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**Happiness At Last!**

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CHAPTER XXXV.

Mershon seemed to awake from his stupor, and snatching the telegram from her, he went upstairs. She watched him for a moment, then her lips moved, and she breathed softly.

"Thank God!" Mershon, as he went unsteadily up the stairs, holding by the balustrade and stumbling now and again, like a man smitten with palsy, had no need to ask who the "some one" was. He knew that Gaunt had stretched out a hand, from the grave, as it were, to shield and protect the girl he had loved.

On the evening of the same day, Mr. Belford was arranging his papers on his desk preparatory to going home.

He had had a particularly hard day, and looked tired and worried, and as the door opened, and his partner, Mr. Lang, put his head round it, Mr. Belford glanced up with a frown.

"Nearly ready?" asked Mr. Lang. They both had handsome houses at Dulwich, and, when practicable and convenient, journeyed homeward together.

"Yes, I think so," replied the senior partner, with a sigh. "I'll just indorse these letters. No news, I suppose?"

"News?" had some to mean to Messrs. Belford & Lang tidings of their client, Lord Gaunt.

Mr. Lang shook his head. "No, none. I'm afraid that it is hopeless to expect any now. He must have been lost."

Mr. Belford nodded and sighed. "Poor fellow! Though, after all, I'm afraid one ought to feel more relief than regret at his death. He, might have ended so—so much worse."

Mr. Lang assented with a gesture. "I've written to young Lord Naseby, the next heir—Lord Gaunt, I suppose he is now; but I'm doubtful whether my letter will reach him. What a singular thing it is, the love of travel and wandering running through the family! Oh—and, Lang, that fellow, Thorpe, has been here again to-day!"

"Oh! what did you do?" "Well, I'm afraid it was weak," replied the senior partner, apologetically, "but I advanced him some money to take him out of the country."

"You did?" "Well, yes. You see, if Lord Gaunt—I mean our Gaunt—should turn up; but that's impossible. Anyway, the next Gaunt will be glad to get rid of the fellow. He has spent the time since the inquest going the round of any of the clubs that would admit him, and telling the story of his and his sister's wrongs."

"In exchange for free drinks, I suppose?" said Mr. Lang.

"Er—yes. So I gave him enough to take him to Monte Carlo."

"Where it is to be hoped he will remain," remarked Mr. Lang. Mr. Belford indorsed the last letter, rose with a sigh, and took his overcoat from the peg behind the door.

"Did you see Mr. Gilsby?" he inquired, with an accent on the name which Mr. Gilsby would not have enjoyed hearing.

"Yes," Mr. Lang smiled. "I never saw before in my whole life a man sorry at receiving money. And Mr. Gilsby was very sorry; there is no doubt of that. It is evident that that man Mershon was bent upon ruining the Deanes."

Mr. Belford shrugged his shoulders with a little weary gesture. He had had a hard day, and any reference to Lord Gaunt's affairs reminded him of the trouble and anxiety the murder in Prince's Mansions had caused him.

"The whole affair is a mystery," he said; "but it is very evident that Mr. Mershon hated poor Lord Gaunt."

"And, of course, the young lady, Miss Dean, was the reason," said Mr. Lang. "There are your gloves, on that dead case."

"Oh, thanks, thanks! I feel so worried—are you ready? If so, I'll turn out the gas."

He had his hand on the key, when they both heard a step on the stairs. All the clerks had gone, and the two principals were alone in the office.

"Now, who can that be?" said Mr. Belford, testily. "Whoever it is I shall not stay. We shall lose our train."

The footsteps outside the door and there came a knock. "Open the door, Lang, and tell them that we can not stay," said Mr. Belford.

Mr. Lang opened the door. Then he uttered an exclamation and fell back, and Gaunt walked in.

Mr. Belford dropped his hat on the desk, and it rolled unheeded to the floor.

"Lord Gaunt!" he gasped, and he stared and gaped at the tall figure and haggard face.

"How do you do, Mr. Belford?" said Gaunt, quietly—very quietly, with that self-possession and sang-froid which had often astonished his legal advisers and not seldom puzzled and annoyed them. "How do you do, Mr. Lang? I am afraid I am late."

"Good God! my lord, do you know—when did you come? Where?" demanded Mr. Belford.

Gaunt stood on the other side of the table. "One moment," he said, "I want to ask you a question. Is Miss Deane in London?"

"Miss Deane?" echoed Mr. Belford, amazed at the question at such a moment.

"Yes, where is she?" "Er—er—Miss Deane is—at home at Leafmore, I believe. But—but, Lord Gaunt, where did you come from?"

"Is she—well?" broke in Gaunt, almost sternly.

The lawyers stared at him. "Er—er—yes. That is, she is better."

She has been very ill— Gaunt's pale face worked. "But she is better. She is at home. But—but—good God, my lord, where have you come from? What—why—"

"From Southampton," said Gaunt, quietly, vouchsafing the information, now that he had learned something of Decima.

"From Southampton!" gasped Mr. Belford. "Then—then—you were saved? You are alive?"

"Yes," said Gaunt, as quietly as before. "I was picked up by a yacht—the 'Sea Wolf'—and the owner kindly turned back and landed me in England."

The two partners exchanged glances—the sharp legal glance. "Then—then perhaps you do not know—that is—you have not learned that—that—"

Gaunt regarded him gravely. "Yes," he said, "I saw the account in the newspaper on board the yacht. You said that Miss Deane was better? Do you mean that she is out of danger? I gathered that she had been ill."

Mr. Belford ignored the question. "Then—then you know that—that—Won't you sit down, my lord? Lang, there is a small flask of brandy in the corner of the safe; perhaps his lordship—"

Gaunt declined the small flask of brandy which Mr. Lang proffered. "I know," he said.

"That—that a murder was committed, and that—"

Mr. Belford could not go on. "That I am deemed guilty?—yes," said Gaunt, as quietly as before. "I did not do it; who did?"

Mr. Belford sunk into his chair. He had, he thought, grown accustomed to Gaunt's sang-froid, but he felt that he was mistaken. This surpassed all his previous experience of it.

"You—you did not—" he stammered. "No," said Gaunt, not sternly, but quite coolly and gravely. "I may be a fool, but I am not fool enough to commit a murder and then cover my victim with my own coat."

Mr. Belford gasped for breath. "But—but you see, my lord, that there is a verdict of willful murder against you; that—that there is a warrant for your arrest?" he stammered.

"Yes," said Gaunt, quietly. "And I have come back to meet the charge. There was a policeman outside as I came up; shall I call him?"

He went to the window; but Mr. Lang seized him by the arm and drew him back.

CHAPTER XXXVI. Mr. Lang dragged Gaunt from the window and almost forced him into a chair.

"For God's sake! don't—don't do anything rash, Lord Gaunt!" he said. "Give us time to—to think, to consider."

Both partners were very much agitated; and not without reason. It was as if a ghost had walked into the room.

Gaunt shrugged his shoulders. "It must come sooner or later; why not to-night?" he said.

His coolness and indifference almost exasperated Mr. Belford. "You do not appear to realize the gravity of your position, Lord Gaunt!" he said, agitatedly. "Perhaps it will help you to do so when I say—gravely and emphatically—that—that we are sorry to see you here!"

"You can not be more sorry than I am," said Gaunt, quietly. "It would be better for me if I were lying at the bottom of the sea. But I am alive, and on land, and the music has to be faced."

He spoke almost cheerfully. Now that he had heard that Decima was safe at The Woodhines, and better, nothing else seemed to matter much; certainly nothing that concerned himself.

"I can't understand how you have been able—been permitted—to reach us," said Mr. Belford.

Gaunt shook his head. "I suppose the police have given me up for dead," he said. "I expected to find some one waiting to arrest me at Southampton; but I was not stopped or interfered with. I had some difficulty in getting here, for the owner of the yacht—a good fellow!—wanted to carry me off to some place where there was no extradition treaty. He thinks me innocent, notwithstanding the evidence."

"I wish he had!" exclaimed Mr. Belford. "Seriously, Lord Gaunt, the evidence is—"

"Very strong," said Mr. Lang under his breath. Gaunt looked from one to the other. "Do you mind my smoking? Thanks." He lighted a cigarette. "I have read it all; there was a newspaper, several on board the 'Sea Wolf,' and I got all I could at Southampton. Yes; it is black enough." He paused. "I suppose nine persons out of ten, ninety-nine out of a hundred, would consider me guilty?"

Mr. Belford was a truthful man, and did not reply. "May I ask if you do?"

Gaunt put the question quietly, and without a trace of resentment. Mr. Belford looked at him in silence for what seemed a long time, then he said: "No!"

"Thanks," said Gaunt. "No, I am not guilty; and yet all the evidence is true and untrained. I suppose many a man has been hung for less?"

Mr. Lang shuddered. (To be continued.)

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**"Totem Poles."**

To the unversed a totem pole has no significance beyond its queerness, but it is in reality a whole story book carved in wood. Early missionaries to the northwest mistook the totem poles for idols. As a matter of fact, they were merely heraldic columns. Each tribal clan has its own traditions and myths, which take the place of history, and these are symbolized by the extraordinary birds and other animals, sometimes human faces or figures, carved on the totem poles. Thus the Bear clan will have its heraldic column topped by the sculptured figure of a bear. The raven shows up conspicuously as the totem, or crest, of the Raven clan; the whale for the Whale clan, and so on.

**Three Lives for 40 Cents.**

A week or two ago a tourist scrambling on the cliffs at Lullworth on the Dorsetshire, England, coast slipped and fell, and though not injured, was landed in such a position that he could neither get up nor down, says a correspondent. There he clung in great danger until the coastguards arrived. In order to rescue him a man had to be let down at the end of strong ropes, which were fixed to bars driven into the ground. It was a difficult and dangerous job, but at last they got the man up in safety. He thanked them and handed them \$1. As one of the rescuers said dryly, "Probably he knew best the value of his life." The case brings to mind another mentioned in a lecture given by Dr. Atkin Swan. In a recent Alpine expedition his guide was able to rescue three climbers who were in danger of their lives. They rewarded him with two francs (nominally forty cents). To conclude, here is a very different incident. A farmer's laborer in Yorkshire pulled his employer's little son out of a pond into which he had fallen. The farmer found that the lad was anxious to emigrate, so paid his fare to Australia and gave him \$500 capital. Now for the sequel. Twenty-two years later the farmer, now a very old man, received word that his former protégé had died unmarried, and left him a sum of over \$40,000.

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