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For Her Sake;

The Murder in Ferness Wood.

CHAPTER LVIII.

"Where is he papa?" she asked; and it seemed to Sir Royal that she was nerving herself for a great effort. Mr. Cameron looked rather confused.

"He is down the chestnut walk; he is sitting, half asleep, on the bench there. I thought perhaps if he slept off the effect of the champagne, he might be better, and then you could just speak to him."

"I hope he has not annoyed you, papa," she said, anxiously.

"No. He had a few words with Captain Bates, and then I saw that he had taken too much wine. Do not distress yourself, Diana."

"She looked at him without uttering a word. How could she be anything but distressed?"

"I had forgotten all for a few moments," she said. "Was it possible, Royal, that I sat there enjoying our quite tete-a-tete unmindful of everything?"

"Shall I go with you, Diana?" asked Sir Royal.

"No, thank you," she replied; "I shall manage him better alone."

She walked away slowly, the two men watching her until she was lost to sight among the trees. The one looked after her with wistful sadness, the other with passionate regret.

"What a fate!" cried Peter Cameron. "What could have possessed the poor child to marry such a man as that?"

"I cannot understand," said Sir Royal. "It has always been a mystery to me."

"She will never know one moment's peace or happiness while he lives," declared Mr. Cameron. "I could almost wish that she had not come home. Before I saw her, I thought it

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was love of life, gayety, and the world that kept her from us; now I understand. She would not come home with him, lest we should see what he really is and what she suffers. My poor Diana!"

"She ought to be separated from him," said Sir Royal.

But Peter Cameron shook his head. "No, that would not do," he said.

And then Sir Lisle joined them.

After a few minutes Mr. Cameron returned to his other guests, and the two men who loved Diana stood talking of her. They conversed long and gravely, Sir Lisle noticing that his companion seemed to be under the influence of extreme emotion. His face was very white and his lips twitched nervously. Sir Lisle asked him once if he was ill.

"No," he answered; "but when I think of Diana and her miserable lot it almost drives me mad."

And Sir Lisle guessed from the expression of his face and the tone of his voice how intensely he loved her.

"Let us go to the chestnut walk," said Sir Royal presently.

The chestnut walk, as it was called, lay on the south side of the house. With its well-kept turf and overhanging boughs, it was one of the most lovely picturesque glades for which Ferness was so famous—cool, shady, and beautiful. At the end stood a statue of a heathen goddess, beneath which was a bench, whereon Lord Clanronald had fallen asleep.

Diana walked up to him and gazed upon his sleeping form. In her mind's eye she saw the kindly, loving face of Sir Royal, the dark handsome visage of Sir Lisle, and a low cry of unutterable bitterness came from her lips as she watched the swollen, sullen countenance of the man she was bound to love, honor, and obey.

CHAPTER LIX.

Lady Clanronald stood for some minutes in silence, watching her sleeping husband. She was glad afterward that no thought of hatred toward him came to her. Only infinite pity filled her heart. If he had been dying before her eyes of some terrible malady, she could not have felt more sorry for him.

At length he opened his eyes and turned with fury upon his wife.

"What are you standing there for, watching me?" he said, angrily.

"I came to speak to you, and found you asleep. I was merely waiting until you awoke," she answered, quietly.

"Now that I am awake, what do you want?" Then his tone changed suddenly, as he added—"Diana, do be good for once. Come down off your pedestal, and act like an ordinary mortal."

"What do you want me to do?" she asked.

"Why, go and send some one to me with a brandy and soda or a tumbler of champagne. I am so thirsty, and am thoroughly tired. Fetes and such nonsense as this do not suit me. Go; there's a good girl."

Then she realized what an unpleasant task lay before her, and that she would have to exercise great tact if she wished to succeed in her mission. In her heart she gave a despairing thought to the two who loved her. She

would have given much that one might stand by her side now.

"Ronald," she began, hesitatingly, "I came to ask you a great favor."

A heart of stone might have been moved at the sight of that beautiful, wistful face; but his lordship was deaf to the eloquent appeal.

"Ask me any favor you will," he said, "when you have complied with my request, I must have something to drink."

She drew nearer to him, and bent over him.

"Ronald," she said, pleadingly, "do not have more brandy. I come to beg you to be careful."

"What do you mean?" he shouted, "Careful about what?"

"About drinking. There are so many people here, and, if it should be noticed, my father would be so distressed, so angry."

"What in the world do I care for your father's anger? What is it to me? As for drink, I have had none. I want some. I am as thirsty as a man can be. Go, now, and do what I ask. You ought to know by experience that I will not listen to your preaching."

"Oh, Ronald, do let me persuade you this once! Do be careful. Come to the house with me and rest until dinner."

"I will not be careful. I shall not go back to the house, and I will have what I have asked for," he said savagely.

Then Diana's heart sunk within her, and she foresaw the probability of her husband's humiliating all connect-



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ed with him. Still she would make one more effort to dissuade him from his purpose. She bent over him and tried to smile into his face, but her lips trembled.

"Ronald," she said, in a sweet, wistful voice—"Ronald, let me persuade you this once. Do—"

He rose in a violent passion, and Diana, hastily retreating from the cruel upraised arm, stumbled and fell. To one looking on it would have seemed that he had knocked her down; but in reality he had only roughly pushed her away.

He seemed shocked and sobered for a few moments.

"Why do you hover about me like this?" he asked, more quietly.

Diana rose hastily, her face deathly pale.

"I will send some one to you," she said.

He laughed maliciously, triumphantly, as she went away.

"The goddess of her pedestal!" he cried. "She came to preach and retired in search of brandy and soda!"

Diana did not stay to listen, but hurried away down the long shady path, her heart beating violently, her face pale, her eyes filled with tears; and then she met Sir Lisle. He was walking quickly toward her, strong emotion visible on his face.

"Are you hurt, Diana?" he cried. "I saw him strike you. Are you hurt?" He looked at her anxiously, as her pallid face was raised entreatingly to his. "I was just coming to you when I saw it." He spoke hurriedly, gaspingly, as he trembled with excitement.

A new and terrible fear took possession of Diana. She remembered that Sir Lisle had said, "If ever he hurts one hair of your dear head, I shall slay him!" The words sounded in her ears now, and she grew pallid with fear.

"I am not hurt. You are wrong, Lisle! He did not strike me; he pushed me away, and I fell."

"He shall never push you away again," said Sir Lisle with decision; and Diana knew that he was at the very white-heat of passion. He seemed to hiss rather than speak his words.

She clung to his arm. "I am not hurt; I am ill," she said. "Oh, Lisle, take me to the house—I am ill!"

The faint trembling voice arrested his anger. He laid her hand on his arm.

"I will take you to the house, Diana," he said. "I will settle accounts with him afterward. He shall never treat you thus again."

"Let us pass through the conservatory," Diana urged; "we shall be less likely to meet any one there." Her object was to gain time to ask Sir Lisle to forget all about the matter.

"Why, Diana," he cried, "you are trembling like a leaf!"

"Listen to me," she answered. "You are going to-morrow, Lisle; let me beg you not to say anything about—about what you saw. If you do, he will resent it, and then—I dare not think of it!" She hid her face with her hands.

"Diana," he said, gravely and sadly, "do you think that while my heart beats in my breast I can go away and leave you in the power of a man like that?"

"I put myself in his power, and no man can free me," she said.

"I will!" he cried. "I will!"

The words died on his lips, for several guests entered the conservatory, and he could say no more.

"Stay with me!" pleaded Diana, in a low voice. "Do not let any one come near me or see me."

And for some minutes he stood in silence by her side; but by and by, turning to make a remark to him, she found that he was gone. She did not feel especially anxious then, for she knew that her wishes always influenced him. Glad to be able to rest before dressing for dinner, she went to her room.

Dinner was to be served in the banquet hall. Meanwhile the ladies had retired to snatch a little rest, and many of the gentlemen were sojourners themselves with cigars.

Lady Cameron was in high good humor; so far, everything had gone off most satisfactorily, and she proudly remarked that the day was one that would long be remembered in the annals of the country.

(To be continued.)

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