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as he looked at her, but she was not all wicked.

Next she conducted Max into a bedroom.

"You will sleep here to-night," she told him. "To-morrow—we shall see what it brings. Should Herman, after all, be suspected, this house may be searched, but I have provided against that. See!"

She opened a wardrobe, in which were several dresses and other articles of clothing for women—these she moved aside, and showed him a sliding panel that gave admission into a deep cupboard that was almost large enough to be called a room.

"If they come to make a search to-morrow for you here, you must conceal yourself in this place," she said, and left him.

Max was far too much excited to sleep well that night, and when Bertha came to him early in the morning with some breakfast he was up and dressed—in her brother's uniform.

"You must remain here yet awhile," she said to him; "the snow is still falling, and the roads will be heavy."

Later, she brought him a newspaper, but it contained no item of special interest; he longed to be out of Treves, and found the time heavy on his hands. About midday, however, all this was changed unexpectedly.

THERE was the sound of voices in the house; the sound came nearer; he heard the voices distinctly, and made out what they were saying—there was the voice of Bertha Schmidt and there was the voice of a man; it was the voice of a man, moreover, which Max had no difficulty in recognizing, for had he not heard it often in the drawing room of the Willoughbys in St. Anton's Avenue? At first, however, he could scarcely believe his ears; but, as he listened, he knew he was not mistaken.

The man's voice was the voice of Captain Hollander! It was hot with anger and rage.

"Yes," Hollander was saying; "the Englishman, as you call him, has escaped. After what you said about him yesterday, Bertha, you are not ill-pleased, I suppose. If it did not seem altogether impossible for you to have a hand in setting him free, I might have thought you had. And it certainly is strange that the man he attacked and overpowered was your brother Herman."

"But you told me that Herman was badly injured," said Bertha, in an insistent tone, and as if she had said this to Hollander more than once.

"There's no doubt of it—he will be in bed for several days; the Englishman felled him with a chair. No, it does not seem likely that Herman could have been in the plot. Yet it's strange, too."

"When was it discovered that the Englishman had escaped?"

"At midnight when the sentries were changed. Herman was found lying in a swoon on the floor, and the prisoner had vanished. The alarm was given at once; search was made, but the fellow could not be found."

"I am glad," said Bertha simply.

"You are glad—you, you fool!" cried Hollander.

"Because of the child," said Bertha, with fervour.

"Curse the child!" exclaimed Hollander. "This man's escape has upset all my plans—that is all I can think of, all I care about!"

"Upset all your plans," said Bertha. "What were your plans?"

"How dare you talk to me like that?" Hollander stormed.

"Did you wish to put him away forever?" she asked.

"Bertha Schmidt! Are you mad? Have you lost your senses?" he almost shouted at the woman, but evidently she was enraged as well as he.

"No," she retorted, in a sharp, hard voice. "But you are no longer my master!"

"I am not your master," said Hollander, "but you dare not set me at defiance, yet you take this tone with me, Bertha!"

"Remember, I am glad of the Englishman's escape, but only because he saved little Fritz," she protested.

"How many times must you say that? Curse the child!"

Bertha screamed at him.

"Do not say that!" she called out.

"I am more than ever glad the Englishman has escaped. What had you against him? Why did you set a trap for him, so that he came here to Treves? Did you wish to kill him, even as you killed the fraulein, but in a different way?"

"Do not yell in that manner—the people outside in the street will hear you. Calm yourself," said Hollander, speaking more quietly than he had hitherto done. "You know that Sylvia Chase had to die—she knew that herself; there was a good reason for it, as you know."

The woman was silent.

"I killed her, it is true," Hollander continued, more quietly still, so that Max, who was thrilled with horror, could hardly hear what was said. "There was no choice, no other way—you know that, just as she knew it; it had to be. And as for you, Bertha, what have you to complain of? Has not everything been done for you that was promised? And now you are glad when my enemy escapes!"

"Because he saved the child," she said again.

Hollander turned from her with an imprecation—as Max guessed from the manner in which it was uttered: the actual word or words he could not hear. Some sentences followed, the sense of which he was unable to catch; then he heard Hollander say distinctly:

"If he is still in Germany, he may yet be caught." Max understood that it was himself to whom the remark applied. "Every train is being watched both here and all along the line to the frontier; pickets are stationed on all the roads."

Thereafter Max heard the sounds of Hollander and Bertha's footsteps; Hollander was leaving the house; then came the noise of the shutting of the outer door—Hollander had gone.

The conversation had occupied but a short space of time, which had not afforded Max sufficient opportunity to grasp all the facts thoroughly that had been disclosed; now that Hollander had departed, he passed them in review.

What amazing revelations! How they filled out the story! And this man, Hollander! What a dark and terrible nature had been exposed. Max was making these reflections when Bertha Schmidt came into the room which she had given to him.

"I heard all, or nearly all, that passed between you and Captain Hollander," said Max.

"Yes," she responded, but in a tone of indifference—as if what he had overheard was of no importance to her. Then she went on in another voice, in which gladness was mingled with anxiety. "For the present, you are safe," she said; "he has no suspicion now, whatever he may have had before, that you are in this house. Yet it will not do for you to remain here. I sent little Fritz out this morning, notwithstanding the snow, to a neighbour; but he will return this afternoon. You must venture forth to-night—the storm may have passed; if it has not, still you must go."

"Yes," Max readily agreed. "The storm helped me last night; it will help me again to-night. I know something of the country, and the frontier is only a few miles away. I must take my chance."

"I shall go with you part of the way," said Bertha. "I know every foot of the district."

"You are very kind," protested Max, "but—"

"Our debt must be paid to you—paid in full," she made answer in a determined voice. "When you return to England, you must beware of Captain Hollander; he does not know what you have learned about him here—if he did, he would not return to England, but not knowing it, he will soon be back again in London. Then take care, for he is your enemy, and he will stick at nothing to gain his ends."

"What is this man?" asked Max. Bertha made no reply for some seconds; then she spoke.

"It is best that you should know all about him—you will know how to act when he arrives in London," she said.