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**REMORSE and REPENTANCE.**

—OR—

**For Daisie's Sake**

CHAPTER XXX.  
REMORSE AND REPENTANCE.

"A pleasure! Oh, God!" and his husky voice almost broke as he continued: "Let me speak; let me tell you my real motive, and then you will see that I am not quite a fiend!"

Without waiting for her permission, he went on with his reasons in such an eloquent voice that she could not doubt his truth.

"Do you think it does not stab me to the heart to look on my accursed work? Do you think I am so vile I cannot repent and wish to expiate the deed by a life's devotion? Yes, I am a changed man, Annette. My former madness would not be possible to me now. I am a crushed and broken man, sin-stricken, sorrowful, repentant. I wish to devote my life to Royall Sherwood, so as to alleviate as far as possible the sufferings I have caused. Could remorse and repentance further go? I ask nothing of you or any one but the privilege to remain near him and give up the best that is in me for his comfort. Will you grant me that longed-for boon?"

"Yes," she murmured, very low; then added: "But you and I, Ray Der- ing, must meet hereafter as the care- less strangers we appear to our friends."

"Oh, yes; I understand all that. I shall not presume, believe me, al- though," with stifled bitterness, "there might be women tender enough to forgive even such sins as mine when a man was driven mad by love of them."

"I am not one of them," Annette an- swered, with cruel frankness. "You were not worthy of my love; you dis- trusted it, and now it lies cold and dead in my bosom, never to awake again!"

"I deserve your contempt and scorn. I cannot resent it," he answered hum- bly; adding: "And you were noble enough to keep my secret. It was great of you. Let me thank you."

"I did it because—I had loved you once!" she murmured, hastily leaving him to his own unpleasant reflections.



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CHAPTER XXXI.  
THE CRUEL TRUTH.

That afternoon the sun came out as bright and warm as in April, and tempted Daisie and Annette to go out for a spin on their bicycles.

"And let us call for Luttie. Perhaps she will like to join us," said Daisie, who had grown almost fond of the deceitful little widow who had chosen to be very kind to her since her treachery had succeeded so well.

As they pedaled along on their shining wheels, both so beautiful, though as different as night and morning in their dark and light types, they attracted much attention and admiration; but their thoughts were too busy with recent events to notice it. Daisie seemed to be charmed over the knowledge that her afflicted husband had secured so suitable a companion.

"He will have no more lonely hours now, with this delightful man to amuse him. Oh, what a burden it lifts from my mind!" she cried gladly.

"Are you learning to love Royall at last, Daisie?" exclaimed Annette.

The dark-blue eyes turned a sweet, sad gaze on the other's face.

"I love Royall as a friend or a brother—that is all; but I pity him so— I pity him so!" she sighed.

"Perhaps, if he should grow strong and well, some time you might learn to love him as a husband?"

A sudden pallor drifted over the blooming face, flushed by the exercise of wheeling.

"I—I am afraid not," Daisie answered sadly; adding: "Oh, Annette, all my love was given once, and thrown back upon my heart! After such a shock I can never love again."

And her thoughts flew back in anguish to that night when she had been so cruelly sundered from Dallas Bain by the plotting of Royall and his cousin—plotting that she never could have forgiven had it not been proved to her afterward that Dallas Bain was unworthy of her love.

Oh, the bitterness of that knowl- edge! Could she ever forget the anguish of the first days after she woke to the truth—the crushing struggle between love and pride—the humiliation of knowing that he had de- serted her for silly, chattering Letty, Mrs. Fleming's servant?

Suddenly she gave such a start that she nearly lost her balance on the wheel.

As they wheeled around the corner, toward Mrs. Fleming's elegant brown- stone mansion, they came face to face with a man loitering on the corner as if waiting for some one, and—the man was James Cullen!

Yes, it was Mrs. Fleming's old ser- vant, whom no one had heard of since he left Sea View, swearing that he would find Letty and her lover, and kill them both.

Impulsively Daisie flung herself from her wheel. Annette following her example, and beckoned the man to ap- proach.

He slouched toward them sullenly, looking as if he had far rather run away. He was well dressed, in a loud, flashy style, with rings on his stubby fingers, and a thick gold watch chain ostentatiously paraded across his plaid vest.

"How do you do, Cullen? I'm glad to find you looking so prosperous. Did—did you ever find Letty Green?" de- manded Daisie breathlessly.

Cullen turned red and pale by turns, and shuffled his feet confusedly, giv- ing a rapid, furtive glance down the street toward Mrs. Fleming's mansion; then he blurted out eagerly:

"No, madame; I swear I've never caught up with the little baggage yet!"

With that, he turned quickly from them, and hurried around the corner, losing himself in the crowds on Fifth Avenue.

"The man looked as if he were ly- ing!" exclaimed Annette, as they re- mounted their wheels.

A few more turns brought them to the widow's house, and, to their amazement, they saw Letty Green coming down the marble steps, gayly dressed, and looking quite as prospe- rous as Cullen, a look of satisfaction on her pert little face.

Daisie and Annette looked at each other with a vague suspicion in their eyes, and the latter cried, in a trou- bled voice:

"Don't let us speak to the girl—oh, don't!"

But again Daisie sprang from her wheel in front of the approaching girl, exclaiming sharply:

"Stop, Letty Green, I wish to speak to you!"

Letty paused, with an insolent smile, and swept them both a curtsey.

"I'm sure I'm glad to see you again

Mrs. Sherwood and Miss Janowitz."

Daisie spoke again, and a strange impulse made her exclaim coolly: "Letty, we saw Cullen waiting for you at the corner. So you married him, after all?"

Imposed on by the quietly assertive tone, and supposing Cullen had con- fessed the truth, Letty answered fal- teringly:

"Yes, madam."

"And," pursued Daisie gaspingly, her face death-white, "perhaps—per- haps—you didn't elope with Mr. Bain—after all. It—it—was a lie you wrote to Cullen, was it not?"

"Come away, Daisie," pleaded An- nette; but she shook off the gentle hand impatiently.

"Answer me," she said imploringly, to Letty, a wild hope springing in her tortured heart. "Did you go away with—him—or not?"

The girl hung her head in shame, and muttered defiantly:

"Yes, madam, I did elope with Mr. Bain. I can't deny the truth."

But falsehood was written on her face and in her eyes that she dare not uplift to the girl she had wronged.

Daisie cried bitterly:

"Then where is he now? Why are you with Cullen instead of—?" Her voice broke with emotion, and the crafty Letty rejoined meekly:

"Oh, Mrs. Sherwood, can't you un- derstand? He—that Dallas Bain, was a—betrayer of innocence! After he persuaded me to go away he wouldn't marry me. He got tired of me in a month, and then he disappeared, the wretch! Then I was starving—I tried to find him, but I could not, and I was going to drown myself when I chanced to meet Cullen, who had come to the city to look for me—to kill me, as he said. But my misery melted his heart. He forgave me, and agreed to make an honest woman of me if I would behave myself. So I married him, the good, kind soul, and—oh, there he is waiting for me now. Excuse me, ladies;" and Letty darted away to join her husband, who had sneaked back to the corner.

Annette felt like a criminal before her friend that she did not cry out that Letty's story was a falsehood, that Dallas Bain was true and good, and that his sweetheart had been run- ded away from him by the most dastard- ly plot in the world.

She could have wept as she saw the white agony of Daisie's face—poor Daisie, whose springing hopes had been so cruelly dashed to earth again, for it did not occur to her to cast doubt on Letty's specious story.

But again Annette said to herself that in this case ignorance was bliss. She dare not speak, for Daisie's own sake.

But she put her arm around the girl's trembling form and supported her up the steps.

"Oh, my poor dear, you are almost fainting! I wish you had not spoken to that husky!" she lamented.

Mrs. Fleming was startled at the pailor of her visitor, and exclaimed:

"You have had an accident?"

"No; she has seen Cullen and his wife, Letty, outside your door," ex- plained Annette, as she held Daisie's head against her breast and patted her cold cheek.

Mrs. Fleming rang for wine, and helped Annette to fuss over agitated Daisie.

"No wonder she is unnerved, poor child!" she said. "I suppose they told you their romantic story—that Mr. Bain deserted Letty, and Cullen found her about to drown herself, and married her offhand. Well, this is the second time that they have come here begging to be taken back into my ser- vice. Of course, I refused, although they were very good help when I had them. But I knew Daisie would not wish to see them about. Drink a little of this wine, dear, it will help you. Now, tell me how Royall likes his new companion. Finds him charming, does he? I am very glad of that. He is very handsome and distinguished-looking, is he not? Do you know there is some- thing familiar about him, as if I had seen him before? And it almost seems to me it was at Gull Beach? Can you recall anything familiar about him, Annette?"

(to be continued.)

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(to be continued.)



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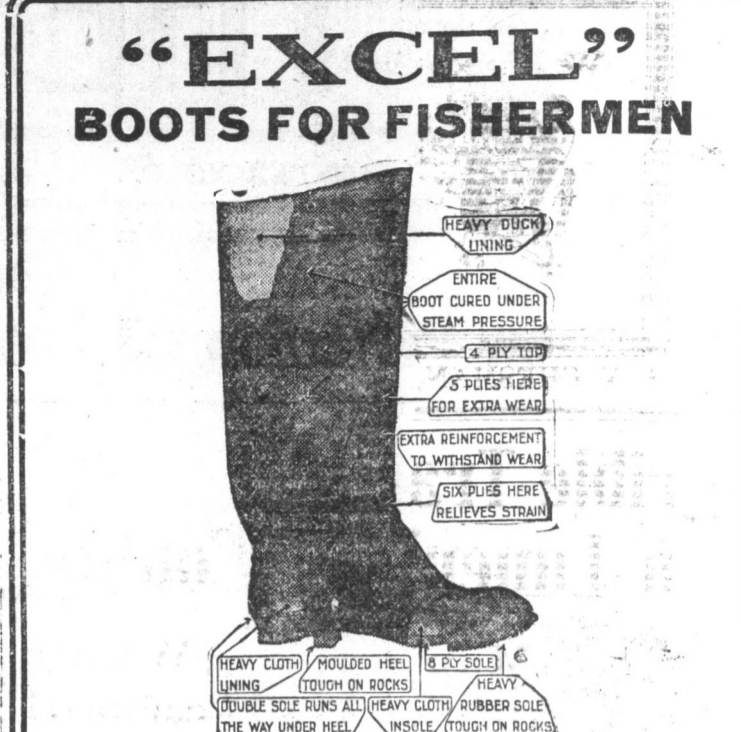
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