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# **Happiness**

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CHAPTER XLI. When Bright had gone, Gaunt left the room and went on the terrace with

So she was going to be married to hoped that he would be worthy of her. no! No man could be worthy of his girl-love, of his Decima! He went down the steps from the errace and sauntered through the park into the road. From there he

Woodbines. She was there—asleep; and he was here. But what a wide gulf yawned be-

ween them! And she was going to be married! Ah. well, that was quite right. It was as it should be. She was young and eautiful; and this young fellowbell, it was right that she should arry one who was young and well ored. A wave of bitterness swept ver him. He tried to crush down the love of her that rose in his heart. He buld go in the morning. He would t see her. He would go back to frica to meet the death which would come sooner or later; sooner, he hop-

saw a sharp light spring into the sky. It seemed to come from the spot which he had been gazing, from The

He stopped and looked earnestly in the direction of the light. It grew and expended, and there was the sound of an explosion. He ran up the hill and leeked earnestly, anxiously, in the direction of the flames; for there were ames now, and the sky was red above the spot, from which they spring. It was a fire; and at The Woodbines

He set off running.

CHAPTER XLII. Gaunt ran across the lawn. climbing the park fence, got into the read. As he went, he was hoping that it might not be The Woodbines, but a hay-stack or rick near i;t but when he had gone another hundred yards or so he saw that it was the Deans'

house that was on fire. Several other persons were running in the same direction, and by the time he had gained the front gate, a crowd had collected and was shouting and rushing about excitedly.

daunt pushed his way through and caught a man, the nearest to him, by the arm.

"Are they all out-safe?" he asked. Before the man could reply, Mr. Bright came running down the path from the burning house.

Is that you, Lord Gaunt?" he panted, then turned and addressed the crowd. "Some one run down to the farm and bring up a ladder-the longyou can find; bring two, and some rope! Has any one gone for the en-

"Yes, yes, sir!" replied a voice. \*Are they all out, Bright?" demandenhigh, but he looked from Bright to ! the house with a terrible anxiety.

get over the fence. The servants are out and safe; I saw them just now. There they are; and Mr. Deane-he "And Decima-Miss Deane?"

Gaunt, impatiently. Mr. Bright shook his head "I haven't seen her. Has any one

een Miss Dean?" he shouted. There was a silence as the crowd looked from one to the other; then the cook pushed her way up to Bright wringing her hands and crying.

"Oh, where is the young mistress Where is Miss Decima?" she wailed. "I can't find her! We-we thought she Lord Illminster! And why not? He had come out with us, but I can't find her in the crowd!"

Gaunt took her by the shoulder. "Don't be afraid," he said, quietly. 'Tell me-which room?" The girl stopped wailing and crying

for a moment "The back room-at the top, my could just see the chimneys of The lord. Miss Decima is sleeping there for a night or two; her own room is being done up."

"Show me!" said Gaunt, quickly. She ran round to the back of the ouse and pointed to a window of the

"That's it, my lord! Oh, my poor oung mistress!

The night had grown dark, and slight drizzle had commenced. The house as yet, though it was spreading rapidly, and he could not see anything at the window. He noticed that there were iron bars to it; the room had been used as a nursey by a former

Gaunt shouted "Decima!" but no answer came, and he ran round to the front again. The house was an old one, and having been built when timber was cheap and jerry-building unknown, there was plenty of wood in it. The flames had caught at the thick beams and quarterings, and the whole of the front of the house was a sheet of fire. One of the men had brought an ax and broken in the front door, and the

draught was driving the fire up the staircase and through the lower rooms But Gaunt did not hesitate a mobe safe somewhere in the crowd: but he would not leave it to chance. He

his arm up before his eyes, he ran toward the door Bright saw him and sprung forward "Where are you going, my lord?"

he demanded. "You can't go insideit's impossible!" "Have you found Miss Deane?" crie

Gaunt, over his shoulder. "No," said Bright; "but you can't go -it's certain death!" Gaunt broke from him and ran into

the house. A volume of flames and smoke surrounded him and shut him from Bright's sight. The crowd roared with excitement, and yelled, "Come back-come back!" and some of the women screamed Gaunt with his face covered by his arm, blundered to the mottom of the staircase and looked up. The flames had traveled through the first floor and were licking round the balustrades of the landing; the smoke was so thick that he could see

nothing but the flames "Decima!" he called. "Decima!" There was no answer, and half blinded and suffocated, he was about to Gaunt. He spoke quietly and calmly rush up the stairs, when they fell away from the landing with a dull

"I-I don't know. I have only just . The smoke and dust rendered it imarrived," replied Bright, "I saw you possible for him to see anything for a 1000

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but the crackling of the wood-work and opening his eyes, he saw a white igure standing on the landing above

"My God!" he said, under his breath and for a second he was paralyzed by fear for the first time in his life. It was only for a second, the next he was himself again.

"Decima!" he cried to her, "Decima! Can you see hear me?"

A tongue of fime shot up between them, and they could see each other plainly. He saw her start and hold her arms to him, heard her cry upon his name, and he held out his arms to her, intending to tell her to jump; but he checked the command that sprung to his lips. In the uncertain light, in her terror, she might miss him or jump short, and if she did so, she would inevitably injure herself.

"Decima, can you hear me?" "Yes, yes!" she cried back to him and her voice, though thick and trembling, was free from the frenzy of terror. "Oh back! Oh, go, go! You can not He laughed flercely.

"Can I not? I can, and I will save you? Do not be afraid. Go back-look! Is the stairs above you safe yet?" She glanced upward. "Yes, I-I think so! Oh, yes; pray-

pray go! The fire is all around you! can see it!' "Go up to the top room-the one at the back!" he shouted "Let me see you go! Quick!

She paused a moment and looked lown at him. Surely it was not terror on the white face which the flames lighted up so plainly, not terror alone but an indenfinable tenderness and

"Go!" he repeated, almost sternly. "There is not a moment to lose! I wil save you! Go to the window, but do a splendid variety of not break it—the draught—"

glance at him, sprung up the top stairs Gaunt turned and fought his way through the flames and smoke into the open air. Half a dozen men seized him and dragged him away from the house and beat out the sparks and spots of fire which smoldered in his clothes. fire had not reached the back of the His face was black, his hair scorched, and he was almost blinded by the your shape by expert

> "All right!" he said, shaking himself free from the anxious, kindly hands "She is safe—as yet. The ladder!" "It's here!" cried Bright. "Are yo

"No. no! Take it round to the back the window with the bars! Quick! said Gaunt. He was cool and self-possessed, bu his lips trembled.

They tore round to the back with the ladder and set it up against the house; but the ladder would not quite Samples and style sheets reach the window. Gaunt looked up. Some ivy was growing against the side, and he thought he could manage to reach the window.

He sprung to the ladder, but Bright and some of the other men seized him. Wait-for God's sake, wait until we've tied the smaller ladder on to this one. "You can do that when I'm up," said Gaunt, quietly. "I can reach the win

meant going into the house. Putting dow by the ivy. Let me go, please!" He pushed Bright aside and tore off his coat, with his foot on the ladder Then he ran up. They held the ladder firmly, and gazed up at him with white, scared faces. When he had gained the top rung he twisted his hands in the ivy as high above his head as possible and drew himself up. For a moment or two he hung by this frail support, and the crowd, as they stared up at him, gave a kind of sob and gasp. When they saw him loosen one hand and reach for the window-sill

"He'll never do it!" exclaimed voice below. "He'll fall-drop like a stone! Some one get some blanketssomething to catch him!"

But Gaunt's strength was herculean, and it was backed by that cool courage which has made the Englishman master of half the world. He raised himself inch by inch, got a grip with his other hand, and presently had one knee on the widow-sill. The crowd sent up a wild cheer: but there was teror and apprehension in it as well as admiration.

Fortunately, the sill was one of the wide, old-fashioned ones, and Gaunt found it possible to kneel on it. As he did so, he saw Decima. There was only the glass between their two faces; hers white and strained with terrorfor him, not for herself-his black and grimed with smoke.

He smiled at her encouragingly and spoke her name. Then he gripped one of the bars and tore it away, and with cry of warning to those below, flung it down. The second bar came away as easily, but the last held fast. It had been nailed with clamp nails and resisted all his efforts for a time, and he could not put forth all his strength, for fear of losing his balance and fallng. Every moment was precious.

He saw a gleam of light behind Decima, and knew that it was the flames which had reached the top story and would take hold of the room itself preently. Clinging to the side of the window, he exerted all the force he dared, and the bar came away suddenly, so ddenly that he staggered and sway-as the spectators beneath grouned ted warningly.

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