

ALL FOR LOVE.

CHAPTER XIII.
PHILIP'S PLEADING.

"But that does not detract one iota from my estimate of what you have done. And now you must go and meet Muriel before she becomes immersed in her duties as hostess. Come; and, Philip, please don't look so very serious. They'll think I haven't been good to you," she concluded, laughing and meeting his thoughtful eyes with a piquant look, her tone ringing with something of the old childish banter.

How lovely she was; how charming in manner as well as in appearance! He could scarcely believe this was the same Beth of long ago; yet, notwithstanding she had changed so wonderfully, there had cropped out, as she talked with her, certain characteristics which proclaimed her the loyal little friend of his youth. He was conscious, however, of a certain indefinable barrier between them, an aloofness, or illiveness, which chafed him sorely.

She led the way back to the library, chatting vivaciously with him, and remained to introduce her friend, Miss Badwin, joining socially for a few minutes in the general conversation. But the moment guests began to gather in the drawing-room, she slipped away to her chamber, where for half an hour she fought a battle with herself that might have been very reassuring to Philip could he have witnessed it.

She knew she must not weep and so disfigure her face, for presently she would have to go below again to join the revelers. She walked the floor utterly bereft of her previous forced composure, her hands tightly clinched, her face colorless, her small white teeth locked together to keep back the sobs, which, if allowed their way, would surely have brought the dreaded flood with them.

Philip's unexpected appearance in the music room had been a great shock to her; had taxed her to the utmost. She had been sufficiently startled, upon turning, to find herself confronted by the knight who had rescued her from the hand of the Philistine in Boston. But to find that this mysterious stranger was Philip, had very nearly caused her to collapse. She had never dreamed they were one and the same, and yet she now recalled that once, while they were together those few minutes, a familiar tone, gesture, or something, had caused her to catch her breath suddenly. She had never

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thought of it again until this moment, but she knew now that her heart had recognized him then, if her eyes had not.

How handsome he had grown, how grandly he had matured in every way; how rich yet gentle, in spite of his astonishment, his voice had been as he had called her My Lady Beth. She loved him with all her heart. Her childish adoration had grown with her growth, had deepened and become more intense with her mental and moral development. She was conscious of it, nor did she hesitate to own it to herself; she even secretly gloried in the fact, for had not her childish ideal proved to be all that her fondest imagination had pictured? Oh, if he had never said those terrible, scornful, repudiating words ten years ago, she would never have released him from that contract; at least not until she had tried to make him love her in return and then she would not have seen him away as she had sent Paul Lambert the other day.

But, her delicate lips setting into a resolute line, he had said them, and he had accepted his release from her contemplated marriage without protest, except to regret her loss of Aunt Eliza's fortune, thus tacitly admitting that the thought of such union was as repulsive to him as she had said it was to her. Now, "all the king's horses and all the king's men" could never make her show that white feather to him, or "wear her heart upon her sleeve for daws to peck at."

Then it suddenly occurred to her that Teddy and Muriel must have had a hand in this unexpected meeting. How else would Philip have been there at that hour and known where to look for her? At first she was inclined to resent it, but as she thought it over she saw she could not. Of course it would never do for her to ignore him in sending out cards for their party, and it was not for her to dictate, nor criticize, in such a matter. However, if they were a league against her, they might reap so much satisfaction out of it perhaps, as they had anticipated.

Gradually, with these diverting thoughts, she began to grow calmer and, finally, fearing she would be missed, she added a few little touches to her toilet, and, forcing a brilliant smile to her lips, tripped lightly downstairs with an air that seemed to indicate that she had not a care in the world, and she immediately became the centre of an admiring group of friends.

Philip could not get near her for more than an hour, but he watched her with ever-increasing fascination. "Who would believe it!" he found himself saying over and over. "No wonder Ted said she was a stunner. What a happy-hearted girl she is, too, and a prime favorite, as well. There are lots of them, sure enough, as he told me—aha!"

That exclamation was drawn forth on seeing a fine looking fellow approach Beth, say a few words which brought a quick flush to her cheek, when with a smile and a nod she allowed herself to be whisked upon the floor to the measure of an alluring waltz. "That fellow loves her with all his heart," he muttered with a frown, after watching Paul Lambert's face a while. "No man ever looks at a woman in that way unless he is dead gone on her. Who is he, I wonder?"

But he bestirred himself after that, and the first opportunity that offered, boldly approached Beth and inquired if she had space on her card for his name.

MINARD'S LINIMENT CURES DIS-
TEMPER.

She looked it over rather doubtfully, then smilingly passed it to him.

"See if there is a place where you care to put it," she said.

He ran his eye down both pages. "There isn't a single waltz left," he observed in a rueful tone.

"No; I am afraid there is nothing but a two-step."

"May I have it?" he asked.

"Certainly, if you wish," Beth cordially returned, with a sudden heart-sinking. Could she bear it, and preserve her composure?

"Do you know you taught me to dance, Lady Beth?" he asked later, when they were upon the floor together.

"Did I? I thought you attended Madam—'s classes," Beth observed evasively.

"Have you forgotten?" Philip demanded reproachfully. "Don't you remember what a great clumsy boy I was, so awkward with my feet that madam almost despaired of me, while you were light as a feather upon the floor? I could run with the fleetest in athletic sports, but I never could have mastered those intricate steps at dancing school if you had not taken me in hand in your back parlor, between lessons, and patiently taught me."

Didn't she remember? Could she ever forget those happy times? How he had laughed at and scolded him when he blundered; how she had encouraged him when he had declared in despair he could never learn; how proud and happy they had both been when he finally caught on and they had whirled about the room in triumph, whistling the measure to either? She could barely repress a sob as it all came up before her.

But she smiled up at him archly, as he swung her lightly in and out among the other couples around them, and returned brightly: "Well, you are a credit now to the instruction you received in your youth, whoever taught you."

"Thank you. If you had only said me a waltz, I'd try to prove it," he sighed regretfully.

"You didn't ask me," she fenced.

"I know—I was so dazed by the surprise I sustained in the music room; so bewildered to find you and

the lady whom I met in Boston one and the same, that it put all my wits to flight at that time; and when I next caught sight of you, you were surrounded by such a solid phalanx of other admirers that I could not get within speaking distance of you."

"Other admirers," Beth knew he said it without attaching any special significance to the words, yet somehow, they thrilled her and told her that he had been watching her at she merely replied with a demure smile:

"You are very excusable."

"Can't you possibly give me another?" he pleaded, as the music ceased and he was leading her to a seat.

"I am afraid they are all taken."

"Then will you go to supper with me?"

"Thank you, but I have already promised Mr. Lambert."

"Who is Mr. Lambert?" demanded Philip with another pang, as he recalled the man who, he had claimed, was "dead gone on her."

"A friend, and he is right here," Beth smilingly replied, as she paused before a gentleman whom Philip instantly recognized. "I want you to know him. Mr. Lambert, let me introduce Mr. Philip Watson."

"Ah! is this the 'best-fellow-in-the-world' from 'To-ko, Jam-pan,' of whom I heard little Philip speak the other day?" Paul Lambert inquired, as the two cordially clasped hands.



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"Yes, the same," Beth laughingly told him, though her cheeks began to tingle at this reference to that memorable interview on the beach. Then she added: "Now will you two please entertain each other for a few minutes while I go to Muriel? She is beckoning to me."

She did not wait for their assent, but hurried away, and Philip found no opportunity to speak with her again that evening, although he remained until every guest had departed, with the hope of at least bidding her good-night.

But Beth had slipped away to her room with her friend Agnes Baldwin, who, ever since her arrival, had been eager to confide to her a tender secret of her own; so Philip at last reluctantly returned to his hotel, after promising Ted to go to breakfast the next morning.

His thoughts were full of Beth, her beauty, her charming personality, her popularity; but, more than all, her illiveness. She had been lovely to him in a way—cordial, friendly, and grateful; but he knew that he had failed, as yet, to unite the broken threads of their old-time friendship.

There was a subtle, intangible something that hedged about her like an impassable moat with the drawbridge up.

(To be Continued.)

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