

JUST IN TIME.

BY ADELINE SERGEANT, AUTHOR OF "JACOB'S WIFE," "UNDER FALSE PRETENCES," &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

Dr. Simpson was a tall, light-haired man with a fair, pleasant face and a keenly observant look in his bright blue eyes. Anthony soon felt that he had done the right thing in sending for him. He was a clever young fellow who had studied in Edinburgh and Paris, and was rather pleased that his Lordship was at home. He listened attentively to the facts that Anthony laid before him and examined the patient with great care, but said nothing very definite. Indeed it would have been next to impossible to say anything definite at that point in Bertie's illness. The most evident thing to do was to keep him perfectly quiet and provide him with good nursing.

So Anthony went. It was twilight when he walked up the drive, and the yellow glow of sunset was fading in the west. "I shall see nobody," thought Anthony to himself; "they will be at dinner. But I'll ask for Lord Morven. I must know the truth." He fancied that the man who admitted him looked at him oddly when he asked to see the Earl, and hesitated before answering that his Lordship was at home. Anthony, however, not being apt to trouble himself about details, took little notice of the man's face or manner, and followed him tranquilly into the library. Here, to his great surprise, he came face to face with Beatrice Esilimont.

"I assure you that I was guiltless of any attempt to hurt or vex you," he said. "What you call taunts are not taunts at all to my thinking. I spoke of your influence. Everyone knows that it is great." "Great," she repeated contemptuously. "Great, indeed, when even I can not prevail upon Morven to allow Lillias to stay in the house if Bertie comes here." "For all that," persisted Anthony, "your influence is greater with Lord Morven than that of anybody else. The whole place knows it. I have already been told of it half a dozen times. 'Ask Miss Esilimont' is what is said to me on all sides with respect to every little matter connected even with Bertie's estate."

"Morven consults me sometimes," said Beatrice in a low tone; "but he does not take my advice." "He is influenced by it, no doubt. And that is just what I said; your influence with him is great, and I thank you in Bertie's name for exerting it in his favor." She looked down at the letter that she had been writing, and seemed disinclined to answer. But after a few minutes' consideration she lifted her handsome head with a somewhat scornful gesture and met his eyes courageously.

"Do you not wonder a little," she said, "that I should have any influence at all? I have not much, as I told you, but the small amount that I have—don't you marvel how I came to possess it? I have no wealth, nor great standing in the world, no authority. But; if you see—"

"You are on his side then?" said Anthony warmly. "I am glad of that." A faint blush appeared on Beatrice's pale cheek. "He spoke to me about it before he went to India," she said. "He was only a boy then; but I trusted him, and Lillias trusted him too. My poor Lillias! She is very much distressed." "Did you speak to Lord Morven about it?" "Yes, I asked him what had happened, and he told me. But I think he was sorry that Bertie had left the house."

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