



**Plot That Failed;
OR,
Love That Would
Not Be Denied.**

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Well," said Fitz, "they sent all sorts of messages to you, and Ethel implored me with tears in her eyes to assure you of her affection and love. Poor Eth, all her troubles are over now, and she's happy. Violet, dare I hope that you forgive me and think I have done right? And will you make me happy, too, Violet?" and, with an imploring look, he tried to take her hand.

Violet drew it from him and sank on to the sofa. Fitz looked perplexed, and stared.

"You don't speak! You haven't said a word!" he said. "What is the matter?"

"Have you not received my letter?" she breathed.

"No," said Fitz, thrusting his hands into his pocket. "Perhaps it is here; I haven't opened them yet. Oh, Violet, you have not refused me; you don't mean to make me miserable for life! Don't say it, don't say it!"

"I have written it," said Violet, paler and paler each moment. "I have written a full explanation. It cannot be; it is forever impossible. Lord Boisdale—Fitz, I am to marry Mr. Murpoint."

"What!" exclaimed Fitz, "am I dreaming—am I mad? Violet, are you to marry the captain?"

Violet rose.

"Let me leave you, my lord! I am so sorry that my letter—then she turned and tried to leave the room.

But Fitz strode after her and seized her arm.

"Violet," he said, "one word more. I see I am not dreaming, that it's truth you are telling me. But if it is true there is villainy somewhere! You are right to reprove me. Heaven knows I am not worthy of you—but the captain!"

"Violet, if Leicester could come to life again, I would have yielded to him quietly, without a word, for I know you were his. But not to the captain! You never did and you never can care for him, and if you marry him it will be against your will. Violet, listen to me, I implore you, I believe—I am sure within my own heart that the captain, Howard Murpoint, is a rogue and a villain."

"Silence!" said Violet, sadly, yet indignantly. "You forget yourself, my lord! You have no right to say such cruel things, to attack an absent man. Mr. Murpoint will be my husband, and I will not—I dare not listen to such a groundless accusation. Enough! Not a word more. Leave me, I beg, my lord!"

"Yet one word more, I implore," said Fitz. "I will leave you and I

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will not see you again; but, mark me, I will not let the matter rest, and if you care for Howard Murpoint, as you would have me believe you do, warn him that there is one on his track who will search him to the heart, and who will cost him what it may, and whether he is an honest man or the rogue he thinks him. Violet, Ethel has escaped his clutches, and you have fallen into them. Escape while there is time, I implore of you! See, I beg you on my knees to take time, to do nothing rashly, to break off this hateful, this horrible engagement!"

"If there had been one thing wanting to confirm me in the path I have taken, Lord Boisdale, your words have supplied it. I will do my duty by an innocent man maligned, and be true to him. I will be true to the man I have promised to marry, though all the world rose to slander him."

"Violet, you do not love him!" groaned Fitz.

"No," said Violet. "But, though I have lost the power to love, I can still act with honor."

And, with a sad smile, she left the room.

Fitz rose, stunned and dazed. He took up his hat and, leaving the house, walked in a maze to Lackland House.

As he was about to enter a footman came up to him.

"My lord, the earl is desirous of seeing you."

"Eh?" said Fitz, who was scarcely conscious of what he was about.

"Upstairs, my lord, in the earl's study."

"All right," said Fitz, and he ascended the stairs with a heavy gait.

Knocking at the study door, he received a cold, stern "Come in," and, entering, found Lord Lackland seated in the same chair at the same table in the same room in which he had sat that morning when he informed Fitz that the Lackland estates were mortgaged and that the Lackland purse was empty.

"Good-morning," said Fitz.

The earl bowed with cold politeness.

"You have arrived this morning?"

"This morning," said Fitz. "I have not been in town three hours."

"I am glad of it," said the earl, "as I wished to see you immediately you arrived."

"I left Ethel—"

"Thank you," said the earl, interrupting him with stately politeness. "I do not wish to know anything of your disobedient and undutiful sister. If I should at any time, I will come to you, who, it seems, is a partner and chief abettor in her misconduct. Be good enough not to mention her name to me."

"But, my lord," said Fitz, who was nearly out of his mind, "surely you do not mean to say that you intend to be hard upon Ethel for marrying where she liked? She has not married a chimney-sweep, or run away with one of the coachmen. Bertie is the best, the most famous man in London—"

"Thank you for the information," said the earl. "I know nothing of Mr. Fairfax, and I do not wish to add to my knowledge. Be kind enough to leave the subject where it is; it is one that is extremely distasteful to me. I wished to see you on business. Here are a number of bills—they have all been contracted by you—I pass them to you for payment."

Fitz stared at them.

"My lord," he said, "I cannot pay these! You know that it is impossible!"

The earl shrugged his shoulders.

"I have nothing to do with that," he said, coldly. "You are over age, you were twenty-one last month; you are liable, I believe."

"I am liable, I know," said Fitz, in despair, "but, of course, sir, I have always looked to you."

"And, I believe some time back, in this very room, I warned you that you could no longer do so. I have my own bills to pay, and I cannot concern myself with any others. Be good enough to take them away; they litter my table."

"But," said Fitz, "I cannot pay them, and you know that I cannot. What is to be done?"

"I regret that I cannot inform you. I should advise you to pay them, or in all probability the creditors will endeavor to compel you."

"In other words they will put me in prison?"



The earl shrugged his shoulders. "I cannot say; I know nothing about it. May I remind you again of the conversation which I before mentioned as taking place between us in this room? I ventured to advise you and my advice was not taken; you cannot be surprised at my reluctance to repeat that advice."

"Is it my fault that Violet Mildmay very properly refuses to enrich a ruined house by marrying the poverty-stricken eldest son and heir, who love her as he does, is utterly unworthy of her?"

"Your fault!" retorted the earl, with icy scorn. "I know nothing of your affairs, but unless I am grossly misinformed it is your fault that Ethel has married a boy and refused a millionaire; that is enough for me. Go on in the course you have before you, Lord Boisdale. Go in the path you are treading, and find yourself a penniless debtor, rotting in jail; it is perfectly indifferent to me. I have pointed out to you the secret of success—you have scorned it or failed to get it by rank foolery. I have done with you! Lackland Hall and money will last my lifetime; afterward it can go to the dogs, which I can see, already at your heels. I am busy, and therefore compelled to wish you good-morning."

So saying, the earl pointed to the pile of bills, and then to the door.

Lord Fitz took up the bills and quietly left the room, dazed still, and more like a man walking in his sleep.

CHAPTER XXX.

We left Leicester and Mr. Thaxton, assisted by Stumpy, carrying Job to the nearest magistrate.

When Leicester had, as well as was able, removed his disguise, and Job saw that Leicester was alive and in the flesh, he had shown the greatest joy, and that notwithstanding the personal peril which Leicester's whim had placed him in.

After a time, when Job reflected upon all the consequences which would fall upon himself, he grew wonderfully quiet, and sat at the bottom of the cart sullen and moody.

"I suppose I'll be hanged," he said, "and I deserve it; but I'll tell the whole truth, Master Leicester, every word of it."

"In that case," said Leicester, "I

will do my best to shield you from punishment."

"I'll turn King's evidence," said Job, with a grin. "I won't turn on the boys; but I'll be even with the captain, curse him!"

Mr. Thaxton exchanged glances with Leicester, and drove on in silence.

As the morning broke they had left the ruined chapel a long way behind, and were nearing Tenby. At this point Mr. Thaxton pulled up, and desired Leicester to step out of the cart, as he wished to say a word to him.

Leicester alighted, nodding to Job, warningly.

"Do not attempt to escape," he said, "I warn you."

"You leave him to me, sir," said Stumpy, cheerfully and significantly, and Leicester followed Mr. Thaxton.

"It has just occurred to me, or rather I have been thinking of it all the way—that you are under a warrant still, Mr. Dodson! Any moment you are liable to arrest. There is a hundred pounds reward, remember, and so large an amount makes men keen. In Tenby there are many men and boys who know you—or at least must have seen you often; you may be detected."

"Not through this disguise," said Leicester.

"Not through that disguise; but by your voice; you cannot disguise that sufficiently. I should have known you by it. Better stay out of the way quietly a while until Job's deposition is taken."

"Very well," said Leicester, "I follow your advice to the letter. All I want is to be near those I love and protect them until that villain is under lock and key. Then it does not matter what becomes of me," he added, sadly.

"Hem!" said Mr. Thaxton, "I think I know what is the matter. I have heard of Miss Mildmay's engagement, but that may be put right."

(To be continued.)



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War News

Messages Received Previous to 9 A.M.

OFFICIAL. LONDON, Feb. 25.

The Governor, Newfoundland: The French Government gives further particulars of the success of their operations near Les Eparges. Over six hundred German dead were found on a small section of a line carried by the French. The prisoners state that two regiments driven off by the French attack lost over a thousand men.

The Russian Government reports two regiments of the Twenty-ninth Division, which were surrounded in East Prussia, have broken through the enemy's lines and rejoined the main forces. Fighting in Northern Poland is extending and becoming extremely severe.

Various successes are reported on the Carpathians, where a precipitous height was carried, the German defenders being killed or captured.

HARCOURT. GERMANY'S SUBMARINES.

LONDON, Feb. 25. Germany's submarine war against British shipping has entered on a new phase. It is reported that Germany is sending a flotilla of trawlers into the North Sea to plant mines off and down the British coast. If the Germans undertake mining operations along the edge of the war zone, they will probably be carried on at night, owing to the vigilance of the air-sea fleets patrolling the coast waters.

German activity is increasing, and the British Isles seem to be fringed with German submarines. The Germans are displaying a skill in handling submarines which is astonishing in naval circles. Crews of many ships that have been torpedoed, report seeing no hostile craft, and extra precautions are being taken to guard ports, following the torpedoing of a vessel close to her pier at Folkestone.

HAS NO OBJECTIONS. LONDON, Feb. 25.

Sir Edward Grey announced in the Commons to-day that Great Britain was in entire accord with Russia's desire for access to the sea. In response to a question from Frederick Jowett, whether England knew of the approved statement of Russian Foreign Minister Sazonoff, that Russia intended to permanently occupy Constantinople, Grey said that he was sure that Sazonoff had made such a statement, but he added that the statement he had seen was that Sazonoff had said that events on the Russian-Turkish frontier would bring Russia nearer the realization of her political economic problem bound up with Russia's access to the sea. With these aspirations, he continued, England is in sympathy, and their realization will no doubt be settled in the terms of peace. The announcement of Grey marks one of the important developments in the European situation since the beginning of the war. Russia's desire for a war winter port, and an unrestricted outlet from the Black Sea has long been one of her most cherished national aspirations. The attitude of Britain in the event that

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