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**Sweet Eva!**

CHAPTER XXX.

"I should like to go round and see Kitty," he said flushing a little. "She doesn't know I'm up." He looked at Eva. "May I bring her to dinner?"

"Of course, you may—we don't have dinner till half-past seven—run along now and ask her."

Peter arose with alacrity; he was on thorns to see his beloved again; he was secretly hugging himself at the thought of her delight at seeing him. Eva saw him off and went back to Calligan.

"What it is to be in love!" she said lightly. "I don't think I shall see a great deal of Peter . . . Yes, what is it?" A maid had come to the door.

"If you please, ma'am, the master telephoned when you were out this afternoon to say that he would not be in to dinner to-night, and would you please not wait."

There was a little silence; Calligan had been sitting on the piano stool, and he whirled round suddenly averting his face.

"Very well," said Peter.

Calligan was picking out the air of a comic song on the piano with one finger; he took as long about it as possible.

Eva threw herself down into a chair.

"I wish I knew how to smoke," she said irreverently. "It looks so—so comforting somehow!" She held out her hand. "Give me a cigarette, Mr. Calligan!"

Calligan rose obediently.

"It'll make you sick," he said reluctantly. "It'll make your head ache—I shouldn't, if I were you."

She looked up at him for a moment. "If you were me, it's exactly what you would do," she said. "Please."

He handed her his case and struck a match.

"I wonder Peter and the other boys

didn't teach you to smoke years ago," he said.

She raised her brows.

"I think they did offer to, but I refused. Oh! She had choked over the first puff."

Calligan laughed.

"Give it to me and let me finish it for you," he said. "You don't like it?"

"No!" She held the cigarette beyond his reach laughingly, and Calligan stooped forward catching her wrist.

"I object to women who smoke," he said, with mock severity. "I—"

He broke off abruptly, as Philip walked into the room. Eva was the only one of the three who did not look concerned; she raised herself a little in the chair.

"Manders told me you would not be in to dinner," she said.

"Neither shall I. I've only come back to change. How do, Tom?"

"I'm teaching your wife to smoke," Calligan said.

"I just remembered about Peter coming," he said. "Where is he?"

"He's gone out to find Kitty. He's bringing her here to dinner."

"I see. You don't mind my not being in?"

"Of course not."

He went away, closing the door behind him.

Calligan stooped and, taking the cigarette from Eva's listless hand, threw it into the fire. She raised no objection now; her face seemed to have grown tired and dispirited.

What was to be gained by this eternal pretence and effort at keeping up appearances? she was asking herself miserably.

Wherever she was and whatever she was doing her heart and her thoughts were with Philip.

"I don't think I care about going out to-night," she said suddenly.

"Very well—come along and try those songs I sent round last night. You're neglecting your music shamefully—"

"I never had any to neglect—I can't really play—I only just strum to amuse myself sometimes—"

"Very well, then strum now to amuse me." He put the stool in readiness for her and began to sort out some music.

Eva rose reluctantly; she had no heart for music, but it would be something to do.

"We'll have this first," Calligan said. "It's a favourite of mine—I didn't know you had it . . . I think they're such fine words."

Eva looked at it—it was the song she had played to Mrs. Winterdick that last night down at the Highway House.

"Though all the skies are clouded, Though all the portents lour, Somewhere—to someone— This is the golden hour.

The hour that comes softly To women and men, Who only know thereafter That they were happy—then!"

Calligan read the words aloud.

"Fine, aren't they?" he said. "Please play it—!" But she shook her head— "Not that—I don't care for it much."

"Right oh!" He took it away at once. He felt that he had unconsciously stumbled on some memory. He went down on his knees and began turning over the pile of music on the floor.

Eva sat watching him, her hands idle in her lap.

There was a step in the hall and she lifted her head eagerly.

"That must be Peter—back again."

She got up to go to the door, when it opened and her brother walked in. He looked a little pale, she thought; he seemed to avoid her eyes.

"Where's Kitty?" she asked blankly.

"She wasn't in—she's gone to a show with her cousin. I suppose I ought to have wired that I was coming. It's not her fault, of course."

"Of course not! Did you leave a message? Then we need not wait dinner; I'm ever so hungry."

She went out to speak to one of the maids, and Peter followed. There was something rather pathetic about his eyes; he caught her arm when he was sure Calligan could not see.

"Eva—you don't think—I mean—who was Kitty with the night Philip saw her?"

She answered at once.

"With her cousin, Philip said—I think the name was Featherstone." Her eyes searched his face. "Philip was with them all the time, Peter," she added gently.

"Yes, of course . . ." He passed an agitated hand across his mouth. "It's rather disappointing though—I'd been counting on to-night."

Eva laughed.

"You can't blame Kitty, can you, Peter—she's no idea you were in town, now, has she?"

"No, but . . . I think I'll go round later on, if you don't mind—she may get in early."

"Very well!" She knew what his thoughts were, and she wondered how many more lives Kitty was going to ruin.

Peter was such a boy.

She did her best to cheer him during dinner, and Calligan nobly seconded her efforts, but they could both see that Peter was on thorns the whole time. He glanced continually at the clock. Long before ten he said that he thought he would be off.

"But the theatres are not over for another hour," Eva said, gently. "You must give her time, Peter."

But Peter would not be persuaded. He insisted that he must go.

"I'll come part of the way with you, then," Calligan said. "If you have no objection."

"Of course not, come along."

"I shall wait up for you Peter," Eva told her brother. "And you need not mind being late if she wants you to stay. We're not at all early birds here. I can tell you."

She went into the deserted drawing-room when they had gone and sat down on the rug by the fire. The music was still strewn over the floor where Calligan had left it. The song she had refused to play was uppermost. Its words floated into her mind mournfully:

"The hour that comes softly To women and men, Who only know thereafter That they were happy—then!" (To be continued.)

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