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THE  
**Lady of the Night**

Amelia Makes a Success

CHAPTER XVII

Master Cyril can tell you all about it, for he spends a rare sight of his time there; he'll take 'em there and show it 'em—Margery, give the gentleman some more tea. Where be they eyes, lass?

They were gazing alternately at Elliot and Cyril; and Margery was so absorbed in her contemplation of them that she started, and knocked over a tea-cup. Both Elliot and Nora put out a hand to save it, with the inevitable result. The tea was spilt. Elliot looked at Nora's hand fixedly; it was, alas! too small for a boy's but it had got very brown and somewhat rough by exposure to the strong Lonaway wind, and her occasional amateur work in the quarry; so he looked away again, doubt and perplexity in his eyes. Fortunately for Nora, Hodges monopolised the conversation, and she was not obliged to speak again until the supper had been finished.

"Now, do 'ee light your pipe, Mr. Graham," said Hodges heartily. "I can see some good tobacco," he added, with a laugh and a wink; for smugling, in a small way, is not quite extinct, at Lonaway at any rate.

Elliot filled his pipe, lit it, and went to the door, saying to Nora as he did so:

"I suppose you know every part of the island?"

"Oh, yes," she said, also going to the door, and leaning against the side, with her hands thrust in her pockets. She looked so like a boy that even her father might have been deceived; but her face was still uneasy, still tormented by doubt.

"You said you didn't know Byeworthy," he remarked, as casually as could.

Nora shrugged her shoulders; she was

afraid of committing herself; and waited for something further.

"I thought you might have known or heard of some of the people near there," said Elliot. "For instance, did you ever hear of the Ryalls, an old family there?"

The moment had come, and it brought with it an idea which flashed across Nora's mind with the rapidity of lightning.

"Oh, yes," she said, quite easily, "they are a kind of connection of mine."

Elliot uttered an exclamation. "That accounts for it!" he said.

"Account for what?" asked Nora indifferently.

"Why, for your likeness to them," he explained. "You are the very image of Nor—Miss Ryall."

"Am I? I hope she's good-looking," retorted Nora impudently.

Elliot made no response, and was silent for a time; then he said, very quietly—

"Have you heard anything about her?"

"Yes," he said, smoking hard. "She's going to be married. She's in London—no, abroad, by this time. I was up in London lately, and heard of it. That's why I asked."

Nora promptly seized on the opportunity.

"I fancy I did hear something about it," she said, with an assumption of indifference. "Yes, I remember. What's the unfortunate man's name?"

"I don't know," said Elliot. "I didn't hear. He's a rich man, I believe—they say so."

"Luck for her," remarked Nora. "Well, I hope they'll be happy. I've never seen her, so I'm not very much interested. They are only distant connections of mine; she's a sort of cousin, I suppose."

"You might be brother and sister by the likeness," remarked Elliot, "only that you are shorter than she is."

He did not know that even a tall girl will look short in male clothing. "You have got the same eyes," he scanned Nora's face, and she held her breath and struggled with the rising colour; "the same mouth, the same coloured hair—only hers is longer, of course."



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and strangely enough, your voice is like hers, only gruffer."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Nora, with a laugh. "I hope she really is good-looking!"

"She's the prettiest, most beautiful girl I have ever seen," said Elliot; and he turned away his head, and therefore did not see the flush which suffused Nora's face.

"Do you care for a stroll?" he asked presently. "I got rather cramped in the boat. By the way," he added, as they walked down the path, "Captain Marks sent all sorts of kind messages to you. You seem to have got the right side of him, my boy. He was talking about you nearly all the way across."

"He's a good sort, is the Captain," remarked Nora. "I shall get him to take me for a cruise, with him."

"What are you doing on the island?" inquired Elliot. To her immense relief he had fallen into the tone of a man addressing a lad much younger than himself.

"Oh, just fooling about," she said. "I'm waiting for Hodges and Shuffley—that's the man who runs the quarry—to make up their minds to pay their rents."

"Shuffley? That's the man at whose place I am to find a bed while I am here," said Elliot. "You might show me the way."

"All right," assented Nora, with a sense of relief; she would be relieved of the night, at least. "How long are you going to stay here?"

"I don't know," replied Elliot. "Until I'm called back, some weeks, at any rate. I've thrown up my situation at Byeworthy."

"Oh, what did you do there?" asked Nora.

"Managed Sir Joseph Ferrand's stud," replied Elliot. "Did you ever hear of him?"

"Don't remember; may have," said Nora, with a yawn. "Take care how you go; it's dark, and it's rather steep here."

Elliot laughed, and laid his hand on her shoulder. "Thank you, my boy," he said, "one would think I were a fine lady you'd been told to look after."

Nora trembled a little at the touch of his hand, and stepped from under it.

"You don't know the place, and I do," she said impatiently. "There's Shuffley's hut, just below us."

"Right!" said Elliot. "I think I'll go straight down and turn in. Say good-night to the Hodges for me, will you? Very nice people. The girl is rather pretty, too," he added, casually and indifferently enough; but Nora shot a sharp glance at him, and her dark brows came together, as was their wont when she was annoyed.

"Do you think so?" she said. "Can't say I admire your taste. Don't fancy girls with eyes like saucers and hair like tow."

"Eh?" said Elliot, his attention arrested by the sharpness of her tone. "I thought she had rather good eyes; and her hair isn't a bit like tow; more like gold. But I scarcely noticed her."

"You seemed to have noticed her pretty closely," retorted Nora shortly. "That's your way down there. Good-night!"

Elliot stopped and held out his hand; Nora tried to ignore it, but the affection would have been futile. She put out her hand, which was completely absorbed by his.

"You've got a paw like a girl's," he remarked; "yes, it's more like a girl's than a boy's."

Nora snatched her hand away, and crimsoned with what he thought was anger.

"And you've got cheek enough for two boys," she said sharply.

He laughed good-temperedly as she turned away abruptly, and he went down the steep path. She stopped at a minute or two, and looked down at the reading figure. At first her face was darkened by a frown, caused by his praise of Margery; then the frown cleared away, and a smile took its place, and she murmured—

"The prettiest, most beautiful girl I have ever seen!"

Strange inconsistency of the feminine nature! The pleasure she derived from that little speech of Elliot's effaced for the moment the peril in which she stood, the risk of discovery which still hung over her.

She went back to the farm slowly. As she entered they were discussing Elliot, for whom she said good-night, and Hodges was evidently very much struck by the new-comer.

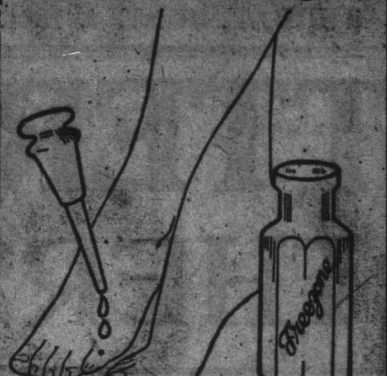
When Nora came down next morning she was a little nervous; for she knew that she was not yet out of the wood, and that she would have to be on her guard lest a chance word should betray her. Early as she was, Elliot had been at the farm some time, and was in the garden talking to Margery, who stood listening shyly, softly beating her lips with a rose. The little action somehow annoyed Nora, and she almost pushed past them, with a curt good-morning in answer to Margery's gentle greeting and Elliot's brief nod.

She did not come in to breakfast until the others had finished, and Hodges informed her that Elliot had gone down to the quarry and would be glad if Cyril would follow him, as he wanted to talk to him.

"Oh, did he?" said Nora, with a toss of her chin. "I was not aware that Mr. Graham was my master, or that I am at his disposal. As it happens, I have something else to do this morning."

But she went down to the quarry. Elliot was there with Shuffley, and had taken off his coat and was bearing a hand with a huge boulder. Nora sat

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on the edge of the cutting, and pulled idly at a tuft of grass as she looked on. Presently Elliot caught sight of her and called out—

"Hi, youngster, come down here!"

Nora flushed, and pretended not to hear him, and he repeated the command in a tone calculated to awaken the dead.

"Thanks; I'm very comfortable here," she called back.

"Come down, you lazy young beggar!" shouted Elliot good-temperedly. "I want you to give us a hand here."

"Not for me, thank you," said Nora. "I've been there before. I know what lending a hand with that granite means; besides, it's too hot."

Elliot shrugged his shoulders, laughed, and went on with his work, and Nora lounged in an obtrusively indolent attitude, and watched them. Presently she heard a footstep; and up came Miss Margery with a can and a basket. Nora rose at once.

"Thank you, Margery," she said amiably. "So kind of you to bring some lunch!"

"It's for Mr. Graham as well," said the ingenious Margery, with her eyes downcast.

"Of course," said Nora pleasantly. "I'm going down; I'll take it to him. Don't you wait. I know you are busy. And I saw a cow in the cornfield." Oh, Nora!

Margery went off to drive away the imaginary cow, and Nora descended, with the basket and the can.

"Oh, you've come now there's something to eat," remarked Elliot, eyeing Nora with the good nature of a giant.

"You don't seem to be too fond of work, Cyril!"

"That can't be so," said Shuffley. "Master Cyril often comes and takes a turn with us. I don't know what ails 'un this morning!"

Nora said nothing, but distributed the food, and sat eating her share in contemplative silence. Shuffley and Elliot fell to again directly after lunch; but Nora held aloof, and presently she rose, and was going up to the level, but Elliot called to her to wait for a minute or two, so she sat down half-way up and waited. He flung himself down beside her, extending his long limbs after the strain, and breathing a sigh of satisfaction.

"Is there any more granite on the island?" he asked.

"It's all granite, I should think," replied Nora indifferently.

"By George!" he murmured. "I don't know very much about it, but it seems to me that the owner has got a fortune in this place."

"Oh?" said Nora, as indifferently as before.

"Yes. The thing only wants working properly. At present they are only getting out odd bits here and there, and working in the most primitive fashion. I've seen some quarries worked in Australia; they have steam drills, all sorts of machinery, like cranes; and they might have the same sort of thing here."

(To be continued)



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