

JOHN ARTHUR'S WARD;
OR, THE DETECTIVE'S DAUGHTER.
"A WOMAN'S CRIME," "THE MISSING DIAMOND,"
ETC., ETC.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

Madeline went back to the lighter, larger room, and, seating herself, looked about her. Again the words of Oliver rang in her ears.

"Corn!" she ejaculated. "He obeyed her summons, and brought me with him. And she was here only last night, and where has she gone since? This must be the notorious, the handsome, the Lucian Davlin, the 'handsome,' this is the first link in the chain that shall yet make your life a burden."

"She crossed the room and touched the bell."

"Now for the first real step," said Madeline, grimly.

"The door opened and the dark face of Henry appeared, bowing on the threshold."

"Come in, Henry, and close the door," said Madeline, pleasantly.

"Thank you, madam; indeed I would," said the man in grateful tones.

"I'm sorry he is not kind to you," said the girl, hypocritically.

"And I don't want you to carry this letter because he ordered you. I want you to do it to oblige me, Henry, and I will make me always your friend."

"Ab, Henry, you resentful gleam from your eyes as you stood behind the chair of your tyrant, has given to this slight girl the clue by which to sway you to her will. She was smiling upon him, and the man replied in grateful tones."

"I'll do anything," said Madeline.

"Thank you, Henry. I was sure I could trust you. Will you get me some writing material, please, and a pen?"

"No, sir; not at this time. This way, sir."

"No answer; no change on the face or attitude of the girl before him."

"Close that door, sir, and take yourself off," he said, turning to Henry.

"Remembering her words, 'You can serve me best here,' Henry bowed with unusual humility, and went out."

"I don't think she is afraid of him," he muttered, as he went down the hall.

"Really, this is rather hard on a fellow's patience, my dear, and no more to the door, and, as you perceive I am tempering my words with a few polite 'no's,' he added, parenthetically, 'I will not permit you to leave me; do you hear me? I will not!'"

His tone of aggressive mockery was maddening to the desperate girl. It lent her a fresh, last impulse of wild, defiant energy. There was no shadow of fear in her mind or heart now. She was outraged, feeling too full possession of all power of speech to utter a word in another instant she stood before him, in her eyes blazing with wrath, and in her hand a pistol, that she had snatched from a table and aimed two short hours before!

"He was not a coward, this man; and page at being thus baited and placed at a disadvantage by his own weapon, drove all the mockery from his face."

There was a flash, a sharp report, and Lucian Davlin reeled for a moment, his right arm hanging helpless and bleeding. Only for a few moments, however, sprang him up, he wheeled about, seized her with his strong left arm, and holding her close to him in a vice-like clutch, hissed, with the deadly earnestness caused by the flowing blood over his face:

"Little demon! I will kill you before I will lose you now! You—shall—not—escape!"

A deadly faintness overcame him, and he fell heavily; still clasping the girl, who, unconscious of his fall, was still clinging to him. Hearing the pistol shot, and almost simultaneously a heavy fall, Henry hurried through the long passage and threw open the door. Clutching the girl, he rushed down the stairs in frantic haste.

Meantime, Clarence Vaughan, punctual to the time appointed, had driven rapidly to the spot where the carriage lay. He was about to alight from the carriage, when he drew back suddenly, and sat in the shadow as a man passed up the street.

It was Lucian Davlin, and he entered the building bearing the number Madeline had given in her note.

Instantly Vaughan comprehended the situation. She had sent for aid in this man's absence, and his return might frustrate her plans. Pondering upon the best course to pursue, he stepped into the carriage, and paced the length of the block. Turning in his promenade, his car was greeted by a pistol shot.

"Oh, sir!—Oh, doctor, come right up, quick, sir," he exclaimed.

"No, sir; not at this time. This way, sir."

He threw open the door and stepped back. Entering the room, this is what Clarence Vaughan saw:

Lying upon the floor in a pool of blood, the splendid form of Lucian Davlin, one arm crumpled to his forehead, the other clasping close the form of a beautiful girl. His eyes were closed, and his face pallid as death. The eyes of the girl were staring wide and unseeing, her face expressing unutterable fear and horror, every muscle rigid as if in a convulsion. One hand was clenched in a death-like grasp, while the other clutched a pistol, still warm and smoldering of powder.

It was the work of a moment to stem the flow of blood, and restore the wounded man to consciousness. First he had removed the inching of his eye, and grasped her upon a bed in the inner room, and, removing the fatal weapon from her hand, instructed Henry how to apply the remedies of the first aid.

At the first signs of recovery, returning life, Doctor Vaughan summoned Henry to look after the patient, and he left with rather unprofessional alacrity, to attend to the fair patient in whose welfare he felt so much interest.

"Not alive!" was the brief but significant answer.

"Not alive! Great heavens, doctor, don't tell me that my mother, whom I don't test the little girl for her life!"

"I am not inclined to your servant for my knowledge concerning you, sir. I wish to leave this place; stand aside and let me pass."

"The red flush had returned to her cheeks, the dangerous sparks to her eyes; her courage and spirits rose in response to his sneering pleasantry. Her eyes were tensed like steel. He little dreamed of the courage, strength and power she could put against him."

"Lucian!" impatiently.

"Well, then, I'm sorry you didn't," quoth Cora, "for from modesty or delicacy I really don't care to inquire of other and I have just curiosity enough to wish to know how she looked."

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