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Buctouche, March 18, 1891.

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to hold back the words; the rigid looks bent upon her froze the impulse, and when she left the dining room she did not tell them that the low spoken good night was perhaps good bye forever.

As soon as the door had closed upon her Leo rose, and with a trembling hand laid a crumpled piece of paper on the table—the written message Sybil had thrown from her window to Roderick.

"See what this means!" Leo said through his clenched teeth. "She is deceiving us for him—bringing shame to our name. Look to her, or to-night this house will lose its daughter."

Sir Maurice read the words, his eyes glowing like steel under his knit brows. "What will you do to stop it?" Leo asked, his cheeks burning with fierce rage. Sir Maurice gave a smile that made his son shiver.

"Nothing. If it requires chains to keep her, let her go."

Lady Cardon gave a faint cry and moved to follow Sybil. Her husband caught her hand and drew her back.

"She knows the choice before her," he muttered in strained tones; "I will allow no interference. If she would leave us, she is not worth keeping."

Leo decided differently. In his hot-headstrong pride, it seemed to him she had better be dead than be so false to herself and all belonging to her.

He had told her he would rather kill her than have her marry Roderick Kemp, and he meant to hold to his word.

He gave her one more warning—one more chance to fling off the shame that would darken the pride of their race.

"Do you see this?" he said, showing her a loaded revolver he had taken to her room. "Make any attempt to leave the house under cover of the night, and I will shoot you as you cross the threshold."

Sybil looked at the glittering toy-like weapon and shivered.

"You would not make yourself a murderer!" she cried, almost in a whisper. "Leo, don't be so hard with me. One day you may know what it is to suffer as I am suffering now. If you were in my place I would help you—indeed I would—even in spite of the whole world."

Leo pushed off her clinging hands. "I am helping you in a way that you will perhaps thank me for at some future time," he answered. "If you are mad enough not to be advised by me I shall carry out my threat."

CHAPTER II.
All that night and the next, Leo took his post outside her door, and Sybil dared make no sign to Roderick Kemp, though she knew he was somewhere in the dark grounds, watching her window.

She could not escape without making some sound which would have caught Leo's quick ear, and he would have burst the door in and alarmed the whole house before she had taken the desperate leap from her balcony.

On the third night, worn out by his long watch, he fell asleep, and Sybil, hearing his heavy breathing, knew this might be her only opportunity.

She listened breathlessly at the door, then stole to the window, softly parted the curtains, and unlatched the casement.

Would Roderick see her—was he waiting for this sign, or had he lost hope at the delay?

Every nerve trembled as she wrapped herself in a long grey cloak and drey the hood over her head.

"This for love's sake—for Roderick's sake!" she thought with a pang as she looked back on all she was leaving. "I wonder when I shall come home forgiven!"

She dared not give herself time for reflection.

Blowing out the candles, she stepped on to the balcony and waited until she heard a rustling amongst the leaves below.

"Are you ready?" Roderick whispered, the words stealing softly on the night air. "Yes!"

The moonlight streamed over her as she leaned against the balustrade, and Roderick could see her face, pale under the strain of an intense excitement.

His eyes burned with eagerness. "Would her courage forsake her? Would she shrink from the awful leap that was to give her life to him?"

Love alone would have made this a moment of wild anxiety to him; but there was a fortune weighed in the balance with his happiness, and he was impatient to secure it.

He stepped close under the balcony and stretched out his arms.

"Come!" he murmured—"come, my darling! Jump, and you will be safe with me!"

His voice called the color into her cheeks. Leo's tired breathing no longer stole on her senses, holding her thoughts back to the bounties that had been sacred to her childhood.

She closed the window noiselessly behind her, and balancing herself lightly on the balustrade, took the downward leap.

Roderick caught her to his breast, and she rested in her arms, giddy, breathless—almost fainting.

"My sweet little one, we must not stay!" he said, kissing her passionately. "How could I bear to have you torn away from me now?"

She clasped her arms tightly around his neck and hid her face on his shoulder.

"Oh, Roderick, my best—my dearest!"

should I give up all for you! Help me—guide me, you who are so soon to be my husband!"

"Trust everything to me, darling!" he answered, drawing her into the shadow of the shrubbery and hurrying her away from the house: "my whole life shall be devoted to your happiness. While I live you shall never feel the pang of a regret."

His arm was still round her, bearing her up against his side as they moved along.

Sybil had thought out no plan beyond the action of this moment, and she gave herself up entirely to Roderick submitting her will to his.

They did not pause until they had reached the edge of a deep narrow river that swept along half concealed under the dark trees.

A boat was moored to the bank. Helping her on to one of the cushioned seats, he untied the rope, and taking his place opposite her, commenced to row with all his strength.

Clouds had gathered over the moon, and the little craft glided along like a shadow, the strong regular beat of the oars the only sound breaking on the stillness.

Roderick did not speak. His lips were pressed tightly together, and all his attention was given to the task.

Hour after hour went by, and yet they were not at their journey's end.

The silence and the darkness had a depressing effect on Sybil, notwithstanding Roderick's presence, and a feverish grief overpowered her.

A feeling of intense loneliness crept into her heart, and she longed to nestle close to Roderick—to lay her tired head on his breast—to hear him say again how dearly he loved her.

It would have been much even to watch him—to see the tender glow in his deep eyes when his gaze dwelt upon her.

But this oppressive gloom—it seemed to chill the romance of the venture—to hold her in terror.

She laid a burning hand on Roderick's wrist. He started impatiently and shook off the clinging touch.

"Don't hinder me," he exclaimed as he bent to the oar; "every stroke counts. We must get to our journey's end before daybreak. Already we may be pursued."

Sybil's pale lips quivered. "Be kind—be true to me, Roderick!" she said impetuously. "I have nobody but you now—nobody in the whole world!"

"Do you regret it already?" he asked reproachfully.

"No, no; you said I never should. I only want to feel sure of your love. I could not be lonely while you love me!"

"Let that be your last doubt, dear one. After to-night you shall never complain of my coldness. My great desire is to get far beyond the reach of those who would take you from me. To-morrow you will be rightfully mine; no man shall dare part us."

His words comforted her; yet she could not get that new uncertainty out of her heart, and she wondered vaguely if her escape had been discovered by those left behind.

"Where are we going?" she asked after a long pause. "To your own home!"

"I have no home—no home fit to offer you, little queen. Will you be satisfied, for a short time, with love in a cottage?"

She laid her hands softly on one of his, and this time he did not try to shake off the clasp.

"Anywhere with you, Roderick," she said gently; "it will not be for long. When I come of age, we shall both be rich."

They had reached a narrow bend in the river, and through the tree Sybil could see the faint glimmer of a light, shining from the window of a solitary cottage.

The boat shot against the bank, and, springing out, Roderick lifted her to his side.

"I am afraid you will miss the luxury you have been accustomed to," he said, retaining her hand. "Do you know, I am selfish enough to be glad to have you all to myself. You will need so much more of my care than if you were surrounded by servants. I should grudge then the privilege of waiting upon you!"

He opened a low wicket-gate, and led her along the unkept pathway to the cottage.

An imperative knock on the door was answered by an old woman Roderick addressed as Mrs. Relmon.

She seemed to have expected them, for, in a trice of the hour, a lamp was burning brightly in the little sitting-room from which the breaking dawn was excluded by the closed curtains.

There was nothing in the lowly poverty of the surroundings to shock Sybil. It was all so fresh and sweet; the pink hangings, the snowy table-cloth, with its center vase of fragrant roses.

"Some of Maggie's work, I suppose," Roderick said as he looked at the flowers. "She didn't wait up for us, then?"

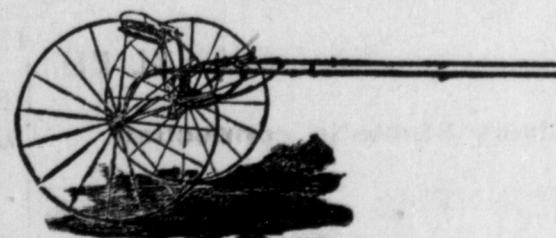
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