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A Judith Of Eighteen Sixty Four.

"So, lieutenant, I leave you in charge of the camp at this point. I go to join General Wallace in trying to head off Early, who is moving toward Frederick, and if I am not mistaken, threatening Washington and Baltimore. Your duties will be light until I telegraph for you—that is, if telegraphing can be done; we never know when the rebels will cut off all communication."

"All right, general. Then I understand all that you wish done outside the regular routine is to detain man, woman or child who crosses these lines between now and the time when you send word that Early is cornered?"

"Yes. We have had too much spying of late. After that affair of the deaf and dumb woman carrying word to the enemy the other day, we cannot be too careful. Even babes in arms may be swaddled in blankets that cover the schemes of the enemy—allow no one to go unsearched."

"All right, general. Well, we have comfortable enough quarters here; there's nothing like a Southern mansion for comfort. Our men don't lack fighting qualities, but they're glad enough to take a rest during this hot spell. What wouldn't I give for a whiff of wind off Savin Rock! The scent of pines is sickening in this humid July weather."

"Well, lieutenant, I am off. Take good care of the little army you have in charge. I hope the sick men will take heart and get well under the influence of this forced rest. Any negroes you can detain, detail as help. If you can get an old mammy or two, keep them they are excellent nurses as a rule."

The general mounted his horse and rode off down the hard road with most of his command. Lieutenant Morgan began pacing up and down the broad veranda which surrounded the manor confiscated by the Union soldiers nearly a year before. The lieutenant was a handsome fellow beneath the sunburn, his beard, and the vest of war. His six feet showed to the fullest advantage, his broad shoulders curving not one whit from the line of beauty. He was always a manly man; the best oar in a Yale crew (he left college to enlist in 1861), and his good looks and bearing made many a girl lose her heart to him. But the lieutenant's heart remained untouched. His life, young as it was, had always been too full of healthy action to leave time for affairs of the heart—at least that is what he thought, not knowing that in any time and in any place love's wings may flutter. But here he was at twenty seven with heart untouched by woman's wiles.

The men were taking their afternoon rest, lying around the house, the grove, the spacious stables, or along the brook. It was a passing glimpse of peace, which would not last long; to many it was the last rest before the final calm. The pickets paced up and down the road and along the river front, like restless tigers, and the lieutenant paced with them, restless with an unrest almost maddening to one so active. That same restlessness had bidden him throw down his books and join the volunteers; it had promoted him from a private to a corporal; from corporal to sergeant, and from sergeant to a lieutenant's commission. When and where would the captaincy open? Maybe he would have a chance in the brilliant campaign Sherman was opening, to work his way up higher.

"Oh, why in the devil must I stay here with these half dead and sick men? They are no good even if the enemy does come

this way—and I am all afire to meet him!" exclaimed the lieutenant as he snapped a brown twig from the sunburned woodbine that clambered over the veranda, and then continued his restless path, chewing the twig and his end of discontent. He stopped suddenly at the sound of a woman's voice rising clear above the deep bass humming of the lounging men. She sang a rebel air, but he did not catch the words until she was almost in sight:

She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb, Huzza! She spurns the Northern scum! She breathes, she burns! She'll come, she'll come, Maryland! My Maryland!

The lieutenant was astonished. Where were the pickets? Man, woman or child crossing these lines to be detained, rang the general's orders through his mind. The girl, for it was a girl of about nineteen, was in sight now, crossing the path that led back to the servants' quarters.

"Halt!" called a sentry. The girl moved on, her golden head erect, bereft of the large hat she swung in one hand; her blue gray eyes were fixed with a stare on the broken Venus which once graced a well kept lawn.

The lieutenant watched with interest as the girl still moved on. Her flowered gown caught in a rose tree, and she stooped to extricate herself, placing on the ground a small valise she had carried.

The sentry stepped forward; he could not find voice for the next command—"Halt, or I fire!" He touched her on the sleeve:

"Madam, I place you under arrest."

The girl drew herself up to her full height of five feet four, and gazed at his freckled face, his strawberry hair and blue washed eyes. He flinched. Her flashing eyes grew soft again with amused contempt of the abashed man before her.

"It's my order, ma'am," he began. She spoke, and the listening lieutenant felt his blood creep warm through his Northern veins at the melody of her Southern voice. Even though filled with scorn, it was the sweetest voice he ever heard out of song.

"The orders! Poor Yanks, and can't you find any one else to place under arrest but a girl? Poor Yanks!"

At this the lieutenant stepped from the veranda and approached her. He raised his fatigue cap as he spoke.

"Your pardon, miss, but we have the general's orders to arrest man, woman, or child who crosses these lines. You will have to be detained until further orders from him. We are at a critical point of our campaign, and as a great deal of spying is going on we can run no risks. If I misjudge not from your late song, you are a rebel."

"Yes, every inch of me! Let me pass, sir. How dare you stop a defenceless girl on her way to a sick negro?"

Her aristocratic little nose quivered with excitement, her prunella boot beat impatiently upon the grass. The lieutenant would rather have been leading a hopeless charge at that moment than facing this bit of womanhood.

"Your name and errand, madam?"

"My name—a name to be proud of—Judith Dangerfield. The Dangerfields were never cowards, men or women, and the men were ever courteous to a woman. My father, Colonel Dangerfield, is with Lee. I am the only one left at home, with the old servants. I would be with my father if I could, if he would let me. You are on the plantation of the Fenwicks, deserted by them a year ago, when the Yankees came over the river. But we will never desert our manor—never while a chimney stands!"

"But why are you imprudent enough to venture away from home, and the enemy at your very doors?"

"Pooh, do you think I care that for you?" snapping her white fingers. "I came to see old Auntie Finks, whom you still have on the plantation. I often pass this way to the plantation beyond—my friend's place. It is four good miles from here, and I always ride over. When I was coming back the last time my horse dropped a shoe near here, and so I left her with Uncle Finks. You haven't seen her have you?"

"Mixture of treason and innocence," mentally remarked the lieutenant, and then: "a little chestnut mare with white stockings, greyhead?"

"Yes, that is she—Helen of Troy. Did you see her! Where is she?"

"Where you left her, in the stalls. I intended to keep her for myself."

Helen of Troy, but you only go when I permit you. You are rebel enough to fire the whole South." He turned to the freckled corporal and said, "Place this young woman under arrest in the south parlor. Have her searched by Aunt Fanny—she's the one Union nigger we can rely on—then keep her under guard, and place a special patrol on the south wing. Have that valise searched also; young ladies don't usually carry valises when they go on errands of charity."

With these orders the lieutenant stalked off, feeling hot and uncomfortable around the heart. Judith did not scream nor make any resistance as she was led away by the guard, only coolly requested:

"Please let go of me. You know well enough I could not escape you men if I tried. I want no Yankee hands on me!"

The freckled corporal loosened his grasp and walked meekly beside her into the south parlor, where Aunt Fanny was summoned and directed to search the young lady and her valise. The black woman shivered before the light in the Southern girl's eyes.

"You turncoat!" exclaimed Judith. "Don't lay your hands on me—I'll have you skinned if you do! Remember the Yanks will not always be behind you. What's in that valise? My clothes which I intended to wear while on a short visit to the next plantation. Take them out, get the wrinkles out of them, and put them into whatever room I am assigned to while in jail. As for the important things your master sent you to search for—here's what becomes of them!" And before the woman could stop her she tore into strips the papers which she had secreted in her bosom, and threw them into the fireplace among a lot of rubbish.

"Now, go, tell your masters what I have done."

The woman, long used to obeying a white voice, went cringing out of the room. When she turned, the girl seized a candle from the mantle, lit it, and threw it among the inflammable rubbish. When the negro returned, accompanied by the lieutenant, the dark oak room was merrily lit by the dancing flames.

"So you were a spy?" exclaimed the man. "Now expect us to believe a woman's story of an errand of charity and a friendly visit, after this! Judith Dangerfield, in the name of the United States of America you are placed under arrest and shall be confined in this house until we learn further about you and your errands Aunt Fanny, do you know this lady?"

"Yes, masser, she's Canel Dangerfield's dater. He's a hot rebel, wif Gen'l Lee."

"Good enough! Now go and see that the upper chamber is prepared for her. New, Miss Dangerfield," the lieutenant went on, sitting down at the oaken centre table, "what was your business around this Union camp if you were on your way to rebel quarters?"

"I refuse to answer that or any other question you put to me." Then with childlike vehemence: "I hate you, Lieutenant Yank!" All the bitterness of frustrated purpose lit up her face and made her whole frame dilate with anger. The lieutenant dropped his glance before her rage, then lifted his smiling eyes to her:

"And do you think I love you, Miss Rebel?"

The sarcastic question took her by surprise. She looked at him and then dropped her erect lashes at sight of something that dwelt in the dark depths of the man's eyes. She could have cried aloud, but she shivered, and then, running over to the big sofa, threw herself on it and hid her gray eyes in the pillow. The lieutenant was astonished at her behavior and more than amazed at himself; for the question he asked her in irony suddenly answered itself in his heart, answered him so truly that he almost reeled under the blow.

He sat down again in the leather armchair. She lay still, sobbing. She was thinking of something she had often dreamed of; she felt it had come to her from a stranger, an enemy—unmasked—oh, shame! She had felt her rebel sword snap and turn to molten steel. At that moment she felt she could have followed him wherever he went, meekly, awe, gladly.

The lieutenant rose and walked over to where the lithe figure made a white patch in the gathering gloom of the oak parlor. "Miss Judith," he said, "look at me."

She turned her pretty face, half smiling through the tear stains.

"Little girl, I am sorry these conditions of war exist—sorry they exist between our people, that they exist between you and me. I am afraid you will have to stay here until the general sends other orders. I hate to keep you" (did he?) "but while you are under my charge you will receive every consideration. Won't you try to forget that you are a prisoner! Think you are my guest."

She did not answer for some time. In

that pause a vision of a long dead Judith at the tent of her country's enemy came to her. She had all the beauty of that Judith—did she possess her power? Yes, why not? She would fascinate this man to his own destruction—he should not have power over her. She put out her white hand to his brow one.

"I will try to forget the unpleasant circumstances under which I am here, lieutenant, and content myself as the guest of a gentleman."

There was much talk of the fair young prisoner, among the men. The privates worshiped her from afar, rebel though she was. And she was doing her best to creep into their hearts. She took care of the sick, read to them, soothed them. The lieutenant was entertained in the evenings by her singing, the men hovered around within earshot when she opened the dusty piano, and, touching the ivory keys, pealed forth her soft contralto to the summer air.

One night they were all singing a hymn to the tune of "John Brown's body." She rested her white fingers on the keys, and listened. The suppressed volume of fervor floated in through the long windows:

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea, With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me, As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free, While God is marching on!

She turned to the lieutenant, who sat over in a dark corner. "Is that the way you Northerners feel, honestly?"

"Yes," he huskily replied. The man was groaning in his heart at its perversity. He loved the girl with all the stored up love of his life. And she—she made no sign, when he came and went at her bidding like a big, good natured Newfoundland dog. When he insinuated once that her people might be worried over her absence, she laughed and said that all her people whom she cared for were either too busy following Lee, or lying mouldering in their graves. Her slaves would not wonder over her absence, as she had often been away for weeks, at times, carrying messages and food to the Confederates in the valley of the Monocacy. After that he let the subject drop.

Though Judith appeared passive to her fate, she was burning with impatience to be free. Her messages, destroyed in the writing, yet lived fresh in her brain, but if not delivered within a few days to the Confederates they would be of no value. She must soon find some way out of her pleasant prison. Soon—but she found herself praying with that Judith of old for constancy of mind that she might despise her enemy and for fortitude that she might yet overthrow him. At first she believed he had been "caught in the net of his own eyes" by her beauty, but lately he seemed indifferent, staying out of her presence a good deal.

One wild night a messenger came and tapped on the French blinds of the south parlor, where Judith sat alone near the fireplace; for a few days of cold rain had their effect on the old, camp house, and the girl had ordered pine fires lit in nearly all the rooms. On hearing the tap on the blind she arose, threw the lieutenant's overcoat around her, and thrust an arm out into the wind and gloom.

"Is it you, lieutenant?" asked a voice. Now Judith had kept her little pink ears open to the news of the armies, and she knew that the lieutenant had been expecting orders from the general ever since Wallace's losses were made known. She huskily answered the messenger:

"Yes—news from the general?"

"A despatch I was commissioned to leave and be off. The Confederates are heading this way. Good night." The man melted away into the storm, and Judith returned to the glow of the fire.

"Move your men up the river. Head off the stragglers coming that way." Judith read the despatch, and then threw it into the fire and poked it down among the pine boughs.

"Shot number one, Lieutenant Morgan," she said under her breath.

Two days later Lieutenant Morgan received a second message from his superior officer. From her seat on the veranda outside Judith could hear the excited voices.

"What in the name of Mars are you trying to tell me?" exclaimed the lieutenant. "I received no orders—"

"You did," roared back the messenger. "You sent back word all right. You asked if it was a despatch from the general, and I said it was as I placed it in your hand. Now you've put us in a devil of a hole. Those scattered rebs got clean across the country to their command. You must report at once to the general. Say, lieutenant, but I am afraid you were under two kinds of bad weather the other night. You will have to pay for it—the times are too dangerous for sleeping."

"There's some mistake here," answered the lieutenant. "I did not take any message from you. What is this to be, an investigation or a regular court-martial?"

"Both, I fear. Lieutenant, do the best you can to clear yourself, for the general is red-hot, says he's mistrusted his man, and the attens to have you shot. Word has reached him, somehow, of a handsome girl you have detained as prisoner, and with whom you are friendly. These things don't go in active campaigns."

The next thing Judith heard was a thud on the waxed floor and the lieutenant's voice ringing:

"Take that, you cowardly cur! Leave the woman's name out of the question. Go tell the general to do his investigating and that I would rather die the death of a dog than have the woman made a target for army scandal. She was a rebel detained under his orders. Get up out of that and be off. Bring me back under arrest if need be, but leave her name out."

Judith fled like a frightened rabbit before the approaching steps of the man. What had she done? He to be shot like a dog! Oh, and such things so often happened in times of war. Already she could see him lying white and still, the red blood trickling from his breast and staining the blue coat he was supposed to have dishonored. Death and dishonor—and she the cause! Wicked women! How un-Judith-like she was now, a wretched bundle of misery crouching low on a clump of cedars near the window, sobbing.

After a little space she crept back to the low window and peeped through the slats of the closed blinds, which had slammed to on the messenger's departure. There sat the lieutenant, his pallid face in his strong hands, his coat thrown back, his limbs stretched out in utter abandon. She heard him groan:

"God! How did it happen? Yes, I suppose if I am not cleared it means disgrace and death. And that a woman must needs be hauled into the affair! Oh the cowardice of men!"

And again Judith fled. Before his face, his reverence for her, her rebellious spirit broke forever. Lee, the Confederacy, her people, all melted away like the morning mist, and the sun of love rose in her heart.

Within twenty four hours the lieutenant was placed under arrest, and when he bade her good by he could scarcely look into her eyes, for his heart lay in his own. And she, pretending not to know the cause of his departure, coldly withdrew her slim white hand and left the room. It was nine at night when he left under guard. A few minutes later a girl mounted the stairs stole the uniform of a sick drummer, clothed herself in it, stole down to the stables, loosened Helen of Troy, put double thicknesses of army socks on her four feet, and then mounted her. She followed the three horsemen over the soft red roads, she spoke tender words to the little mare, she petted its glossy neck, and showered hot tears on the coarse brown hair.

The three horsemen rode into camp early in the next dawn, the girl following close behind. She had heard the counter-sign, "Lincoln," which they had passed, and gave it to the pickets. They did not glance at the face under the little peaked cap, and let her pass with the word, thinking she was the lieutenant's servant. And his servant she was in her heart.

They reached the headquarters in a farm house to the right of the tents. The man entered, and Judith follows into the hall, her heart beating sick and wild, weighted with two sins—a traitor to her father, a traitor to the man she loved so unwisely and too late.

Outside the door she listened to the voices. The general produced written affidavits from men on guard that night, testifying to the fact that the messenger came and delivered a despatch to the lieutenant. Things looked black for the young officer.

"Sir, you are not only a coward but a disgrace to your country. I have word that your motive for not moving when I ordered you that you had a fair lady in the manor. I believe in moments like these action must be quick and sharp. I trusted in you, believed you—but you will have to take the consequences of your breach. I have orders from the President to deal speedily with all found asleep at their posts. You not only slept but disregarded all laws of country and decency. I have sworn oaths from two of the men on guard that you were with the woman in question that night; she was with you in the south parlor when my message arrived. You have forfeited both your honor and your life."

The soldier stood still, white to the lips, neither denying the imputation nor imploring a reprieve. Suddenly there broke into the room a young woman clothed in

drummer's suit of blue, her thick golden hair escaping from the drummer's cap. She threw herself at the feet of the astonished general.

"General! General! It was I did it—I took your message. I burned it. He was not in the room. He had made me destroy messages I had to Early. I hated him and vowed I would repay in his own coin. Oh, general, he is not a coward, he is a soldier and a gentleman. Do not let him be shot like a dog. Oh, general, it was my fault, my crime, shoot me! He scorned me, he almost killed me with his scorn. He did not love me—"

And before the astonished soldiers, woman-like, she swooned away.

"My God! How came she here? Do not believe her, general," exclaimed the lieutenant.

But when she came to and had received nourishment, and woman's garments from the farmer's wife, the general did listen to her. She told him all her story. The old man looked at the girl, and, wiping his wrinkled old face, said she had been a pretty bad rebel, and he guessed he'd leave her to the mercy of the lieutenant.

And she shivered and sighed, smiled down at the rough farm dress, and hiding her eyes in the back of the rocker, begged the general not to send Lieutenant Morgan, she hated him.

But the general, who was versed in love as well as war, knew better and sent in the lieutenant.

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