

THE FAIR IMPOSTOR.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CLEAN DOVE WITH IT.

HERE is Lillian? he asked. Dawson Slade glanced upward, and put his hand on Harold's arm as he was about to spring up the stairs.

'No, Woodleigh,' he said, quietly, 'not yet. Let me see her alone for a moment. Will it not be best?'

Harold bit his lip. 'He was to have been married to her on the morrow.'

'But I—' he said. 'You are the last person on earth she will wish to see,' said Slade, in a low voice.

Harold paused. He did understand. 'Your cousin is in there,' said Dawson Slade, pointing to the library.

'You—why you?' he asked, hoarsely. Slade looked at him with a sad smile.

'Because I love her,' he said, quietly. 'Because I loved her before you ever saw or heard of her. Leave her to me, Woodleigh.'

Harold hesitated another moment, then went to the library; but he turned as the door opened.

'I am bewildered—I cannot see all clearly,' he said, putting his trembling hand to his forehead; 'but—but—will you tell her, Slade, I consider that I am bound to my word, and that I am her affianced husband?'

Dawson Slade inclined his head. 'I will tell her,' he said, simply. A moment afterward the maid came down awed and excited.

'Miss Lillian is not in her room; I cannot find her upstairs, and—her cloak and hat have gone, sir.'

Dawson Slade sprang to the hatstand and seized his hat, and made for the door without a word. It was a wild night, dark as pitch, the wind driving the rain across the park and roaring hoarsely through the trees.

Buttoning up his coat, he made his way down the steps and ran round to the stables, guided thither by a light which burned in that direction.

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Stay, give me that lamp, and he caught the stable lantern from the groom's hands.

The detective bit his lip and smiled with grim determination. 'You're a cool hand, sir; guessed you've found that she's flown?'

'I know it ten minutes afterward. I couldn't stop her—I've no warrant—but I'll follow her and keep within sight of her, if I have to die for it.'

'Silence,' said Slade, sternly, scarcely heeding his companion's words. He was leaning forward, throwing the light of the lamp onto the road, hoping, yet almost dreading, to see the tall, graceful figure he loved so well, and never more fully than in this hour of supreme anxiety.

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have passed her. It's my belief that she didn't mean trying the rail at all.

With a quick gesture he snatched the reins and turned the horse. 'What is it, what is it you've thought of?' asked Robert Green; but Dawson Slade, with a stern gesture, motioned him to silence, and urging the horse with unsparring whip made, not for the Hall, but for the cliff road.

Robert Green watched him in silence for some minutes, then suddenly broke into a whistle of intelligence. 'Whew, you don't think that, sir? Great Heaven, she wouldn't do that. If that's what you've got on your mind, for the lady's sake let's get on as fast as you like, and he shook his head apprehensively.'

Dawson Slade, still speechless, drove on, his eyes fixed on the narrow road, every portion of which the lamp lit up.

How long that road seemed he never can tell, but at last they came to the end of it and began the rise to the hills.

For some time past the rain had come down less heavily, and the wind had abated something of its ferocity, and now as they neared the cliffs, the last remnant of the wind storm blew the clouds from the moon, and she sailed out from behind them and flooded their way with light.

The horse was reeking with sweat and foam-flecked, and panted up the hill with every sign of distress.

'She can't—it's impossible that she should have kept ahead of us,' said Robert Green, breaking the silence at last. For answer Dawson Slade pointed to the road. In the wet and slush his keen eyes had noticed marks of recent wheels.

'No,' said Green; 'no vehicle of any kind left the stable before this; I made sure of that.'

As he spoke they reached the small run on the cliff, and before the foot of the mail cart, the horse steaming in the moonlight.

Robert Green jumped down, ran into the inn and out again, all in a minute.

'By Heaven! you are right, sir!' he said. 'The man says that a woman asked him to give her a lift to the cliff, and he brought her here. He thought she was one of them women at the coast-guard station. What's to be done?'

Dawson Slade jumped down, and throwing the reins on the horse's back, walked quickly toward the narrow path down which the picnic party had climbed. Robert Green followed close on his heels.

Step by step Dawson Slade descended, led on, as it were, by instinct. They reached the little plateau overlooking the beach, every stone of which stood out in the moonlight.

Dawson Slade stooped down and looked over; Robert Green stopped also, and his hand felt with a sudden exclamation on Dawson Slade's shoulder.

To be continued.

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UNCLAIMED LETTERS, REMAINING IN G.P. to SEPT. 1910, 3rd.

Table listing unclaimed letters with columns for names, addresses, and initials.

SEAMEN'S LIST.

Table listing seamen with columns for names, addresses, and initials.

G. P. O., September 3rd, 1910. H. J. B. WOODS, P.M.G.

Advertisement for Portrait Work, The Holloway Studio, featuring a portrait of a woman.

Advertisement for John Maunder, Tailor & Clothier, featuring a man in a suit and text about the latest English, French & American designs.

Advertisement for a Good Ad in a Bad Place Business, featuring a man holding a sign.

Advertisement for European Agency, featuring a man in a suit and text about wholesale indents.

Small text at the bottom right corner of the page.