

A Cruel Revenge

BY LAURA JEAN LIBBEY

Author of "A Broken Betrothal," "Parted at the Altar,"
"The Heiress of Cameron Hall," Etc., Etc.

(CONTINUED)

"You had better listen to reason," he said, angrily. "and not irritate me, or it will be the worse for you. Because I was unfortunate you deserted me and I with the wealthy young banker," he said, sneeringly. "But how long do you think he would stand by you if he knew you had at this moment another husband?"

"Let me pass!" exclaimed Rosebud. "I certainly declare that I am not, nor was I ever wife of yours. How dare you detain me, sir? I will call my husband!"

"Do so, my charming wife," retorted Fielding, fairly livid with suppressed rage. "I am desirous of making that gentleman's acquaintance, and politely requesting him to restore me my wife, who has the cool effrontery to repudiate my prior claims. One word from me and the honorable Raymond Leslie will spurn you from him. I am quite confident you have never told him you were a convict's bride before you wedded him. Do not turn love to hate, Rosebud. Come, fly with me now, and I will forgive you for your cruel desertion. We will go far away where the past shall never be discovered and begin life anew. What do you say?"

"Leave me, you vile wretch!" cried the poor tortured young creature, turning upon him as a stag at bay turns on the hounds that goad it on to death and destruction. "I defy you! I am the wife of the noblest man who ever lived, whom I worship almost to madness. I am not your wife, and I repeat I never was your wife. No, no, I am not your wife. My husband would have little mercy upon you if you dared breathe such a false story to him, and the whole world would laugh you to scorn."

"The consequence of your own folly rests upon your own head. You defy me to the last—well, we shall see. What would you say if I were to send for Maud Arden and your step-mother, and for the justice of the peace who married us, and the two witnesses, his wife and daughter, who saw the ceremony performed? In the face of all this evidence would you dare deny that you are Rosebud Fielding, my wife? Ha! you would not dare deny my claim then."

"While my breath lasts I shall have but one answer!" she cried, brave and dauntless to the bitter end. "I am not your wife."

"We shall soon see," he declared, turning on his heel with a diabolical laugh.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Why does Heaven not strike me dead?" wailed poor Little Rosebud, piteously, sinking down upon her knees in the long grass and burying her terrified face in the sweet, pitying roses. "I have nothing to live for! He will go to Raymond and tell him all, and he will never forgive me for deceiving him so. Was

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Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets should be used with "Favorite Prescription" whenever a laxative is required.

severe shock," returned the physician, "still, not necessarily dangerous; all she needs is complete rest and quiet, and home, above all other places in the world, is the only place to find rest."

The moment the door closed on the retreating physician poor Little Rosebud sprang up from among the soft, lace pillows with a heartrending sob that brought her anxious young husband to her side.

"Oh, Raymond, don't listen to him!" she sobbed. "Indeed, he does not know. I must get away from here to-night—this very hour—or my heart will break! If you love me, Raymond, you will listen to my prayer."

"Of course I love you, my darling," he replied, bending tenderly over her; "that is just the reason I intend to be so careful of you; and as to attempting such a long journey, weak as you are, it is simply not to be thought of."

"For the sake of our love, Raymond, do not refuse me," she pleaded. "There are times when the doctors are all wrong. You would see, darling, that it was for the best. If you refused me I would die, and when you looked upon my face, cold in death, you would remember, love, how hard I pleaded with you to take me away at once."

It was hard to refuse his young wife anything she asked for, and he could not find it in his heart to refuse her eloquent prayer now, and in spite of his better judgment and against the physician's express orders, he reluctantly consented to continue the preparations he had commenced for starting that night.

He never forgot the delight on Rosebud's face.

"My whole life shall repay you for it," she cried, gratefully, gazing up into his face with her eloquent blue eyes fairly glowing in a transport of joy.

In an instant all traces of illness seemed to leave her, and she flitted about like a robin, helping her deft little maid arrange the trunks.

Raymond was certainly puzzled. His little bride was as happy as a child. He laughed amusedly as he watched her. The promise of starting that night certainly worked wonders, he told himself.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

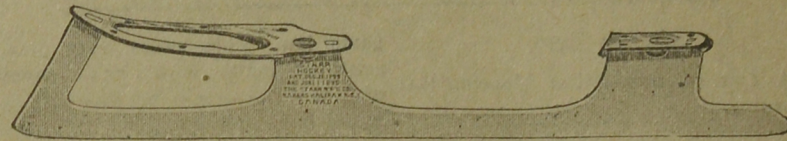
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(From the [Athenian, Kan., Daily Globe])

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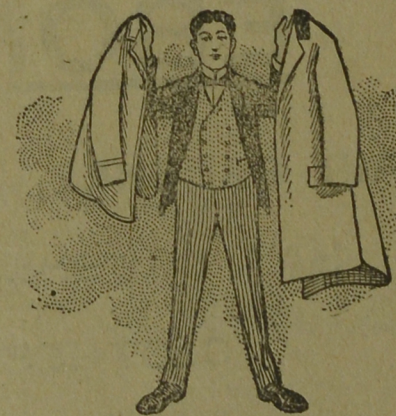
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