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WHEN LOVE Came Too Late.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Olivia's Testimony.

The squire shook his head silently. "Look at the revolver again. You see those initials? Is it usual for Lord Clydesfold to cut his initials—the initials of his assumed name—on articles belonging to him?"

"No. I never knew him to do such a thing before."

"Do you consider that those initials have been recently cut, Lord Granville?"

"Really, my lord," said Mr. Sewell, "this is not evidence."

"I shall not interfere," said the judge, almost grimly.

"They are recently cut," said Bertie. "It never belonged to Lord Clydesfold. He wouldn't have bought a revolver of this description; a trumpery, a silver-plated thing!" and he put it from him with a gesture of contempt which made the crowd exchange glances.

"You left England suddenly, Lord Granville," said Mr. Edgar; "you saw your friend Lord Clydesfold before you left?"

"I did; a few hours before. I have cause to remember it."

Mr. Edgar pricked up his ears. "May I ask you what you mean?"

"Will you tell us why you left England?"

Bertie glanced for one half-second toward the pale, lovely face which to him was like a star in the eager, crowded court.

"Must I answer that?" he said.

"You must."

"I left in consequence of a great disappointment," said poor Bertie, his face downcast.

"A love disappointment?" asked Mr. Edgar, who would have spared no one in his endeavor to save the client who would not stretch out a finger to save himself. "Did Lord Clydesfold know of

this?"

"He did," said Bertie in a low voice. "He had been, as he has always been, the truest, staunchest friend through this trouble. It was he who advised me to go abroad, who gave me the sympathy and counsel of a brother. I owe it to him that I did not give way and go to the bad—"

He stopped and raised his eyes—they were moist—to the spot where Olivia sat.

Mr. Edgar saw the glance, and his own eyes grew keen.

"I am sorry to have to ask you the question, but I must do it. Was the lady with whom you were in love, Miss Vanley?"

Bertie flushed, then he raised his head, and said in a low voice:

"It was Miss Vanley."

"Now Mrs. Bradstone?" said Mr. Edgar.

Olivia covered her face with her hands, feeling that every eye was fixed upon her. Then she withdrew her hands and looked full at Bertie with an expression of sisterly love and pity.

"And Lord Clydesfold knew of your devotion? Now, Lord Granville, I am going to ask you a question which may give you and others pain; but I am fighting for my client's, your friend's, life, and I charge you answer it! Have you reason to believe that Lord Clydesfold also loved that young lady?"

Bertie started, and his face went pale, then he said:

"I did not think so, but—"

"Go on."

"I think so now!"

The crowded court swayed to and fro in its intense excitement, and looked from the pale face of the prisoner to Bertie, and then to Olivia as she sat white as a statue, her eyes fixed on vacancy, and yet seeing the dark, sad ones of the prisoner.

Mr. Edgar's brain went to work. He was still in the dark, and yet he began to feel as if a glimmer of light were penetrating the mystery.

"Knowing that he was already married, he would not admit this to you?" he asked.

"No, a thousand times no!" said Bertie. "I have already said my friend is the soul of honor," and he half-turned to the dock.

Mr. Edgar bowed to him.

"Thank you, Lord Granville. I now call Mr. Vanley."

The poor squire went into the box, Bertie taking his hand and pressing it as he passed.

"How pale and worried the poor squire do look!" murmured a man, and an echo of sympathy ran around.

"Tell us what you know of Lord Clydesfold, if you please, sir," said Mr. Edgar, with all a young man's respect for age.

The squire, in a low yet distinct voice, told the story the reader knows so well.

"Do you think him capable of committing a murder?"

"Quite—quite incapable," said the squire, and he was about to leave the box, when Mr. Edgar stopped him with a question.

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"This murder was discovered some few hours after the marriage of Miss Vanley to Mr. Bradstone?"

"It was," said the squire, gravely. "He was a friend of Lord Clydesfold's. I will call him next. He is in court, I suppose?" and he looked around.

"He is not in court. He is abroad," said the squire.

Mr. Edgar's eyes glittered.

"Abroad," he said, as if carelessly. "Why has he gone abroad?"

"He was called by business."

"When did he leave, sir?" asked Mr. Edgar.

"Two nights ago," said the squire.

"Really, my lord, I must admit that this appears to me quite irrelevant and calculated to cause unnecessary pain to others," said Mr. Sewell.

"I see no reason to interfere," said the judge again.

"When did you see him last?"

The squire thought a moment before answering.

"When did Mrs. Bradstone see him last?" asked Mr. Edgar again.

The squire paused a second.

"On the wedding day."

Mr. Edgar began to fidget with his brief; his keen eyes veiled by their lids.

"The tidings of the murder were brought into the hall while the wedding party was waiting, and—and my daughter fell in a swoon. She has been ill for some time since—is ill now," and the squire's voice quavered.

Mr. Edgar inclined his head.

"Be assured, sir," he said, "that you have my sympathy, and that of all well-intentioned men. But it is my painful duty to ask you more questions. She has not seen Mr. Bradstone since the wedding day?"

"You cannot ask him that; how can he answer it with any certainty?" said Mr. Sewell, as if really his patience at these irregular questions had become exhausted.

"Good," said Mr. Edgar, promptly. "I call Mrs. Bradstone."

A thrill ran through the court; and suddenly Fardeane leaned forward and laid his hand on Mr. Edgar's shoulder.

"No!" he said, sternly.

Mr. Edgar looked up at him with respectful firmness.

"Pardon me, my lord," he said. "Mrs. Bradstone, please!"

Olivia rose trembling, and now, for the moment, her pale face was crimson. Bertie sprang forward and gave her his arm, and she walked into the box. And now, for the first time, the calm demeanor which the prisoner had maintained with apparently no effort, broke down. He was seen to tremble, and his hands clasped and unclasped each other on the edge of the dock.

As she passed, she raised her eyes to his, and looked at him with such a steadfast gaze of pity and trust and devotion, that his own gaze faltered, and, with an almost audible groan for the suffering she was about to endure, he turned his head away.

She grasped the front of the box

tightly; Bertie stood close beside her, her father just below her. Mr. Edgar arranged his notes to give her a few moments to prepare herself, then he said:

"Mrs. Bradstone, I deeply regret having to call you, and believe me I will cause you as little pain as possible, and will detain you not one moment longer than I am obliged. You know Lord Clydesfold—that is, Mr. Fardeane?"

"Yes," came from her pale lips.

"He is as close a friend of yours as he is of your father's?"

"Yes."

"Did you know that he was married?"

"No," and a spasm of pain passed over her lovely face.

"You did not, until this morning, here in court?"

"No."

"I ask you—I am sorry to have to do so—has Lord Clydesfold ever expressed his love for you?"

It was an awful moment. She raised her eyes bravely.

"Yes."

"When?"

"He spoke—in an unguarded moment—a few words; that was all."

"And recalled them instantly, I imagine?"

"He did; ah, yes, he did!" she said.

"Did he know that you were engaged to Mr. Bradstone; did you tell him?"

"I did."

"So that," said Mr. Edgar, with one eye on the jury, "he knew there would be no hope of winning you, even if he were free?"

"No," she answered, faintly.

"And you still continued friends?"

"Yes."

"Such friends that you would have gone to him in any trouble?"

"Ah, yes!" she breathed.

"Then you married Mr. Bradstone, with whom you were in love?" he went on, his keen eyes, made pitiless by his desire to win the unequal battle, fixed searchingly on her.

"I married him, yes," was the almost inaudible reply.

"With whom you were in love?"

"I submit, my lord," began Mr. Sewell; but the judge held up his hand. With the rest he was hanging upon these questions in breathless silence.

"Answer me, please. Wait! I shall ask you, I must ask you: Did you love, had you given your heart to my client, Lord Clydesfold?"

She covered her face with her hands and seemed as if she were praying for strength; then she let her hands fall, and said in a whisper that, low as it was, reached the farthest corner of the court:

"Yes, I loved him."

Fardeane's face worked, and he sank down in the chair that had been provided for him, and leaned his head upon his hand.

The crowd drew a long breath. Surely there had never been so enjoyable a sensation as this!

Mr. Edgar, still groping for light, went on:

"Again my duty compels me to ask you why, if you loved Lord Clydesfold, and knew nothing of his marriage, did you marry Mr. Bradstone?"

Intense silence.

Her face went white, almost death-like; then Mr. Edgar pointed to the Testament on which she had sworn.

"The whole truth you have sworn!" he said.

"Because"—her voice faltered—"because he promised to give me the money to save my father—"

(To be Continued.)

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