

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS

BY J. HARRISON

Kind Hearts are more than Coronets. And simple faith than Norman Blood.

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CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

"Leigh!" warned Mrs. Fenton. "Do be careful!"

"Why?" she asked. "You are making a good marriage. Hugh is a splendid fellow."

"Well?" cried the girl, impatiently. "I bring wealth, my freedom, my youth, my beauty, one of the best of names!"

"My dear, I fully realize that you are a girl above the ordinary by far. But, remember also, what a man Hugh is. Many will envy you."

Leigh was silent. "I don't know what to make of you," said the mother, despairingly.

"I can safely say I do not understand my own child!" Leigh laughed.

"Did you ever flatter yourself that you did? Your nature is content with small things—it knows neither doubt nor struggle."

"You have no idea of the value of that goodness to your future," said Mrs. Fenton.

"Goodness! Faith! Belief in God! What a bugaboo to frighten a child from wrong-doing."

"What you and father deprived me of—the love I dreamed of," she returned, bitterly.

"I gave Hugh my promise, when I looked into his eyes, I fancied the same love for me transformed him, as once was mine."

"Leigh!" cried her mother. "What are you saying? Of whom do you speak?"

"Whom? Oh, how well you know! I swore never to mention his name in your presence."

"A miserable gambler, an itinerant musician!" said the mother, roused at last.

"A pleasant person to win the affections of Leigh Fenton! Yes; and so you would have married Allan Fraser, would you?"

"Do not doubt me, Hugh," she said, more earnestly than she knew.

"Doubt you? If I doubted you, then would I be poor indeed and miserable."

"Joy, delight, thanksgiving!" She shook her head.

"Where, Leigh? Why, all around us. You are the epitome of all three."

"Ah, but now it shall be," he said, tenderly.

"Hugh, my lad," said Uncle Eric to him later in the day.

"Poor Laurence!" said Hugh. "It hasn't been changed since his time—somehow I always felt that Harry would disappoint me."

"Do they? My life has not been all of roses!" "Ah, but now it shall be," he said, tenderly.

"I refuse to discuss this question any further," said Mrs. Fenton, sharply.

"Only great fear could have induced the mother to speak in such a tone to her imperious girl."

"The following week found a gay party gathered under the Lindsay roof-tree."

"I have learned to love it dearly, very dearly," he said.

"I suppose so." She continued to look at the house with appreciative eyes.

She did not enter into his mood, but touched the little pony lightly with her whip and they started off.

"We won't have to stay here, anyhow," she said. "We can come back to it, of course. But don't stay here."

"And why not?" "Oh, Hugh, could you be satisfied to live year in and year out in this wilderness?"

"And yet, Leigh," he said, quickly, "if it is so decreed that Lindsay Manor is to be mine—God keep that day far distant—our main interests will centre right here in this place."

"I am speaking of the greater world. You must remember this is only a small portion of it—this State of South Carolina—even though it does contain Lindsay Manor."

"The words were bad enough, but the tone!" "Out in the world there is a wider horizon—one is not bound by so many distressing restrictions," she pursued.

"Mrs. Fenton looked up from the book of photographs lying on the table before her."

"Gertrude's little pale face bent forward and her soft brown eyes met those of the beauty with a hard light in their gentle depths."

"Did you know Harry Lindsay?" asked Hugh in astonishment.

"We had two black sheep," said Gertrude, drawing back again with careless air.

"That is too bitter a term to apply to Laurence," said Mildred Powell now, in a low tone.

"You are what they call a model young man, I believe," she answered.

"I have heard that many times recently. I can only wonder what you saw in me when—let us say, Gertrude was around?"

"He hesitated a moment, then his eyes took on the steely glitter she knew so well."

"You will not speak in that manner, or in that tone to me, Leigh?" "No, I am unused to obedience."

"Therefore I would not command, but request," he returned, more quietly.

"She did not answer. He always made her feel ashamed of herself, as she had told his mother, and this was one of the instances."

"That sonata! I know it so well, Hugh! Listen—did you ever hear anything more divine? Oh, Hugh, I love it, I love it!"

"Mr. Cameron, you will oblige me by not continuing that thing," he said.

"Leigh's expression was one of complete astonishment as she turned to look at the old man, who was scowling heavily."

"Laurence used to play it," whispered Gertrude. "Run into something else—anything, but not that."

"Leigh! Who is Laurence?" asked Leigh. "She had caught the whispered word and addressed this query to Uncle Eric, who had to pass her on his way to the group at the piano."

"...y neohew, who is dead," said Uncle Eric, grimly.

"She went to the gallery with Mildred the next day, her interest in the young man whose story she had heard having lasted over-night."

"No picture here resembles your hero," she said. "Which is Laurence?"

"He is not here—I told you we had hidden him," answered Mildred.

"We do not even forgive the dead. He has offended us—we banish him. The only reason his portrait was not destroyed was because a famous artist painted it."

"A black sheep in this virtuous family! How singular!" said Leigh.

"A black sheep in this virtuous family! How singular!" said Leigh.

lover. It was new to be taken possession of as he had taken possession of her; to be told her faults as he had told her of them; to cross swords in diverse opinions.

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