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The Sound of Wedding Bells

Won After Great Perseverance!

CHAPTER V.

"I am Hugh Falconer," he repeats, and it is necessary that he should repeat the assertion, for Dulcie sits and stares at him with the vacancy of utter, bemusing astonishment.

Then she opens her lips, and the color comes and goes on her face at every word, as she says, slowly, stupidly:

"You are—Sir—Hugh Falconer!"

He inclines his head. There is no smile on his lips, only the same intent, set look in the dark gray eyes.

"And you sat there and let me tell you—let me say what I did!" she says, in a low voice, with an indignant flash in her eyes. "You sat still, knowing all the time—"

"Pardon me," he says, grimly; "you forget that I did not know. I was quite ignorant of the circumstances of the case. You yourself told me that your uncle's heir was to be kept in ignorance."

She looks at him with an unconcealed incredulity.



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"And you did not know me—know my name?"

"Not from Adam's, or Eve's, rather," he says, bluntly.

She looks beyond him, at the hot and garish room, at the struggling, jostling dancers, with an air of bewilderment for a moment, then her eyes go back to his face, and she laughs vacantly.

He pulls his mustache, and looks down at her.

"I am glad," he says, "that you can find food for merriment; I am glad that the 'situation' amuses you."

"Yes," she says, frankly. "The situation!—It is a good word, and describes it. Yes, it amuses me. Do you know what I was laughing at?"

"I venture to flatter myself it was at me," he says, coolly.

She nods, and the laughter shines and ripples in her lovely, daring eyes.

"Yes, I was laughing at the expression of intense disgust which, try as hard as you did, would come into your face when you learned that I was—myself."

He colors and looks down at his boots. She has nearly hit the mark; if it was not disgust, it was consternation. Beautiful as she is, fascinating as he has found this dark-eyed, red-lipped school-girl, she is not the type of woman that he admired sufficiently to wish to make his wife. He, Sir Hugh Falconer, the representative of one of the oldest families in Europe, the staid, grave, critical, can scarcely be expected to approve of a girl who is willing to scramble through the streets of Rome at Carnival time, accompanied only by a gentleman—young, handsome, and almost a stranger—a girl who looks and speaks her mind so frankly and altogether so unconventionally as does Dulcie Dorrmore. And yet—how beautiful she is, as she sits with the laughter on her lips, the elfish mockery in her eyes!

"Yes, disgusted," she repeats. "And now, what follows?" she adds.

He stares at the carpet, at the curtains, at the ball-room beyond. She bites her lip covertly, and her eyes flash at his silence.

"You leave me to speak," she says, mockingly. "That is considerate of you. Well, having by chance met and inspected the young lady bequeathed to you, you will, of course, decline the bequest."

He looks up, and a smile plays for a moment under his mustache.

"I don't know that," he says. She colors; the red is always very near the olive cheeks.

"Well, that doesn't matter," she says, quietly. "I suppose that I also have a say in the matter. I can do as I like."

"Undoubtedly," he says.

"Very well, then," she says, conclusively. "At any rate, I have made up my mind. I do not wish to be disposed of as if I were an estate, or a house and furniture, and I decline to have anything whatever to do with the matter."

"With me, in fact?" he says.

She rises and smiles, and even as she does so her beauty, the nameless grace which belongs to her, strike him to the heart.

"Do not be precipitate," he says, rising and standing beside her, and biting his nether lip. "We neither of us quite know how the affair stands. There may be circumstances—I mean—hadn't you better wait?"

"Thanks, no," she says, curtly; "I have quite decided, quite. Oh, here is Sir Archibald!" and she moves to the opening.

Sir Archie, with anxiety plainly portrayed on his handsome countenance, comes hurriedly toward her, his eyes beaming joyfully as he spies her.

"Oh, where have you been?" he exclaims woefully. "I have been looking for you everywhere—"

"But in the right place," she puts in.

"Eh? Yes, of course, and—halloo! Hugh! here you are! Do you know—have you been introduced?" and he looks from one to the other, from the grave, thoughtful, absorbed face of the man to the laughing and defiant and rather haughty face of the girl.

"Oh, yes," says Dulcie. "Sir Hugh Falconer and I are quite old friends by this time—or is it foes? We have been exchanging confidences, have we not?"

Sir Archie strokes his mustache and stares, and blushes.

"I didn't know," he murmurs, looking rather embarrassed, and sheepish.

"Have you got this waltz for me, Miss Dorrmore? I think I put it down."

Dulcie looks at her card; he has not put it down, but she nods.

"Yes, you may have it," and without a glance in the direction of the grave face, she puts her hand upon Sir Archie's arm, and they go out.

The next instant they are whirling round the room, and Sir Hugh is left to stand and stare at them, catching glimpses of the beautiful face as it passes him now and again, and to remark to himself that certainly she is not the girl he would choose to make Lady Falconer.

"I—I didn't know you knew Hugh Falconer," says Sir Archie, as they pause for breath.

"No!" says Dulcie. "And was he the friend whom you met in the streets just now—the wonderful man with the Victoria Cross, and all that?"

He nods.

"Yes, yes, that was Hugh. Shall we have another turn?"

"Yes—no, let us sit down somewhere. You shall tell me all about him."

Quite content, so that she is near him, Sir Archie finds a seat, and wiping his face smiles blandly and good-humoredly at the crowd.

"Run thing, meeting him here!" he says. "Awfully jolly, though. There's nobody I like better than old Hugh."

"Why 'old' Hugh?" says Dulcie, her eyes following the tall, stalwart, slenderly formed as it crosses the room and pauses at the door. "He is not very 'old,' is he?"

"Oh, no," says Sir Archie; "quite young, you know. Not much older than I am, but he looks older. He's seen so much life, you know—active service, and all that. Then he's so—so grave—"

"And grim," puts in Dulcie.

"Well—no, not always, only sometimes, and then it's only his manner. He's the best-hearted fellow alive!"

"Now," says Dulcie, meditatively, "I wonder why it is that the most disagreeable and glum of men kind are always credited with having the best hearts alive!"

Sir Archie laughs.

"Disagreeable! Oh, no, I shouldn't say Hugh was disagreeable!" he protests. "Rather quiet, you know. Only his manner, and all that. You see, he always had a lot on his shoulders, and that makes him quiet."

"A lot on his shoulders! Do you mean his epaulettes?" says Dulcie, with a mischievous assumption of innocence.

Sir Archie laughs again.

"Lot of responsibility, I mean. You see—well, it's the old story. The fact is—ahem!—well, you know, everybody knows it, hence it doesn't matter if I tell you. Old Hugh is very poor, not well titled, you know."

"I see," she says, and her eyes droop. "And yet he is a baronet, isn't he?"

"Yes," he assents; "but there are plenty of fellows with titles who are hard up. Sometimes the money doesn't go with the title; it doesn't in Hugh's case; and then he's got a mother and sisters to provide for."

"Sisters! How many? A dozen—twenty?" asks Dulcie.

"No, two."

"Oh! And—and he provides for them?"

"Yes, like a brick!" says Archie, fervently. "Oh, he's a thorough good fellow, you know! I can't make out why he sold out and left the army; quite one of their best men. Perhaps he's going to be married."

Dulcie's face flushes for a moment, then she laughs softly.

"Perhaps so. Why did you think so?"

"Oh, I don't know. I think I remember that there was a young lady to whom he was supposed to be attached."

Dulcie looks up quickly.

"Tell me," she says, eagerly, then she pauses and continues, with affected indifference, "Really! What was she like?"

"Like!" he says. "Let me see. Oh, I remember. She was one of the quiet sort. A little girl, with soft, brown eyes, and a moony little way with her."

"I know," she says, almost to herself, "I know. One of the 'good girls'; soft and quiet and demure. Great at parish work—helps the curate, carries round a little basket—one half, no, two thirds, tracts, and the other third chicken broth and green tea."

Sir Archie stares, and then bursts into a laugh that causes an old lady near them to jump in her chair.

"Why, you know her!" he says.

"How strange! Yes, that's the sort of girl. Awfully nice and—smooth. Her name—let me see—her name is—"

"Either Emily, or Jane, or Sophonisba," says Dulcie, mockingly.

"No, it's Lucy—Lucy Fairfax: I remember now. She was the daughter of old Major Fairfax of the Blues; killed out at—at—at—"

"Thanks," said Dulcie. "And your friend, Sir Hugh, is engaged to this paragon of all the virtues?"

Sir Archie strokes his mustache dubiously.

"Well, I don't say that; but I know he was very sweet on her. Hugh is the sort of man to avoid an engagement unless he could carry it out, and, you see, he was so poor—"

"I see," says Dulcie, whose quick wit has taken in the whole story. "And Sir Hugh is simply waiting for a turn of fortune to secure his prize. Let us hope that the turn has now come."

"I hope so," says Sir Archie. "Such a rattling good fellow, you know! Shall we have just one more turn? They'll leave off directly, else."

(To be Continued.)

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Waist—2163. Skirt—2179. Comprising Ladies' Waist 2163 and Ladies' Skirt 2179. The waist fronts are finished with a deep tuck. The sleeve may be in wrist or elbow length. The low neck is finished with a broad shape collar. The skirt has a lap tuck at the centre front, and shaped pockets which may be omitted. The Waist Pattern is cut in 7 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. It requires 3 1/2 yards of 36-inch material for a medium size. The Skirt Pattern is cut in 7 sizes also: 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32 and 34 inches waist measure. It requires 3 1/2 yards of 44-inch material for a 24-inch size. The skirt measures about 2 1/2 yards at the foot.

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Scandinavia May be Involved

American Revelations of Swedish Intrigues May be Reaching Consequences

(By Lowell Mellett, Staff Correspondent)

London, Sept. 10.—Possibilities of Scandinavian becoming involved in the war were seen in London following American revelations of German-Swedish intrigues in messages from Argentina at Stockholm. Foreign Office.

The disclosures are regarded as of highest importance here, on account of the long and close relations between the two countries.

Furthermore, the action of the British and American governments in releasing the disclosures is regarded as a significant step towards the Stockholm peace conference.

The British and American governments had knowledge of the Germanism at the end of the war and that a conference of the free from German influence was possible.

The Thirty Year

It is a curious coincidence Sweden's two most famous kings fell by "a dubious Charles XII. by a cannon ball" "petty fortress," and Gustavus in the sudden onslaught of hostile horsemen at Poltava, on November 8, 1709. The cases otherwise were different. Charles XII. presented himself alone in his own country; but Gustavus sent a great cause, and his fall was mourned, and he was but 38, and from the year had been fighting, and 1630 he entered Germany, and powerful arm to aid the cause of the Reformation. Two years were crowned with rich in glory. He defeated fierce Wallona general, T. Breitenfeld, and the battle of Loh, where his redoubtable feat was killed. But his fate was repulsed with heavy loss attempt to storm the city outside Nuremberg. Gustavus Wallenstein found retreat shortly afterwards, and he followed him closely up until he was reached and the Imperial army gave battle on the plain where Napoleon was slain. The engagement was a tactical advantage, the long Thirty Years' War was almost much protracted.

The greatest depth of quakes are known about thirty miles, as calculated that a heaviest ment granite might occur at same depth.

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