



"The Die is Cast"

For Better or For Worse."

CHAPTER II. A Chance Acquaintance.

She caught her breath, but she did not cry out, for Kittle was courage personified, and, as she set her hat straight, she looked up at her preserver, who was standing beside her. He was a young man, with a face that was not only handsome, but with an indication of some quality in it, which, even at that moment affected Kittle strangely and curiously. She knew, by something more than his dress—which, though somewhat careless, was that of what, again, Hagnes would have called a "swell"—that he was a gentleman. He was looking down at her with a kindly regard, and a touch of anxiety, which made his face a very pleasant one.

"You are not hurt, I hope?" he said.

"Not in the least," said Kittle quickly. "But I should have been, if you had not been there, and hadn't pulled me up. I should have been trampled under foot," she added, gratefully.

"I'm very glad I happened to be near," he said. "I'm very glad to hear that you are not hurt; but I am sure you must be rather frightened. Won't you sit down a moment—just to recover your breath? I know what you must feel like; I've been down in a football scrimmage."

Mechanically Kittle sat down on the seat by which they had been standing, and he seated himself beside her; but he did not stare at her; instead, he looked before him rather thoughtfully. She appeared to be alone; she did not explain that she had lost her friends, or wanted to go in instant search of them. Yes; she appeared to be alone; and yet his first glance at her face, her voice, had told him that she ought not to have been unaccompanied; that she was, in short, "respectable." He was almost convinced that she was a lady. If any doubts as to her respectability had been left in his mind, they were dispelled by Kittle, who at this point exclaimed:

"Oh, I must find Agnes!"

"Your sister?" he inquired. "You have lost her?"

Kittle laughed in her frank way—she would have been frank and unabashed in the presence of royalty itself.

"No; she's our servant. We came together, to take care of each other; and she'll think I'm lost, and will be awfully upset. I must go and find her! Good-by—and thank you very much," said Kittle, hurriedly.

As she sprang up, the little lace handkerchief she had found slipped from her belt, and fluttered to the

ground. The young man picked it up, and held it in his hand.

"One moment," he said. "I don't think I can let you go wandering about this place alone. It's just possible that the idiotic crowd will get into another panic—they fancied just now that one of the lions had broken loose—and that you will come to some real harm next time. You must allow me to accompany you in your search. I've no doubt we shall find your maid; if not, you must let me take you home to your people."

"No, no!" said Kittle, looking up at him as if she were aghast at the suggestion. "I could not let you do that. Dad—I mean my father, would be awfully angry if he knew that I had got into such a scrape as this, and lost Agnes."

"Then we must find Agnes," he said, with a smile. "Do you think she was in that crush; what point do you think she would make for in the hope of meeting you?"

"Oh, I'm sure I don't know," replied Kittle, with a little shrug of despair. "There is no knowing what Hagnes Hevangeline would do if she lost her head. I expect she's half-crazed with fright by this time."

They were walking side by side now; and as they came into the brighter light, the young man looked down at her with a thoughtful gravity, and he saw that she was exceedingly pretty; more than pretty, he decided, and that she was as unembarrassed—as, well as a lady would have been; indeed, she seemed to have forgotten his presence, and to be completely engrossed in her search for Agnes.

"Do you like this kind of place?" he inquired.

"She looked up at him absently. "Do I? Oh, yes; it's delightful. The music, the lights, and the people, and all the things one sees. Don't you like it?"

"I suppose I ought to say yes," he replied, with a strange smile.

Kittle regarded him with slight surprise. "That means you don't. Then why did you come?"

"Upon my word, I don't know," he said, musingly. "To pass away an hour or two, I suppose. I happen to be all alone in London; and a man who happens to be alone in London finds it rather a dull place."

Her wondering eyes returned to his face. "Yes; I should think so," she said. "How strange to be alone in London! Do you mean to say that you haven't any friends, any relations?" she asked, her interest aroused.

"Pretty nearly that; in fact, quite that," he said. "Now you, of course, have father, mother, no end of relations and friends?"

"I've a father," assented Kittle, "but no mother, and no relations. Now I come to think of it, to be without relations isn't so curious after all. But I've lots of friends. Oh, I wish I could see Agnes! I think I'm getting a little tired."

"I'm not surprised," he said; "we have been on the hunt for some time. Do you know, I think it would be better for us if we sat down at this table here, and kept a lookout; we can cover a lot of ground from here."

Kittle sank into the chair with a sigh, and leaned forward, beating an impatient tattoo on the table with her slim fingers, while she kept her anxious eyes on the various paths. The young man beckoned to a waiter, and quietly ordered two cups of coffee.

"Oh, it's very kind of you," said

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Kittle, when the coffee was brought; "but I don't want any."

It struck her that she was rather ungracious, so she took a little; then, as if she had suddenly remembered him, she said:

"Need you wait? I shall be sure to see Agnes directly; she wouldn't dream of going home without me. Please don't wait!"

"I hope you will let me stay with you until you have found your maid," he said. "I shouldn't like to leave you in this place alone. By the way," he smiled faintly, "I hope I may say that I am quite a capable—and respectable—guardian. My name is Lashmore." He stopped and waited, and, her attention arrested by the pause, Kittle turned to him.

"My name—" she began; then she stopped, and, for the first time, the color rose to her face; and at that moment the young man knew that she was not merely pretty, but that she was beautiful. "I don't think I want to tell you my name," she said, her eyes meeting his frankly and pleadingly. "No; I don't want you to know. I know it isn't right to be here alone, sitting here with you; father would be very angry if he knew it."

"Then neither he nor any one else shall know it from me," he said, very quietly, but with a genuineness so evident that Kittle gave a nod and breathed a little sigh of relief. He nodded in response. "I will give you a promise if you like, that I will not only never mention my meeting with you this evening, but if I should be so fortunate as to see you again—"

"That's not likely," put in Kittle. "—I will not even remind you of it."

"Thank you very much," said Kittle; "that's very nice of you. And," she laughed, "I'll promise the same."

He returned her laugh just as he returned her little nod.

"And, just to show you what an honest Injun I am, I will not ask you to tell me your name; though, I must confess," he added, slowly, and with a little touch of color in his face this time, "I should like to know it."

Kittle might have told him; for there was something in his eyes, in his smile, which inspired confidence; but at that moment she caught sight of Agnes, and sprang to her feet, exclaiming:

"There she is! The girl with her back to us, that one with the ostrich feather. Oh, I'm so glad! Good-by, and thank you very much!"

She held out her hand—she really was very much obliged to him—he took it in his, and held it for a second, raising his hat. As she sped away, she looked over her shoulder, and said, half laughingly, half seriously:

"Remember your promise!"

"Right! I won't forget," he responded with a nod.

He stood and watched her as she ran after and joined the girl with the ostrich feather; and he noticed that they did not turn round and look in his direction, as they would have done if his late companion had spoken to the other girl about him. He was turning away musingly, when he suddenly remembered the pocket handkerchief; and he drew it from his

pocket, and took a step or two after the girls; but it occurred to him that he would, so to speak, be breaking his promise, betraying her confidence. He stopped and mechanically turned the handkerchief over in his hand; the light was very strong where he stood, and he saw a name marked on the dainty piece of cambric and lace, and could read it quite distinctly.

"I know her name after all," he said to himself, with a smile. "Eva Lyndhurst."

He folded the handkerchief neatly—one would almost say gently, tenderly—and put it in his breast pocket; then he lighted a cigarette, and went slowly toward the exit. As Kittle, with her quick eye, had noticed, all his movements, deliberate or quick, were marked by a freedom of limb, which to one more experienced than Kittle would have indicated that the young man had moved in broader spheres than the limited one of a London life. He looked not only a gentleman and somewhat of an aristocrat; but there was that indefinable air of the wilds and the woods about him; and for one so young, there was a touch of sadness and gravity in the eyes, a suggestion of resolution and firmness in the set of the lips and the chin that were somewhat remarkable.

As he rose from the seat, a man who was sitting at a table at some little distance behind the young fellow rose also, and followed slowly in the other man's footsteps. Lashmore paused at the gate, the man stopped also, and still behind him at a little distance; and when Lashmore sauntered on again, the man sauntered on likewise. Traversing a part of what has been impolitely called the howling wilderness of Kensington, Lashmore reached one of the quiet streets in Chelsea.

He stopped before an old house, the windows of which showed not the least sign of life, and opening the door with a latch-key, passed in. A minute or two afterward the man who had followed him in the gardens came down the street. He was walking a shade more quickly now; and as he passed under the light of one of the lamps, he bore a striking resemblance to Kittle's friend, Mr. Levison.

(To be Continued.)

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War News

Messages Received Previous to

ANOTHER PEACE SUGGESTION
NEW YORK, March 27.—A News Agency despatch from Amsterdam says: "Intimate Chancery Von Bethmann will make another peace speech at the meeting of the Reichstag Thursday, is contained in the despatch received here today."

BRITISH CAPTURE LONDON, March 27.—The British this morning captured the village of... according to an official bulletin the British headquarters at noon. Thirty prisoners and machine gun were taken. In the afternoon the Germans launched counter attacks from the northeast. These attacks, the report says, were repulsed.

FRENCH CAPTURE PARIS, March 27.—Though strongly opposed, the Germans, French troops captured the towns of Fontenay La Fenille, south of Orléans, says the official statement. The war office tonight announced that the French Soissons in the neighborhood.

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