

The Earl's Mistake

"I shall not," said Zenobia, coming up to him, and putting her hand upon his arm: she lost no opportunity of impressing upon others the closeness of the relationship between Lord Cecil and herself: she never let them, or him, forget for a moment that she was his promised wife.

Philippa looked pointedly across the parade in the direction of Carrie had gone. "Not much, it is true, my lord, only nearly killed an innocent, trusting girl, but as she happens to be my sister, I naturally feel some slight resentment."

"Stay!" he said, almost in a tone of command. "Philippa, your treatment of me convinces me that you do not know all of this unhappy business. I may be guilty of much, but I am not so vile and so base as you think me! No, Philippa, before heaven, I am not so bad as you think me!"

"That is between you and your conscience, my lord," she said, coldly. "I accuse you of winning the love of my sister, and throwing it aside as something not worth your keeping. That is all I have to say to you."

"Then I tell you that you wrong me most cruelly," he retorted, bitterly. "I expect that you would be kept that; or all else is not worth living for. Though I have seen my darling once and the misery of my position is must as my honor!"

"What good can this do?" said Philippa, sadly. "Better let things rest as they are, my lord. She is better and stronger now, and—and— She thought of Gerald Moore."

"He watched her face, her eyes, intent. "You will tell me that my image may be effaced from her heart, and that she may find consolation and forgetfulness of the past in the love of another girl, better man! So be it!"

"A narrow escape," she thought, and mentally resolved that this should be her last meeting with Gerald Moore, at the same moment, with that readiness which distinguished her, she determined to utilize the opportunity by getting Lord Cecil to fix the wedding day.

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