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CHAPTER IV.
In Love With A Face.

Cyril Burne started slightly and wheeled his chair aside, then got up and began pacing the room with quick, restless steps.

Jack Wesley mixed a couple of drinks with deliberate precision.

"Walk up, walk up!" he murmured, "the lion is now about to be fed—or rather drunk. I wonder how much Mrs. Brown, the landlady, will charge for the carpet; perhaps if you'd take a 'lap' round the other side of the table—"

"Thus, adjured, Cyril stopped short, and taking up his glass, seated himself on the table.

"That's better," remarked Jack Wesley, dropping into the chair; "now we can talk—that is, if you can tear your mind away from the romantic episode of the mysterious voice on the terrace; and I should like to ask you, my dear Cyril, what you intend to do?"

Cyril flashed his dark eyes on him, still rather absently.

"What I intend to do?"

"Exactly," said Jack, puffing at his pipe and nursing his knee, a favorite trick of his. "When a week ago you came into—burst into—would be the more exact expression—my chambers with the proposal that I should accompany you on a trip to Santeigh, County Berks, you asserted, in response to my question 'Why?' that you wanted to make some sketches for the new picture which is one day to startle the artistic world, and blazon your name on the head roll of Fame. You also remarked that it would be a capital chance for my getting a few rustic ideas for a poem, a novel, or a play. Is not that so?"

Cyril nodded with a half-smile.

"In a weak moment, a very weak moment, I consented. I may remark that I always do consent to your proposals, and that I never fail to rue my weakness. This instance is no exception to the general rule. We have been in this secluded spot for two whole days. Your sketches are represented by that insane outline of a tree," he pointed his pipe at a canvas on an easel, "and my rustic ideas have not yet suggested themselves. 'Instead of which,' as the magistrate observed, we have perpetrated a sample of mad trespassing which ought to have landed us in the village quid, or obtained for us a charge of shot or a revolver bullet apiece. I like adventures—for other persons; as for me, writing about 'em is good enough; and I beg to state that I politely, but emphatically, refuse to accompany you in any further exploit, whether it take the shape of prowling like burglars at midnight about a noble mansion, or breaking about a church. And I would also like to ask, when are you going to return to town?"

Cyril Burne laughed slowly again.

"Jack, if you'd been born dumb you'd have been as nearly perfect as a man could be," he said.

"Thanks for your kind appreciation, but allow me to remark that that is not an answer to my question. Please—I ask it as a special favor—don't begin to prance up and down again!" For Cyril had got off the table, and threatened to resume his restless pacing. He desisted, however, and went and leaned up against the mantelshelf, and looked down at the spectacled face with a curious expression, half-sad, half-wistful.

"Jack," he said, and there was a certain gravity in his deep, musical voice, "you are the only friend I have in the world, and sometimes I am sorely tempted to tell you, to confide—"

He stopped, and Jack Wesley regarded him seriously.

"Never give way to temptation, Cyril," he said, succinctly.

"And yet I have vowed to keep my secret."

"The fool makes a vow, the wise man keeps it," murmured Jack.

"Did it ever occur to you, Jack, that though you and I have been close friends for nearly a twelvemonth, you know as little about me as you did the night we met. You remember? The night you found me sauntering over Waterloo Bridge and looking at the water?"

"Yes, I remember," assented Wesley.

"I was without a penny, with the key to the street," his voice softened, and he leaned forward, and laid his hand on the other man's shoulder.

"And generally miserable. Having been in the same condition myself, I

know the signs and felt a fellow-feeling."

"You stopped and spoke," resumed Cyril, his voice so full of music that it stirred the heart of the listener, "and insisted upon my coming home with you and sharing your supper. You asked no questions, and therefore got no fibs. And you have asked none from that hour to this." z

"What proves that I have not inherited my Mother Eve's crowning fault—curiosity," put in Jack under his breath.

"You took me on trust, helped me to gain my living—were in short, that rarest of all rare things, a friend, a true friend in need; and, as a return for all your kindness, I refuse to confide in you!"

There was, silence for a moment, then Jack Wesley looked up.

"Why should you confide in me?" he said. "Keep your secret, whatever it may be, my dear Cyril. I am quite content with my ignorance concerning it. A man's a poor kind of friend who wants to pry into his chum's private affairs. And now, will you come back to London to-morrow?"

Cyril Burne thrust his hands in his pockets, and frowned at the carpet.

"No," he said, not ill-naturedly, but with firm emphasis, "Jack, I cannot."

Jack Wesley knocked the ashes from his pipe and regarded it intently before saying anything further; then he said:

"Then I must go alone. All play and no work will make Jack a hungry boy. You can paint down here as well—better than in town; I must be near my books. Yes, I'll return; but—"

He paused, and, getting up, regarded the handsome, pensive face with a shrewd smile. "You didn't see the lady—old or young—who quoted Shakespeare on the terrace to-night, Cyril?"

Cyril Burne's face reddened under its tan, but he raised his eyes, and met his friend's gaze steadily.

"No," he said. "I know what you mean, and I plead guilty. Jack, I'll tell you what keeps me here. You will laugh—I can't help it. You'll think me mad, even if you don't say so; perhaps I am. Well, then, this afternoon when I left you for a stroll I sauntered towards the court gates to get a view of the house. As I was standing there a carriage came up. It stopped while the lodge-keeper was opening the gates, and I saw an old man and a girl inside. She looked out for a moment, I only caught a glimpse of her face, but—he passed and looked straight before him, his eyes glowing with a look which Jack Wesley had never observed in them before—"I see her now! Jack, it was the most beautiful face I have ever seen. I stood rooted to the spot. She did not see me, and her eyes—"

He paused again. "Do you know that picture in the left-hand corner of the large room of the National Gallery, Jack?"

Jack Wesley nodded. He was not smiling now.

"They were like the girl's in the

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"It was," he assented grimly. "I'd cut out of harm's way; that is to say, would go through fire and water to miles away from Santeigh Court and see her again!"

"And you imagine, suspect, that the girl who resembles the De Vincet voice you heard was hers?" suggested this. For all you know she may be Jack Wesley.

Cyril raised his eyes.

"Yes, I think so," he said in a low voice. "At any rate, she is on a visit to voice. They were silent for a space, an earl. She may be no end of a then with a long breath he said, as well herself—"

if to sum up the matter: "Now you "And I am a miserable painter," know why I cannot go back with you broke in Cyril. "I know. There is Jack."

"I think I understand," said Wesley, thought of, and yet I cannot go. ley, gravely, "and you make a great Leave me here, Jack, for a few days mistake if you think I am going to try at least. I know it's madness, but— and persuade you; but you'll let me well, knowing it won't cure it."

say that, if I were indeed the friend Jack Wesley nodded, a nod of com- you call me, I should secure you by prehension.

main force and convey you as a luna- (To be continued)

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I'VE A LITTLE POKER PARTY ON FOR TONIGHT.

LBRT
DVD
LMR
GRG
SML
LXNDR
NDRW
THDR

The man's wife is at the seashore spending her vacation and his money. He has decided to give a little stag party, and has made a list of the guys who are to be there. He has left out the vowels in the names for reasons of his own. What are the eight names. The first is ALBERT.

Answer to yesterday's puzzle: Welch (welc CH). McCann.

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