

...he heard her not. His eye was fixed upon his son, as Carlynden led him away, fattered and bleeding. For some time he controlled his emotion—at length a burst of agonized feeling convulsed his iron frame, and he exclaimed—

“The boy I adored—who I vainly thought possessed all the courage and honor of his ancestors!—the first of all my line who ever disgraced their fathers’ fame by treason such as this!—The image of his sainted mother, too!—and must he die?—so young—so beautiful?—Heaven help me! my brain is reeling! How shall I sustain myself under this dreadful blow? And I had yearned to meet him again—and I have met him—met him to see him die by the hangman and the gibbet!—My God! My son—my son!” and the stern old veteran, no longer able to control his nature, hid his face in his hands and groaned aloud. But it was too late; Carlynden had hurried him off as Frances Mason fell to the sword, as pale and motionless as if the angel of Death had stricken her down forever.

Meanwhile a singular conversation was being held by two other characters engaged in this scene—Ruggles and the half-distracted father of Frances.

The former, who had stood gazing on as Sir Edward made the discovery which identified the culprit as his son, closely scrutinized the face of the latter, and exclaimed, half aloud:

“Something wrong in all this! that is not Jordan, and it would be useless for me to make Mason acquainted with the knowledge I possess until I can produce the real party in person. I see how it will be,” he thought, as he heard Carlynden mutter those ominous words which predicted death to young Sarsfield—“I see how it will be; I shall have the coast clear, and no one to interfere with my plans. Both these fellows, young Sarsfield and Carlynden, are evidently my rivals—and, if they live, both have a thousand fold better chance of success than I have. But the officer will have this fellow they mistake for Jordan put out of the way, I see that, and thus I shall be rid of him: then I will accuse Carlynden of his murder, and bring forward his servant to prove the charge, and so get him out of the way. It is a daring project, though—but I cannot fail; his life, character, fortune are in my hands, and he dare not refuse. I know his crime, and he is aware of it, and the hand of Frances Mason must be mine as the reward of my silence. Hitherto I’ve not brought matters to a close because I never could lay my hands on Jordan; but now I think I can give a good guess as to his whereabouts. It is as plain as noon day that Sir Edward was right when he suggested that it must have been the strange vessel which bore down that rescued her. I begin to see through the whole of it—this young fellow has captured Jordan, and then through some romantic whim has played his part and enacted the pirate for Miss Mason’s special benefit, and now, owing to his wound, he cannot explain

matters away. It is devilish, lucky Sir Edward has got the notion into his head that this young fellow is the real Jordan, otherwise he would liberate him, and thus leave him still at liberty to prosecute his love suit. In all likelihood, then, Jordan is a prisoner in the vessel this fellow commands, and should Mason refuse, I can have terrible revenge by revealing everything to his son—so in either case I shall be gainer—for if he refuses me his daughter with a large dowry, I will place the son in possession of his fortune and claim half the spoils as my reward.”

Thus soliloquizing, he advanced to where the old merchant stood wrapt in moody meditations, and gazing apathetically upon his daughter’s inanimate form.

“Mr. Mason,” said Ruggles, in a low tone, “do you remember that night—”

“Villain!” hissed the old man, trembling like an aspen, “dare you allude to that again! Have I not purchased your silence with nearly half my wealth?”

“It is not enough for so terrible a secret,” answered Ruggles moodily—“nor do you yet know the full extent of my knowledge.”

“Not enough!” groaned Mason, “and what more would you have?”

“Your daughter’s hand!”

“My daughter’s hand!” almost yelled the old man, growing pale with passion, fear and doubt—*you!—you!* he gasped, curling his thin lip, “are you mad? Dungehill serf! dare you aspire to such a price?”

“Dare I aspire?” that is not the question, it is—dare you refuse?”

“Yes, dog!—betray me if you will—do your worst, you must suffer with me, and we will both die by the hangman ere Frances Mason becomes the wife of such as you.”

“She is like, as things go, to become the wife of a most respectable personage—to wit, the pirate yonder. Should that fellow escape I would like very much to see how you could prevent her from flying to his arms.

“Demon, it is useless to tempt me—I will not purchase my safety by sacrificing my child. No! the deed is done—and as my accomplice, you dare not, for your own sake, denounce me.”

“But the boy lives,” said Ruggles, slowly watching the effects of his words. The old man started—cleared his hands, and stood as if struck speechless with astonishment.

“Liar!” he cried, at length—“how know you this?”

“I have watched him step by step, ever since that night. I did not carry your orders into effect, but restored him to his mother—who supported him in the most ample manner till within a year since, I can produce him now, and by imparting to him a knowledge of his birth and your unnatural crime, ruin you forever!”

“Ha! I fear you not now,” cried Mason, partly recovering himself—“since he lives, what have I to fear from your developments? True, his claims might involve me in a law

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