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A QUEEN UNCROWNED

THE STORY IN THE LONE INN.

CHAPTER X.

"Certainly. When I do dream, I always pay attention to it, and omit no detail. It was somewhere in an old, deserted room, I believe."

"Ah!" she said, with a paling cheek, and a rising fire in her eye. "Perhaps you can also tell me what we said?"

"No, I cannot. And I do not see anything remarkable in your meeting the old lady," he said, in an indifferent tone.

"Nor in our plotting to murder you—stranger things have happened. Are you sure you locked your chamber door last night on retiring, Capt. Disbrowe?"

"A singular question; but, yes, I rather think I did."

"And you are not given to walking in your sleep, occasionally?"

"In my sleep? No, never." And he looked at her with a peculiar smile.

Jacinto laughed.

"Really Jacquetta, one would think you were cross-examining him as if he were on trial for shoplifting. I shall be careful how I tell you what I dream."

"Well, he said, half annoyed, half laughing, 'is it my turn next?'"

"Do you know," said Disbrowe, "I have the strangest idea that I have seen you somewhere before. But for your foreign accent, and your dark hair and complexion, I could swear you were—"

"Who?" said Jacinto, as he paused.

"You will laugh, but a lady I knew in England. You reminded me of her from the first, in some odd, unaccountable way, and your laugh—if I had not looked at you that time I could swear it was—"

"Norma!" laughed Jacquetta.

"By Jove! you've hit it! But what do you know of Norma?"

"I had a dream," said Jacquetta, with a malicious twinkle of her eye. "I dreamed Captain Disbrowe was to be married to a certain Miss Norma Macdonald when she would attain her nineteenth birthday, and that he only came to America to kill time during the tedious interval. Ahem! You see others can dream besides you, my good cousin."

Disbrowe stood fairly dumb with amazement, and his color came and went. Jacquetta's wicked eyes sparkled with triumph.

"I say!" called Frank, at this interesting juncture, thrusting out his head, through the parlor door, "do you mean to come to breakfast to-day, or are we all to starve in here, while you three talk scandal out here?"

"We weren't talking scandal, Frank, dear," said Jacquetta.

Then passing her arm through Jacinto's, she went in, followed by Captain Disbrowe.

"Why, Jack!—I say Jack! where's the little Orrie Howlet?" asked Frank, at the table.

"Gone," said Jacquetta, curtly.

"Gone!" echoed the young gentleman. "Where?"

"Home—to the inn!"

"Home! Go away! she couldn't go so early!"

"Has she really gone, Jack?" said Mr. De Vere, in surprise.

"Yes, sir."

"Why, when did she go?"

Late last night—just before I retired. Old Grizzle came after her. Was that part of your dream, cousin?"

Disbrowe smiled, and bowed slightly.

"Oh, she did, did she?" said Frank.

"How did Orrie like that?"

"She didn't like it at all. She would have preferred remaining until morning, and being escorted home by Captain Disbrowe, for whom she has evidently conceived a rash and inordinate attachment."

Jacquetta teased Captain Disbrowe unmercifully throughout the meal. But just as she was uttering a witticism a sudden and most unexpected sound froze the words on her lips.

He sprang from his horse, and had raised his whip to knock at the door, when a scream of delight greeted his ear; and the next instant a pair of arms were around his neck, and little

A low, soft strain of music, subdued and distant, yet perfectly clear and sweet, fell on the ears of all—that music Disbrowe so well knew.

In an instant Jacquetta was on her feet, deathly white, and with her hands clasped convulsively over her heart. Mr. De Vere, too, arose in consternation; and even Augusta, who had hitherto sat silent and stony, stood up, in evident agitation. Had a grenade suddenly exploded at their feet, it could not have produced a more instantaneous change than that low, sweet, plaintive strain. And Disbrowe saw—himself agitated, through he could scarcely tell why—that the eyes of her father and sister turned on Jacquetta, in mingled terror and pity, as if she were the one most concerned.

There was an instant's silence, and then it arose again in a long, wailing sort of cry, dying out faint and sad. Without a word, Jacquetta started to leave the room.

"Jacquetta, my dear girl, do you think I had not better accompany you?" said Mr. De Vere, turning his agitated face toward her.

"No, no—I will go myself—remain where you are," she said, in a voice so like that of last night, that her image arose again before Disbrowe, as he had seen her then standing, white and stern, like a devouring flame, in the cold moonlight.

A long and embarrassing pause ensued—broken at last by Mr. De Vere, who asked, with an apparent effort, some trivial question of Disbrowe. The young guardsman responded; and seeing the evident distress of his uncle, strove to sustain the conversation, in which he was joined, for the first time, by Augusta, who seemed roused from her petrified state by the singular sound.

Not long afterward Disbrowe was in the saddle, striving to banish his perplexing thoughts. Thinking of Jacquetta, and trying in vain to solve the riddle, he rode rapidly on, resolved to see little Orrie before he returned.

It was three hours nearly before the inn came in sight; and he remembered, with a strange mingling of feelings, the last night he had spent there. It was a gloomy-looking place—almost as foreboding in aspect as its mistress.

He sprang from his horse, and had raised his whip to knock at the door, when a scream of delight greeted his ear; and the next instant a pair of arms were around his neck, and little

Orrie herself was kissing and clinging to him like a human crab.

"Oh, I knew you'd come! I knew you would! And I'm so glad!" she exclaimed, in tones of breathless delight. "I've been waiting for you all the morning. Why didn't you come earlier?"

"Well, unless I had started in the middle of the night, I don't see how I could!"

"I came in the middle of the night—did you know it?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Miss Jack told you. I wanted to see you, but Miss Jack wouldn't let me."

"What did she say?"

"Why, that you were asleep, and it would not look well to go and awaken you. And then she said she would tell you to come and see me to-day. Were you sorry when she said I was gone?"

"Very."

Orrie lowered her voice, and pointed to the house.

"It wasn't my fault, you know, she came for me, and I didn't want to go. But then, it's just like her. She's a horrid, ugly old thing, every way you can fix it!"

"Did she beat you when she got you home?"

"No; Old Nick was here, and he wouldn't let her. Only for him, I guess I'd have caught it!" said Orrie, with a chuckle.

"Ah! is he there now?"

"No; he and Kit and Blaise went away this morning. Do you know," said Orrie, lowering her voice again, "they were talking about you when I arrived?"

"Were they? What did they say?"

"Well, you know, I couldn't hear very well—I wasn't in the room, but listening at the door."

"Oh! a very commendable practice, which you ought to cultivate while you are young, as I fancy you have a talent that way. And they were talking about you!"

"They were talking about you!" said Orrie, looking a little puzzled, for one-half of the young gentleman's speeches were Greek to her or thereabouts; and Captain Nick said he would kill you, if he was to swing for it the next moment. What did he mean by that?"

"Never mind! You will find out, probably, by experience, one of these days, if you live much longer with this amiable old lady of yours. What else did they say?"

Why, old Grizzle laughed at him, and said she despised his notions of revenge. That killing was no good—or something like that—and that she knew a way to fix you off a thousand times worse!"

"Dear old soul!" said Disbrowe, apostrophizing her in a low voice.

"What a blessed old lady she is, to be sure!"

"Then I heard old Nick ask her how; and she said to come to-morrow night—that's—that's, you know," said Orrie—"and she would tell him. And he wanted her to tell him then; and she got cross, and said she would not. And I heard her tell him another thing, too!" added the little one, suddenly—"something about Miss Jack."

"You did, eh? What was it, magpie?"

"Why, that she was going to kill two birds with one stone—you and her. So you and Miss Jack had better look out!"

"Thank you. I wish you could twist yourself into some corner and hear what precious revelations they will make to-night."

"Eh?" said Orrie.

"Oh, nothing! If you hear anything more, will you let me know?"

"Well, it's such a long piece to go to Fontelle," said Orrie, hesitatingly. "And old Grizzle does get so mad—though I don't care for that much—that—"

"Oh! I don't wish you to travel to Fontelle, my dear child," said Capt. Disbrowe, smiling at her troubled little face. "Perhaps I may ride over again to-morrow and see you."

"Will you? Oh, how nice! And ain't Fontelle a beautiful place with such lovely big rooms, and nice pictures, and carpets, and splendid soft beds? Oh! I wish I lived there!" said Orrie, with sparkling eyes.

"Upon my honor I wish you did, Firefly! Perhaps you may some-day. Shall I tell you how?"

"Yes!" said Orrie, eagerly.

"Then make Frank fall in love with you, and get married to him!" laughed Disbrowe.

(To be continued)

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Sausage is nice served with apple rings fried in sausage fat, and mashed sweet potatoes.  
With coffee gelatin serve cream that has been sweetened, flavored with vanilla and whipped.  
Left over boiled hominy and creamed whipped beef make an excellent luncheon casserole.  
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