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The LUST of HATE

BY GUY BOOTHBY

Author of "A Beautiful White Devil", "A Bid For Fortune", "The Marriage of Rother", "Dr. Nikola," Etc

Continued from Yesterday.

When the cab crew up at the front door I jumped out, and was about to help my companion to alight when I heard the front door open, and next moment a tall, fine-looking man, about sixty years of age, crossed the verandah and came down the steps. At first he regarded me with a stare of surprise, but before he could ask me my business, Miss Maybourne had descended from that vehicle and was in his arms. Not desiring to interrupt them in their greetings I strolled down the path. But I was not permitted to go far before I heard my name called. I turned, and went back to have my hand shaken off by Mr. Maybourne.

"My daughter says you have saved her life," he cried. "I'll not ask questions now, but I thank you, sir—from the bottom of my heart. I thank you. God knows you have done me a service the value of which no man can estimate."

The warmth of his manner was so much above what I had expected that it left me without power to reply. "Come in, come in," he continued in a voice that fairly shook with emotion. "Oh, let us thank God for this happy day!"

I placed his arm round his daughter's waist, and drew her to him as if he would not let her move from his side again. I followed a few steps behind, and should have entered the house had I not been recalled by the fact that he had not yet been paid.

I instantly put my hand into my pocket, only to have the fact recalled to me that I possessed no money at all. My capital had gone to the bottom in the Fiji Princess, and I was absolutely penniless. The position was an embarrassing one, and I was just reflecting what I had better do, when I heard Mr. Maybourne come out into the verandah again. He must have divined my difficulty, for without hesitation he discharged the debt, and apologizing for not having thought of it, led me into the house.

Passing through an elegantly-furnished hall we entered the dining-room. Here breakfast was laid, and it was evidently from that meal that Mr. Maybourne had jumped up to receive us.

"Now, Mr. Wrexford," he cried, pointing to a chair, "sit yourself down, my friend, and let me tell you everything from the beginning to the end. Heaven knows I can hardly believe my good fortune. Half an hour ago I was the most miserable man under the sun, now I am as happy as a king."

"Had you then heard of the wreck of the 'Fiji Princess'?" I enquired. "Here is a telegram I received last night," he said, handing me a paper he had taken from his pocket. "You see it is from Tenerife, and says that nothing has yet been heard of the vessel which was more than a fortnight overdue. Agnes tells me that you were rescued by the King of Cartage. I understood she was expected about mid-day to-day, and I had resolved to visit her as soon as she got into dock, in order to enquire if they had any tidings to report regarding the lost vessel. How little I expected to find that you were safe on board her, Aggie! Mr. Wrexford, you can have no idea of the agony I have suffered this week past."

"In the contrary," I answered, "I think I can tell you my story. I must not be cheated of a single detail. I saw from the way he looked at me that he expected me to do the narrating, so I did so, commencing with the striking of the vessel on the rock, and winding up with an account of our rescue by the King of Cartage. He listened with rapt attention until I had finished, and then turned to his daughter.

"Has Mr. Wrexford told me everything?" he asked with a smile. "No," she answered. "He has not told you half enough. He has not told you that when I fell overboard one night, when we were off the Spanish coast, he sprang over after me and held me up until a boat came to our assistance. He has not told you how when the vessel sank he gave his own life-belt to me, nor has he given you any idea of his constant kindness and self-sacrifice all through that dreadful time."

Mr. Maybourne rose from his chair as she finished speaking, and came round to where I sat. Holding out his hand to me, he said, with tears standing in his eyes:

"Mr. Wrexford, you are a brave man, and from the bottom of my heart I thank you. You have saved my girl, and brought her home safe to me; as long as I live I shall not be able to repay the debt I owe you. Remember, however, that henceforth I am your true friend."

But I must draw a curtain over this scene. If I go into any further details I shall break down again as I did then. Suffice it that Mr. Maybourne refused to hear of my leaving his house as I proposed, but insisted that I should remain as his guest until I had decided what I intended to do with myself.

"For the future you must look upon this as your home in South Africa," he said. "I seem powerless to express my gratitude to you as I should like. Every time may come when I may even be able to repay that."

"You have more than repaid me," I said. "I have every reason to be deeply grateful to you for the way you have received me. He replied in his former strain, and when he had done so, the conversation turned upon those who had been lost in the ill-fated Fiji Princess. It was easy to see that his brother-in-law's

death cut him to the quick.

After luncheon that day I found myself alone with Mr. Maybourne. I was not sorry for this, as I wanted to sound him as to my future movements. As I have so often said, I had no sort of desire to remain in Cape Town, and judged that the sooner I was up country, and out of civilization, the better it would be for me.

"You must forgive my being frank with you, Mr. Wrexford," said my host, as we sat at the breakfast table, drawing our chairs into the verandah; "but I have gathered from what you yourself have said and from what my daughter has told me, that you are a visiting South Africa on the chance of obtaining some sort of employment. Is this so?"

"That is exactly why I am here," I said. "I am most anxious to find something to do as soon as possible."

"In what direction will you seek it?" he asked. "What is your inclination? Remember, I may be able to help you."

"I am not at all particular," I answered. "I have knocked about the world a good deal, and I can turn my hand to most things. But if a choice were permitted me, I fancy I should prefer mining of some sort to anything else."

"Indeed! I had no idea you understood that sort of work."

"I have done a good deal of it," I replied, with a little touch of pride, for which next moment I found it difficult to account, considering the result to which it had brought me.

He asked me one or two practical questions, which I was fortunately able to answer to his satisfaction, and then was silent for a couple of minutes or so. At last he consulted his pocket book, and then turned to me again.

"That you have come to the conclusion that you have made no mistake in time for both of us. We may be able to do each other mutual services."

"I am very glad to hear that," I answered. "But in what possible way can I help you?"

"Well, the matter stands like this," he said. "As you are doubtless aware, my business is mostly in connection with mining, both in this colony and elsewhere. Well, information has lately reached me concerning what promises to prove a first-class property in Mashonaland, eighty-five miles from Bulawayo. The mine has been excellently reported on, and is now being got into good going order. It only needs a capable manager at its head to do really well. Of course such a man is easily procured in a country where every man seems to be engaged in mining, more or less; and yet for that very self-same reason I am unable to make selection. The available men all know too much, and I have private reasons for wishing this mine to be well looked after. Now the question is, would you care for the post?"

Needless to say, I embraced the opportunity in much the same manner as a hungry trout jumps at a fly. If I could only manage to get up there without being caught the appointment would suit me as well as the acceptance of it as I was at his offer; and when, after a little further conversation—in which I received many useful hints and no small amount of advice—I was assured that my daughter, she struck me as being even more delighted than either her father or myself, I noticed that Mr. Maybourne looked at her rather anxiously for a moment as if he suspected there might be some sort of understanding between us, but whatever he might have thought he kept it to himself. He need, however, have had no fear on that score. Circumstances had placed an insurmountable barrier between myself and any thought of marriage with his daughter.

As the result of our conversation, and at my special desire, it was arranged that I should start for my post on the following day. Nobody could have been more eager than I was to be out in the wilds. But, with all my heart I felt sad when I thought that after to-morrow I might never see the woman I so ardently loved again. Since the previous night, when on the promenade of the steamer I had told her of my love, neither of us had referred in any way to the subject. So remote was the chance that I should ever be able to make her my wife that I determined so far as possible, to prevent her from giving any thought to the idea. But I was not destined after all to leave without referring to the matter.

That evening after dinner we were sitting in the verandah outside the drawing-room, when the butler came to inform Mr. Maybourne that a neighbor had called to see him. Asking us to excuse him for a few moments he left us and went into the study. When we were alone together I spoke to him of the affection of her father's kindness and told her how much I appreciated it. She uttered a little sigh, and as this seemed an enquired answer to my speech, I enquired the reason of it.

"You say you are going away to-morrow," she answered, "and yet you ask me why I sigh! Cannot you guess?"

"Agnes," I said, "you know I have no option but to go. Do not let us go over the ground we covered last night. It would be best not for both our sakes; you must see that yourself."

"You know what it is worth," I answered vehemently, roused out of myself by this accusation. "And if ever the chance occurs again of proving it you will be afforded another example. I cannot say more."

"And is it always to be like this, Gilbert," she asked, for the first time calling me by my Christian name. "Are we to be separated all our lives?"

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(Signed)
H. MARCHESSAULT,
High Constable.

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District Doings

January 21st, an unusual thing for this time of year.

GUILDS.

John Lee, Jr., of Highgate, was the guest of Geo. Attridge last week. The roads are in a terrible state just now.

Mrs. Walker, who has been visiting her daughter, Mrs. Wm. Durheim, left for her home in Toledo last week. Despite the roughness of the weather, she struck me as being even more delighted than either her father or myself, I noticed that Mr. Maybourne looked at her rather anxiously for a moment as if he suspected there might be some sort of understanding between us, but whatever he might have thought he kept it to himself. He need, however, have had no fear on that score. Circumstances had placed an insurmountable barrier between myself and any thought of marriage with his daughter.

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"You know what it is worth," I answered vehemently, roused out of myself by this accusation. "And if ever the chance occurs again of proving it you will be afforded another example. I cannot say more."

"And is it always to be like this, Gilbert," she asked, for the first time calling me by my Christian name. "Are we to be separated all our lives?"

"God knows—I fear so," I murmured, though it cut me to the heart to have to say the words.

She bowed her head on her hands with a little moan, while I, feeling that I should not be able to control myself much longer, sprang to my feet and went across to the verandah rails. For something like five minutes I stood looking into the dark garden, then I pulled myself together as well as I was able and went back to my chair.

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