

# A True Diamond

CHAPTER X.

Forget-Me-Not.

"Wait a minute. Women are no use in such matters. Pups could always give good advice. Mr. Thomas—you know Minnie's father—wants a wife." Mr. Hales was staggered.

"Ah, poor man, but—I did not promise to find wives for my parishioners."

"It wouldn't be a bad thing though, if there was a woman who would marry him; if not, he'll go to the dogs, I know."

"It really is a good idea," said Mr. Hales. "I'll think of it; but surely he ought to fall in love?"

"Love doesn't matter much. Pups said, 'a wife that was of use for a man's grub and his clo' was the best all-round sort of wife in his opinion, and Minnie is never tidy. That bigger girl is a silly. Don't you love children? I do."

"Come in," said the Vicar. A sadness seemed to possess him at the contrast between this child of nature and his "lady patron," as Silvia called Lady Dove.

"Good-bye, Trick. I'm going to study now. Be good, Trick, because I've got to be clever."

Toney instinctively felt that she was not liked when Silvia rose languidly to greet her. There was no cordiality in her greeting, but Mrs. Hales' sweet face was kindness itself, as she said:

"We have been trying to settle a plan, Miss Whitburn, but without you it was difficult. Silvia reads history aloud every morning and writes out a piece of it afterwards. Then she does some French and German with me and some algebra with her brother. Then music—she loves music, and she often goes out sketching with the Hamilton girls."

"I don't know French and German, at least, I can talk some French, because we had a French family living near to us. I don't know a word of German and I don't want to."

"You don't like languages?" asked Mr. Hales.

"Well, I like Greek and Latin awfully. There's some sense in them."

Silvia looked up surprised.

"Oh," said Mr. Hales in a tone of pleasure. "Then I shall be of some use to you, I hope."

"But I hate music and drawing and all that rubbish. At least, no, I love pictures, but I can't draw; and as to music, I don't know one note from another, and I can't think how any one else ever does!"

Silvia was again silently scornful.

"And history?" asked Mr. Hales, smiling.

"I like legendary history. Things that you can't prove or argue about. Do you know the story of Owain and the nice lion who fought all his battles?"

"Fairy tales," said Silvia scornfully. "I'm too old for them."

"It was in Pups' jolly book. When Owain had to fight with a giant, the lion jumped right off a high wall of the castle to help him. It's just like Trick. He tore the giant from shoulder to hip, his heart was laid bare."

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and the giant fell down dead. It is really quite jolly."

"One of Arthur's knights," said Mr. Hales. "I haven't that book on Celtic tales here, but I have read it."

"That's a pity, but never mind. I know them almost by heart, and I'll tell them to you if you like," said Toney, turning to the scornful Silvia, who said, "Thank you," in a freezing voice.

"Then they wore such pretty things in those days. Yellow satin and peacocks' feathers, and they had bows and arrows of red yew. I wonder if I could find some here, Mr. Hales! Then the men as well as the women wore pearls and ermine and colored leather in their shoes. Pups said it meant Cordova leather."

"That would all be very ridiculous now," said Silvia.

"You are like Lured, the gem of light," said Toney, sitting down. "You must hear about her some day. But I'm chattering."

"You must work, Toney. Shall I make out a time-table for you?" said Mrs. Hales.

"Another! Oh, dear!" and Toney sighed. "I wrote out ever so many time-tables this morning and pinned them on all the doors downstairs at Aldersfield House, and Aunt Dove didn't like it. There's one still on the kitchen door, because, you see, I always go there early for some grub."

Silvia recoiled.

At last Mrs. Hales wrote out a suitable time-table and allowed Toney to plunge into her Greek with Mr. Hales not hoping for much result, but in this she was mistaken. Toney's education had been controlled by a man and she was by no means backward in the dead languages. History, too she had a liking for, but other accomplishments were mostly a blank in her mind.

When the allotted time was over ending with a little sewing, Toney jumped up and stretched herself.

"It's too long for one sitting. Another time I must have a run between each subject. You see, Mrs. Hales" (the Vicar had gone out after the Greek) "the body is all important. It must be fed with fresh air very frequently. I'm sure Miss Silvia here hasn't had enough fresh air. She is the Earl's child, 'A mayden as white as whales' bones."

"Whales' bones!" exclaimed Silvia, by no means flattered. "Whalebone is black."

"Pups said it wasn't our whale, but the sea-unicorn's tooth—but at home we always called pale people 'whale bones.'"

"You must go back now. Will some one meet you?" said Mrs. Hales.

"I fancy Crumpet will; but I'll get there before she's far ahead. Good-bye. I think lessons here won't be bad if I may have a run out now and then."

Toney disappeared with a rush, which was followed by the barking of Trick and the bang of the front gate.

CHAPTER XI.  
A KNIGHT ERRANT.

At luncheon-time Lady Dove was satisfied that she had done right by Antonia, for she was as quiet as a mouse. Miss Crump had worked very hard all the morning, but her pale

face was not noticed by her employer, Toney, who was beginning to "stretch out," as she expressed it to herself, noticed the poor companion's weary look, so she sat and meditated upon a remedy. This it was which kept her so quiet till Lady Dove remarked.

"Sir Evas is coming back by the six o'clock train, Miss Crump. He will bring with him two gentlemen to dine and sleep. Tell Stone about it. I should like the dinner-table flowers done again. They were very heavy-looking yesterday, even Diggins can do them better when he tries. Also, please, see that Antonia tries on her dress this afternoon. Rivett has cut down my grey silk for her."

"I knew it would be grey!" exclaimed Toney. "Pink is prettier, don't you think, for young people, Aunt Dove?"

"I don't expect you, Antonia, to have a choice."

"Ah! yes, I forgot," said Toney happily. "A poor relation ought to be dressed in grey."

(To be continued.)

"How dreadful," said Silvia. "Oh, mother, how could you let her come here?"

"She is a very intelligent girl and she has beautiful eyes."

"If people have beautiful eyes you and Cecil forgive them everything," said Silvia.

Mr. Hales came in at this moment. "Cecil, how dreadful! She called me 'whalebones!' I really think she is a little off her head."

"She is a little wild certainly; but did you notice her eyes, Silvia?"

"There, I said so, just because her eyes are bright, you and mother forgive her her odd manners."

"The windows of the soul. But, indeed, she has good abilities in some directions at all events."

"She does not know one note from another."

"She is very natural," said Mrs. Hales.

Silvia was silent, but she, nevertheless, allowed a dislike for Toney to take root in her mind.

Toney, in the meanwhile, was hurrying home. Just as she reached the park gate she heard the trot of a horse, and in another moment Lewis Waycott stopped by her side.

"Good morning, Miss Whitburn. Have you been riding?"

"No, I have been driving mentally. I'm sleepy in consequence, and I want to run off the stiffness."

"You don't like study?"

"Well, it's not quite natural to me. Do you like dogs and birds?"

"Certainly, especially in September."

"You like killing them. That's horrible! I thought you were like Owain who killed them for themselves."

"Who might he be, Miss Whitburn?"

"Toney, please. We're friends, aren't we?"

"Friends, of course! I've got a first-rate hunter for you if you will ride him."

"Wouldn't I! But—Aunt Dove—Still, no, she wouldn't mind if I broke my neck; but she would have to pretend to care, and that would be tiresome for her, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, very; but more so for you. Still, from what I have seen, you will be safe on any animal."

"Do you like white whalebones, Mr. Squire? That's Mr. Hales' sister."

"Miss Hales is very pretty, people say."

"She's not my sort. I like him."

"The vicar?"

"Yes. He's kind. Aunt Dove says he preaches too long sermons on Sunday morning. Do you think so?"

"Well, yes; but I'm not fond of sermons."

"Does he mean all he says?"

"I fancy so."

"That's a pity. If so I can't tell him to be shorter. I won't hurt his feelings. Good-bye, Mr. Squire. I should like to ride this afternoon only 'm going to give Miss Crump a good time."

"She hasn't much of that I fear."

"Gracious stars! No! Uncle Dove and I are learning to be companions o Aunt Dove so as to take her place one day," and with this piece of information Toney put her hands on her gate and vaulted over it.

"She is certainly very original," said Lewis, and he rode home with a smile on his lips.

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