

**Plot That Failed;
OR,
Love That Would
Not Be Denied.**

CHAPTER XXI.

Once more the captain looked down upon the dead body and distorted face with calm, grave complaisance.

The lawyer asked a few questions. "Can I see the hat?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the coastguard, approaching the cupboard.

While he was unlocking it, a thin, cadaverous looking man entered, in a quiet, careless sort of fashion, and went up close behind the lawyer.

"There's the hat, sir," said the guard. "It was found close near the corpse, and— Hello! Who are you?"

This was addressed to the intrusive stranger, who had suddenly pushed closer and stretched out his hand.

"What's that?" he said, pointing to a flower in the cupboard.

"That's a flower," returned the coastguard. "Praps you didn't hear me ask who you was?"

"Yes, I did," retorted the stranger mildly. "Where did you find that flower?"

The coastguard stared. "If you must know," he said, with dignity, "that flower was clinched tight in the dead man's hand!"

"It was, was it?" said the stranger, quietly, pushing up to the cupboard, and taking up the flower. "A Lily," he muttered. "I thought so."

Then, to the astonishment of the coastguard, he quietly shut the cupboard, locked it, and dropped the key in his pocket.

Then he turned, touched his hat to the gentlemen, who stood regarding him attentively, and said:

"My name's Dockett, gentlemen— Detective Dockett."

"The captain made a gesture of assent. "Please not to mention that I'm here, gentlemen," said the detective. "I'd like to walk round quietly a bit before the yokels gets the scent of it."

"Certainly," said Mr. Thaxton, gravely. "Any assistance I can be to you, I shall be glad to render. My name is Thaxton, and I am Mrs. Mildmay's solicitor."

The detective touched his hat again. "Thank you, sir," he said. "I think I'd like a light trap in a quarter of an hour, and a smart chap who could show me the way to Coombe Lodge."

"Lord Lackland's?" said the captain. "The nearest magistrate," said the detective.

The captain glanced at Mr. Thaxton. At that moment the police inspector entered, hurriedly.

"Well," said the detective, "you can speak out."

"He's gone," said the inspector. "Leastways, I cannot find him, or any tidings of him."

The detective brightened up, as if by magic, and a sharp, ferrety expression came upon his face.

"What, already?" he said, quietly. "Have you posted a man at the station?"

"I did that last night," said the inspector.

"And telegraphed a description of him?"

"Yes," said the man.

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"Then I must have that light trap at once, if you please, gentlemen," said Mr. Dockett.

Hurriedly, the party left the station and ran down the path to the village. "For whom are you looking?" asked Mr. Thaxton of the detective.

"Mr. Leicester Dodson," said the detective, shortly. "It was his hat, and he was seen on the cliff road."

"But—but," said the captain, "it is impossible!"

The detective glanced at him, and smiled. "Nothing's impossible in a murder, sir, I think I can get a trap of a horse here quicker than going up to the Park. Here, saddle me a horse, sharp, boy, and I'll give you a shilling."

There was confusion instantly all around the "Blue Lion," at the door of which stood Martha, grim and fierce, as usual.

A horse was saddled, and, after giving a few instructions to the inspector, Detective Dockett dashed off.

The captain looked at Mr. Thaxton with perplexity and dismay.

"This is preposterous and ridiculous! Mr. Leicester Dodson is the most respected man in the place."

Mr. Thaxton shook his head gravely.

"The course the detective is adopting is inevitable," he said. "We had better get to the Cedars, and see his father or mother."

"Come along, then," said the captain, and the two gentlemen hurried off.

At the gates of the Cedars they found a policeman, and it was some moments before he would permit them to pass.

At last they succeeded in overcoming his scruples, and made their way to the house.

Mrs. Dodson came to them, pale and agitated, but her scorn at the mere idea of Leicester's committing

such a deed helped to keep her up. She answered all their questions as she had done those of the inspector.

"Leicester is not here," she said, "and I cannot tell you where he is. He often goes away suddenly and unexpectedly. He may be in London, but, if he is, he will come down at once. I have telegraphed for him and his father, who went up with Mr. Lennox. What is all this silly story about a murder, Captain Murpoint?"

The captain did his best—or pretended to do—to reassure and soothe her, and Mr. Thaxton, after a few moments' silence, asked if he could see the valet.

Mrs. Dodson dispatched a messenger to find the valet who soon appeared, looking as bewildered as every one else.

He, however, threw some light upon the matter by informing them of the dispatch of the portmanteau.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Thaxton. "Why did you not say so before?"

The man hung his head. He was a faithful fellow, and had hoped, by concealing his master's destination, that he should give him all the more time to get out of the way, "if so be as he had committed a mistake."

"Foolish fellow!" said Mr. Thaxton. "It is to your master's interest to return and clear up the matter. We must telegraph to the Isle of Man. If, as I suppose, Mr. Leicester started last night, he would not reach there until midday. Do not be alarmed, madam: he will assuredly hurry back posthaste, and set the affair straight, so far as he is concerned."

"That I am confident of, sir," said Mrs. Dodson, with simple dignity.

The two gentlemen rose and departed, the captain still excited, the lawyer very calm and thoughtful. They telegraphed, through the police, to the Isle of Man, and waited feverishly for an answer.

An answer came late that night. The "Wave" had come in, telegraphed the skipper of the yacht, but Mr. Leicester had not arrived by it.

Before midnight the hue and cry was in full voice, and the police were on the alert to arrest Leicester Dodson, wherever and whenever he might be found, on a charge of willful murder.

CHAPTER XXII.

The days rolled on in the little fishing village, and the terrible drama which had convulsed it was still talked of and remembered, but with less vividness every day.

Up at the Cedars two sorrowful human beings, clad in black, were earning that bitter lesson which all must learn, to suffer and to bear.

Violet was their sole comfort in the hour of darkness.

She had given them the only explanation of the tragedy they would accept, namely that Leicester had slain Starling in self-defence and had himself fallen over the cliff into the sea.

Violet's plump roundness gradually toned down to a sparseness which was grace itself, but, alas! strangely different to her old healthy vigor.

One other person beside the relations of Leicester mourned for him, and that was little, lame Jemmie, Willie Sanderson's brother.

To the poor, afflicted lad Leicester had seemed to be a beneficent god. The child adored the man who had, in so kindly and true a fashion, ministered to his wants, and no one shed more tears than little Jemmie.

In his little chair, which he could propel himself, he would haunt the Cedars, and the walks which had been favorite resorts of Leicester, and there weep over the memory of his great friend and hero.

One evening, the lad set off in his quiet, sad way for a walk, or, rather, ride on the cliff.

Impelled by an awful curiosity, the boy drove close to the edge of the cliff, and looked down.

He drew back, with a sob of grief, and was about to return, but, as he made the movement, his tear-dimmed eyes caught the glimmer of some object lying under the edge of the cliff, half hidden by the overhanging tufts of grass.

With a mechanical curiosity, he drew near to it, and saw, with a beating heart, that it was a knife.

Instantly it flashed upon him that it was the very knife with which Leicester had, in self-defence, slain Jim Starling.

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With the knife hidden in his bosom, he returned home, determined to destroy the weapon, with its telltale rust of blood, on the first opportunity.

Of course, the doctor was not at all satisfied with the outward calm and serenity with which Violet bore her grief.

"It is all very well," he said to Mr. Thaxton, as he and that gentleman were smoking a cigar on the lawn and conferring together as to the state of Violet's health, "it is all very well to say that she is resigned, but I must confess that I do not like the word when it is applied to the numbness of a young girl. Could you not get up a little difficulty of some sort? Anything would answer the purpose to divert her mind from this terrible subject."

"Hem!" said Mr. Thaxton. "I have always avoided business, though, as you are aware, I was summoned to go into some matter. Every day I offer to touch upon the subject with Mrs. Mildmay she entreats me to wait a little and to remain."

"Yes," said the doctor, "and I am very glad you are here, but still I think I would attempt to interest her. Cannot Captain Murpoint assist us? He seems to have taken the management of affairs."

"Yes," said Mr. Thaxton, and his brow clouded slightly. "Captain Murpoint is invaluable; he is extremely clever, and seems to obtain implicit obedience here."

At that moment Captain Murpoint came on to the lawn.

(To be Continued.)

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1170.—A NEW AND PRETTY NIGHT DRESS.

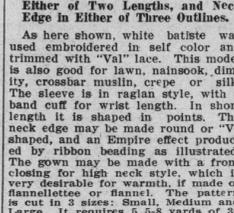


Ladies Night Dress with Sleeve in Either of Two Lengths, and Neck Edge in Either of Three Outlines.

As here shown, white batiste was used embroidered in self color and trimmed with "Val" lace. This model is also good for lawn, nainsook, dimity, crossbar muslin, crepe or silk. The sleeve is in raglan style, with a band cuff for wrist length. In short length it is shaped in points. The neck edge may be made round or "V" shaped, and an Empire effect produced by ribbon beading as illustrated. The gown may be made with a front closing for high neck style, which is very desirable for warmth, if made of flannellette or flannel. The pattern is cut in 3 sizes: Small, Medium and Large. It requires 5-8 yards of 36 inch material for a Medium size.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 10c. in silver or stamps.

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Ladies' Combination Garment, Corset Cover and Drawers with or without Ruffle, and in Round or Square Neck Outline.

Cambic, nainsook, batiste, crepe, flannellette or silk may be used for this style. The garment is fitted by shoulder, and underarm seams and darts, and may be finished in square or round neck outline, and with or without ruffle. It would be pretty in white nainsook, with hand embroidery on the fronts and the free edges embroidered with scallops. With prevailing long waist styles this garment is very practical. The pattern is cut in 6 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44 inches bust measure. It requires 2 1/2 yards of 36 inch material for a 36 inch size, with 3/4 and extra if made with ruffle.

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