and drew it around her.  
"I shall sleep in you once more!" she said, pressing her face upon the fur—"once more."

Then, gliding with the old savage grace, she went to a writing-desk, and, unlocking it, drew out a small bundle of papers. As she did so there was a low, yet firm, knock at the door; the lid of the escrutoire fell with a crash and she stood patting and almost defiant, clutching the papers in one hand and the tiny dagger in the other under the cloak. The knock was repeated, and then a voice spoke her name.

A thrill ran through her, and she put her hand to her bosom to still her beating heart. It was the voice that never spoke within her hearing without awakening an echo in her heart.  
In a voice that startled herself, she made him come in, and almost before she had spoken, Percy opened the door and entered.

The moment that had intervened had given her time to conceal the papers and gain the couch. Percy, coming out of the strongly lighted corridor, stood for a moment to get accustomed to the dim light; then—as he saw her in her evening dress of some soft, subtle shade, and with costly gems glittering among lace, all backed up by the dark fur half-falling from her gleaming shoulders—his pale, stern face relaxed into an involuntary expression of amazed admiration; but it was not until she rose and spoke, not until she breathed his name that he recognized the grace and subtle change that had come over her.

"Kyra," he said—his low, rich voice full and sweet with the gentleness which always marked his manner with women. "Were you asleep? I have disturbed you—perhaps alarmed you?"  
"No," she said—her voice as low as his, but marvellously clear—"no; have you just come?"  
"Yes," he said, releasing her hand and dropping into the chair near the lounge. "I have just arrived half by train and half by saddle. It is very late, and I was unexpected. I hope I am not unwelcome," he added with a smile.

"Why did you not come before?" was her answer, as she raised her eyes and fixed them on him.  
"For a moment he did not reply; something in the dark eyes seemed to deprive him of speech.  
"I"—he hesitated—"have been very busy. I knew, too—that is, I heard—you were very happy, and not dull—that you had been out a great deal, and so I sacrificed my inclination to duty."

Though the phrase was spoken glibly enough it lacked his usual straightforward earnestness, and its artificial tone did not escape her.  
"You have been dining with Lord Harcourt," he went on, as if for talking sake. "He is a wonderful man—"

"Why have you come now?" she interrupted, softly and directly.  
Percy put his hand up to his lips, after an old trick of his, and frowned.  
"I have come to say good-by, Kyra," he said, with a would-be commonplace smile. "You know my old opinion, that the Verings were descended from the Wandering Jew. I am more fixed in that belief than ever, and as it is of no use fighting against an inherited inclination, I am off on my travels again."

"Where are you going?" she asked, her face pale and piteous in the dark, dim, soft light.  
"Well—to Africa," he said, after a pause. "It will be a new track for me, and—but I did not come into Buckinghamshire to talk over my route, Kyra, but to go over a little business with you." He paused, and with a slight gesture, she drew her fur cloak round her. "Are you cold?" he asked, glancing at the window.

"Yes, a little," she replied, with a smile. "This has kept off the cold many another night, has it not?" and she touched the fur with her small hand.  
"Yes," he said, looking down. "Yes, yes," then he looked up again. "Kyra, I have made all arrangements—all I can think off that are likely to be of any use to you, and I think that, unless I return, you will find the estate managed comfortably and properly. I would not go but that I know your own personal welfare is in better hands than mine."

He looked at her with a steady smile, and paused for a moment, as he met her questioning look in return.  
"I saw Charlie last night—I do not see much of him—but though I do not ask, nor does he tell me where he spends his time, I can guess. Charlie and I have been more than brothers, and his happiness is mine—and his happiness is and will be great, Kyra."

For a moment there was a wistful pain in his voice, and he looked at her with a yearning look; but her eyes, well fixed on his face, wore the same questioning look.  
"With him I can leave you quite safe. It is not necessary for me to trouble you with his business; but you will believe me, Kyra, that it is my one wish that you should live at the Wold. I cannot bear to think that the old place should return, after its one brief bit of sunshine, to its old dreariness. You will light it up with your presence, and bring back the old times. Yes, I shall look back with many a sigh and think of you filling the place with your beauty."

He paused abruptly, aroused to the sense of his quickened words, by the sudden flush of color in her face, and the startled look in her eyes.  
"I—forgive me, Kyra, it is too late for rhapsodies, but I must exact your promise. You will live at the Wold while I am away, and that will be for many a long year—perhaps forever."  
"Live at the Wold!" she echoed. "I—alone! alone!" she exclaimed.  
"No, but when you and Charlie are married."  
(To be Continued.)

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In a few short years woman have become super-woman; a process of "putting up" for woman, man was discarded and though her star shines less brightly, it is now not the light in the firmament. Quite recently, woman came across the things to carry guns. They appeared. He was rather a to himself. He grew in a most astonishing way in his own estimation in the next few weeks. He thought there were such possibilities of development within his sphere. He began to feel a man. He was ways had a sneaking kind of he was one; but he had never

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