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### At the Eleventh Hour!

CHAPTER XI.  
BELCOURT'S TORTURE.

When almost on the pinnacle of happiness, how terrible it is to be dashed down into the depths of despair!

Stephen Belcourt had tasted to the full all the bitterness of such a reverse. Rich, handsome, successful, he had come to the age of thirty with a buoyant heart full of hope and pride. Intellectually brilliant, and ambitious of political preferment, his head had overruled his heart on that golden day at Blooming Meadows, when the peerless charm of a simple maiden in her flower had lured him to love.

Oh, the sweetness of this passion to his noble heart! Who could tell its intensity?

He reckoned not that his love was a poor girl, below him in social position, while he might have chosen from among the highest in the land.

He would have stooped from a throne to raise lovely Lynette to his side.

Believing himself on the eve of being elected to the highest office in his native State, his greatest joy was that he could share his honors with the queen of his heart.

The blow that had struck down all these vaulting hopes at once was like a terrible bolt crashing down from above, laying his life in ruins.

When torn from Lynette's side by the officers of the law in the very moment when he was about to pause for her answer to his ardent suit, it caused him that his devotion had awakened a return in her tender heart. He read it in her glances, smiles and blushes, heard it in the tones of her musical voice. He, to whom life had already given so much, was to be granted this crowning favor—Lynette's love.

And in this moment of dizzy joy, on the very highest pinnacle of hope, that awful bolt had fallen and hurled him down into the valley of despair.

From that day to this, when, through the prison grating, he beheld Lynette flash past in her lover's carriage, how long had been the interval, how deep the grief!

It was like a terrible dream to him to be thrown into prison on a false charge of murder, refused bail, in spite of the efforts of distinguished counsel, and kept there helplessly, chafing against fate while his canvass was neglected, or only attended to by success friends, who despaired of his success in this fatal crisis that had befallen their candidate.

He knew that everything was going against him, that friends were falling off, that a secret influence was at work in his country detracting from the number of his voters; in short, that he was playing at a losing game with fate. But the hardest stroke of all had come in the first week of his incarceration, when his mother had brought him the news of Lynette's betrothal to Graham Prentiss. He could hardly credit it at first. He had been hoping and almost expecting every hour for a tender note telling him she loved him and believed in him. Oh, no, she could not believe him guilty! The thought was too dreadful.

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but he gazed listlessly at all, until suddenly a terrible change came over his features, a pallor like death.

An elegant turnout rattled past, and in the open carriage he saw four familiar faces, among them the peerless beauty that was mirrored on his heart.

How pale, how fair, how proud, beneath the black-plumed pretty hat, looked that most exquisite face of the girlish coquette as she turned it toward the prison window. But in that moment she seemed to forget her beauty and he did not catch Lynette's gaze of love and longing and bitter despair nor the cry that thrilled over her blanched lips as she sank fainting among the cushions. He had only one glimpse of her face, and to him she seemed proud and happy, flaunting her new splendor before his wretched eyes.

"Wretched, heartless flirt!" he groaned retreating into his cell, and falling face downward on his narrow cot, shaken to the depths of his being by that unexpected sight.

"How could she seek to torture me like this. Could she not leave me in peace, the heartless little flirt? Why she is not even worthy of my scorn! I ought to forget and forgive the soulless little stren, since she cannot be capable of feeling!"

There was a knock at his cell door, and he rose impatiently. His counsel had called to acquaint him with the facts that Myrtle Dare had been telling the occupants of the carriage when they drove past.

"The woman has seen the picture of the dead girl, and identified her as her daughter, Madge McDonald. Her married name not known," he said.

"Well, is there any hope in all this for me?"

"No; but Madge showed her photograph in a lockbox she wore about her neck, and she believes she will recognize him by that. She is coming here to-morrow to have a look at you, my dear boy."

"Pray Heaven she may come soon, for she cannot recognize in my own likeness to her villainous son-in-law whoever he may be, all her evidences must be in my favor," Belcourt answered hopefully.

"Yes, all her evidences must be in your favor," said Lawyer Price decidedly, adding: "There is quite a mystery about that lockbox the girl carried. Her mother swears that she wore it about her neck when she left her home to seek her husband. It was missing when they found her lead in the woods."

(To be continued.)

"She was betrothed to Graham Prentiss the day after your arrest," the proud old mother said bitterly; and when he answered with incredulous words, she told him all that Mr. Halliburton had said to her the day of the fair—the story corroborated afterward by Graham Prentiss.

"The girl deceived us all, Stephen dear. She was a heartless flirt, just playing fast and loose with two true-hearted men, ready to snap up the best chance. As for love, she probably does not know its meaning, as has taken Prentiss for his money, just as she intended to take you for your position. I'm sorry we ever took her up, and the best thing we can do now is to ignore her altogether."

"Yes, we will never mention her again," he replied quietly, but with all of the Belcourt pride.

So it happened that Lynette's name was not breathed in his presence again, all his friends resorting more bitterly her cruel flirtation with him. No news came to him of the long weeks in which she battled with the terrible fever, nor of the early date set for her wedding. A silence as of the grave fell between their suffering hearts, and he felt it better so. He could not have borne yet to hear of her happiness with his successful rival. He must tear her from his heart first, and it is so hard to learn to despise the thing we have once loved, to thrust from the heart its fallen idol.

Oh, what a love he had given that agony those wretched weeks? Did he not remember her in all her beauty, although he tried to hate her for her sin? What else was there to do in those weeks of martyrdom?

"So beautiful, yet false; so innocent seeming, yet coquette to her finger-tips. Where did she learn it, in this worldliness, when reared so simply in her country home?" he wondered over and over.

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|---|---|---|---|--|
| Adams, Emma, card<br>Adams, Mary, card<br>Adams, Mrs. James, card<br>Ahy, Mrs. Charles<br>Ames, J.<br>Anlie, Andrew, red.<br>Andrews, Joseph, card<br>Atkins, A. H., card | Adams, Mrs. James, card<br>Ahy, Mrs. Charles<br>Ames, J.<br>Anlie, Andrew, red.<br>Andrews, Joseph, card<br>Atkins, A. H., card<br>Bragg, Mrs. George, card<br>Bunn, Mrs. George, card<br>Bennett, Miss C., card<br>Bennett, Miss Mollie, card<br>Benson, James<br>Benson, Miss Beinda,<br>Brien, Toney, Berine St.<br>Byrne, S.<br>Boland, Mrs. J., Water St.<br>Prossau, Mrs. Wm.<br>Brown, Miss A., card<br>Brooklehurst, George,<br>Butler, E. J., Mount Scio Rd.<br>Butler, Sarah, card<br>Butler, Bella, card<br>Blunden, James,<br>Burke, Miss Mary, red.<br>Butler, Miss Annie, red.<br>Clarke, John<br>Crane, Archibald,<br>Carroll, Mrs. Kate, card<br>Campbell, Miss K., card<br>Christian, Miss Alice,<br>Chesson, Flora P.<br>Carter, Mrs. card<br>Carew, Mrs. John,<br>Corbin, W. A.<br>Conron, Teasle, Water St.<br>Congdon, Mrs. Ellen<br>Collett, Mrs. Albert<br>Cook, Miss Lillie, red.<br>Connors, Miss Albert<br>Cornell, Miss Ila M.<br>Coady, Mrs. J., card<br>Collins, Miss Estelle,<br>Condon, Mrs. Ellen,<br>Coefield, Miss A., card<br>Curnew, Wm., | Eldridge, Harding,<br>English, May, No. 7 — St.<br>Farrell, Mary, Riverhead<br>Farish, S. W.<br>Freeman, H.<br>French, Walter,<br>French, John, St. John's<br>French, Miss Mary,<br>Fisher, Mrs. Esther<br>Fitzgerald, Miss Eliza,<br>Fitzgerald, Mrs. John,<br>Foster, Miss Alice,<br>Fahy, Wm., card<br>Gannon, K. H.,<br>Gannon, Mrs. John<br>Greene, Eliza<br>Greene, Louis<br>Gillet, Arthur, George's St.<br>Gossney, James,<br>Gould, Chester, card<br>Hannon, Margaret, red.<br>Horwood, R. G.<br>Hayse, Michael,<br>Harnum, Hodley, card<br>Hayden, Laurence<br>Hancock, Florence,<br>Hannon, Mrs. Jas., B.B.<br>Hamilton, Mrs. Joseph,<br>Heuradine, Miss Bella,<br>Hennessey, J. H.,<br>Healey, Nicholas, Job's St.<br>Hepburn, Wm.<br>Hewitt, Stephen,<br>Hiscock, Mrs. Carolina,<br>Hiscock, Jessie,<br>Hignes, E.,<br>Hillyer, Wm., Power's St.<br>Higgins, F. Atence, red.<br>Hiscock, Mrs. Carolina,<br>Hunted, Thomas,<br>Hiscock, John W.<br>Holloway, Eli John,<br>House, John, Albert St.<br>Huey, James<br>Jessen, Mrs. No. 1 — St.<br>James, Mrs. H.,<br>Johnstone, Robert G.<br>Kenny, James, card,<br>Kelly, Thomas, card<br>Kerrigan, Wm.,<br>Kelly, John J.,<br>Kelloway, Miss Emily,<br>Keating, M., card<br>Keating, George<br>Keating, M. J.,<br>Kelly, John J.,<br>King, John,<br>Lapp, Chas. J.,<br>Ladd, John, Bond St.<br>Lee, Miss Beagle,<br>Lipp, Chas. J.,<br>Lipp, John, Bond St.<br>Lipp, E. W., Pleasant Street | Lyons, H. J. H.,<br>Loveless, Miss Lizzie,<br>Lowe, Moses, Water St.<br>Marsh, Miss Josie, West End<br>Marshall, Mrs. Wm., card<br>Maden, John, Cabot St.<br>Mayer, Lizzie, Hall's Hill<br>Milley, Mrs. Wm. M.,<br>Milley, Mrs. Wm. 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T., Long's Hill<br>Smith, P.<br>Smith, David<br>Simmonds, Mrs. George<br>Scott, Miss Annie D.<br>Scott, Miss Provie,<br>care Samuel Miller<br>T Try, Thomas,<br>Tumble, Ester, Castle Ray<br>Taylor, Miss Ellen,<br>Trainer, M., card<br>Turner, D., Pleasant St.<br>Tlorney, Matthew,<br>Tobin, Mrs. K., Gower St.<br>Thomas, George<br>Thompson, Catherine J.,<br>Thomas, J. A., card<br>Tucker, Mrs. Catherine,<br>Cross Roads<br>Walsh, Miss K., Field St.<br>Wagg, Albert, Queen's St.<br>Wallen, Ethel, card<br>Wakefield, Miss M. Y.,<br>Wax, Archibald<br>Wells, John, Murray St.<br>Whelan, Miss Lena,<br>New Gower Street<br>Wells, Ernest,<br>Wilson, care Gen'l P. Office<br>Whitson, Whitworth<br>Wiseman, Miss Julia,<br>White, C. J.,<br>White, Mrs. L.,<br>Williams, Mrs. Martha,<br>Atlantic Avenue<br>Wilson, R. D.,<br>Willson, Wm.,<br>late Millertown |
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