







YOLANDE.

BY WILLIAM BLAKE. AUTHOR OF "SHEPHERD DREAMS," "MADONNA OF DARK," "WATERBURY," "SCARAB," ETC.

(Continued.) CHAPTER XI. BOATLOAD.

And as for Mr. Winterbourne himself! Well, he was not blind. He could see as far ahead as any of them. His imagination was not captured by any picture of Yolande in black velvet, and if he knew nothing about the desirability of buying back Corrievreck, his hope and prayer for the future was clear and definite enough. To secure for Yolande a peaceful, safe, and happy life—that was his one aim and thought; and already he clearly recognized, and in his own mind strove to make light of, in a sadly humorous way, the necessity of a separation between him and her. It was the way of the world—why should he complain? If she was securely settled in life, that would be enough happiness for him. And this young fellow, who was paying her so much obvious attention, was a nice enough young fellow, as things went; of good birth and breeding, well-mannered, good-natured, and otherwise unobjectionable. And Yolande seemed to be on the most friendly terms with him.

But even now it was strange to find himself being courted in this way, ever slight a degree, from Yolande's companionship. It was his own doing, and he knew it; and he knew that he was acting wisely in preparing himself by small degrees for the inevitable; and yet he had to confess to himself that the operation was not a pleasant one. Then it was a slow process. Yolande herself did not notice how, whether they were in the Cairo bazars or in the balcony at the hotel, her father managed to hang back a little; and how the Master of Lynn had come quite naturally to take his place; and how it was the latter, and not the former, who knew where her travelling bag was, and called her maid for her, and bought her fruit at the stations. On this very morning, for example, on their arrival at Asyout, when they had seen their luggage packed on the camels' backs by the tall and swarthy Arabs, and when they set out to walk down to the Nile, over the burning sands, it was, as usual, Mr. Leslie who happened to be her companion. Her father had lingered behind, under pretence of once more counting over the articles of luggage, along with Ahmed the dragoman; and when he overtook the other members of the party, it was the Gramans that he chose to accompany. Mrs. Graham was complaining of the discomfort of travelling by night, and declaring that she would not undertake such another journey to avoid all the heat that ever was heard of; and her husband was observing, with the candor of husbands, that her hair certainly did look like a hay-rick in a gale of wind.

"There's Archie," she said, glancing at the two white figures in front of them, "he's always spick and span. No matter what happens, he always looks as if he'd come out of a bandbox. And a very nice thing about him," said Mr. Winterbourne, "is to be careless about one's appearance is no great compliment to one's companions. Mrs. Graham," he added, in his timid and nervous way, "I wish you would tell me frankly—you see there is scarcely any one I can ask—would you tell me honestly if you think that Yolande dresses fairly well?"

"Oh, I think she dresses charmingly," said pretty Mrs. Graham, in the most good-natured way. "Quite charmingly. She is so very original."

"But I don't want her to be original," he said, with a slight touch of querulousness. "That is just what I want her to go to the very best places, and get what is most correct, and not to mind about the cost of it. I don't care about the cost of it; we have no establishment to keep up; no horses or anything of the kind; and why should she be so particular about the cost of this or that? Really, Mrs. Graham, it would be so kind of you to give her a word of advice."

"Oh, but dear Yolande and I have had long talks about that already, you know, Mr. Winterbourne," said she. "Do you suppose two women could do so much together without? And I know what she thinks. First and foremost, she wears what she thinks will please you; and I think she is rather clever at finding out what you like."

"Oh, but that is absurd," said he, peevishly. "What do I know about it? Sometimes I have made suggestions; but—but I want her to be well dressed."

Cairo—Aberdaman, was it?—and I would ask him just to look again at that wonderful piece of Syrian embroidery."

"I remember," said he, quickly. "I remember quite well. Of course she shall have it. I had no idea she cared for it."

"Do you think any living woman could look at it without coveting it with her whole soul? But she was not likely to say that to you. It was horribly expensive—I forget how much."

"She shall have it," he said, briefly. "It would make the loveliest opera cloak," she suggested.

"An opera cloak!" he repeated, with an sudden change of manner. "It would be perfectly gorgeous," she said.

"Oh, but I don't think she will want an opera cloak," said he, coldly. "It would be a pity. It would be throwing it away."

"Are you never going to take her to the theatre, then?" said Mrs. Graham, with a stare.

"I hope Yolande will not live much in cities," said he, somewhat hastily, and evidently wishing to get rid of the subject. "She has lived always in the country—look at the health of her cheeks. I hope she will never live in a city; she will live a far quieter and happier life in the country; and she will do very well without theatres or anything of the kind."

"I wish to ask a question, however, Colonel Graham. Did you hear a shriek? No! Well, this is the question: I found a cockroach in one of the drawers as big as—well, I thought it was an alligator out of the river—you did not hear Jane shriek!—and I would like to know if any of the beasts are similar in proportion."

"My dear child!" broke in Mrs. Graham. "Thank goodness you know nothing about it—you never were in India. Here you haven't to twitch off the bedclothes before going to bed to make sure that there isn't a snake waiting for you. Why, what is there here? Nothing. The heat is bad, but it is dry; it does not sap the life out of you like the Indian heat. The flies worry; but they are not nearly so bad as you don't lose your temper. The mosquitoes are pretty considerable, I admit; but you have your Levinge."

"Do you think I was complaining?" exclaimed Yolande. "Complaining!—as we now!"

"No, it was Jim, I dare say," said the other, most gratuitously. "Men always do complain, because they have so little to complain about. But it would take an Aladdin's lamp to find anything wrong with a day like this, or with such a pleasant setting out; and I do hope, Jim, you will be civil for once, and let that young fellow and his father know how much we are obliged to them for the loan of the boat. They expect it, those Eastern people. It is a grand old grumpy, like Englishmen and Scotchmen. I do hope you'll be polite to him."

"All right," said her husband, with his lazy good-nature. "I'll Bismillah him within an inch of his life."

So the calm and dream-like day went pleasantly by, the slowly moving panorama around them constantly offering objects of new interest. In the afternoon they passed some ranges of bare and arid limestone hills; and on the face of the rocks, now catching a faint pink or lilac glow from the setting sun—they could make out the entrances of ancient tombs, placed high above all possible inundations. It was not far south of this portion of the river that the Nile resolved to come to an anchor; for the water, which had been an eye-witness, in substance as follows: A tree was sawed down, and in falling, struck the croch of another tree. A large limb was broken off, rebounded, and fell on the top of the first tree, in height, knocking it down. This stump fell upon and killed a horse quite a distance from the tree which it had felled, and where he was considered entirely out of danger.

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plans were, and so he was able to approach her in a frank way. "Perhaps he might be able to get Mr. Winterbourne's approval and thus be twice armed."

Yolande's father, who had regarded the two as they stood there by the rail, looking into the distance, watched them as they came back again, and he looked at the girl with a strange and wistful look. Had she said "Yes" already? Was she going away from him? But there was no sign of any emotion on the fair young face—neither alarm, nor consent, nor maiden hesitation, nor anything of the sort. Quite frankly and naturally she came over to her father's chair, down beside him on the deck, and put her hand on his knee.

"I wish I knew a little more about the stars," she said.

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Paper houses are coming into use in England, where for some purposes they are found greatly superior to stone. Showings have twice before square were found common both to use and transport, and the materials being impervious to moisture, the little cottages are satisfactory and so the cost is reduced. It is said that they will be used at the seaside during the coming season, not only for bathing houses, but as "residences" for quiet bachelors of contemplative habits.

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That was a pleasant enough meal too, in the cheerful little saloon, the sprightly colors of which were in a measure subdued by the yellow radiance of the painting lamp. The two women had sat upon their lightest and coolest and brightest costumes; and now, for the first time perhaps, they recognized how completely the little group of them was shut off from the world. On board ship they had plenty of neighbors; in hotels they sat at the table d'hôte; but here they were really a family party; and Colonel Graham, in addressing Yolande, dropped the "Miss" quite naturally, and it seemed as though these people had known each other all their lives through, and that they had come away for their holiday trip, and were to be together until they returned again together to their proper homes in the Highlands. The Gramans, indeed, talked as if they had already annexed and adopted Yolande.

After dinner they adjourned to the upper deck for the sake of coolness; and everything very clean and bright and cool; and the circular open space at the stern was a veritable Bellevue, from which, sitting in the shade, they could gaze abroad on the wide yellow-green waters of the Nile, and on the picturesque scenes along the banks; and when, in the course, buckets and brought them—an interminable meal, with three or four kinds of wine on the table—they forgot that the men and the dishes were French, when their attention was attracted by the Albanian-looking person in embroidered cap and baggy breeches of yellow silk, and when they heard outside the hoarse chorus of a Nubian crew laboring at the long oars of one of the trading boats.

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BUYERS WHEN IN ST. JOHN, are respectfully invited to inspect our WAREHOUSES and SAMPLE ROOMS, where they will see the large variety we keep of HARDWARE, CUTLERY, PAINTS, OILS, GLASS, ROPE, TAR, PITCH, AGRICULTURAL TOOLS, FANCY GOODS, ETC.

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