

LOVE FINDS A WAY.

BY JEANNETTE H. WALWORTH.

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"Now, when your dear father and I projected this identical tour our intention was to go directly to Paris—the paper cutter halted directly over the black spot standing for that fascinating metropolis—and from there!"

With rebellion in his heart Tom was summing up his grievances. Olivia had not emerged promptly on his arrival. Her long delay had the effect of making him feel crudely premature and not eagerly welcome. All the sparkle had been blown off the day by her tarrying. Her father excused her on the score of a headache, superinduced by loss of rest. When she did appear, however, cool and fresh in her crisp, pretty house gown, with shining eyes and red ripe lips, it was impossible to accept that fiction of a headache.

"We planned to remain in Paris six weeks on our first visit, confining ourselves principally to the art galleries and the places of historic interest. You see that was or would have been just after the days of the commune."

Tom's ears reported his guardian's words, and when Olivia did come his heart complained. He had gone forward eagerly to meet her, almost ardently. She must have read all his adoring thoughts in his burning eyes and flushing cheeks. His telltale cheeks had gone flaming hot at sight of her. She had smiled at him as indulgently as if he had been a young spaniel frisking at her heels, and for the brief space of time lapsing between his coming and the summons to dinner she had patronized him so openly that she had successfully imposed upon him an uncomfortable sense of extreme juvenility. He gnawed his budding mustache in impotent rage.

"Poor, dear Rufus!" his guardian droned. "He had the making of a fine artist in him. Doubtless that six weeks in Paris would have been most profitably spent by us. From Paris we meant to go by easy stages—here the paper cutter ambled erratically over the map, descriptive of the easy stages—until we reached Florence—Florence, the home of classic art, the scene of immortal Savonarola's unappreciated efforts and martyrdom."

What a finished young lady the pretty little thing had blossomed into on the strength of a debut! He had tried to talk to her of the future, giving it a tinge of common interest—hers, his, theirs. She had persisted in questioning him, with a matronly air of superior age, about his studies and his wardrobe and his physical condition. He had alluded to his guardian's wish that he should travel and intimated that half a dozen words from her adverse to the project would settle his mind permanently. No power on earth could make him put the sea between her and him if she would bid him stay.

Instead she had wrinkled her pretty brows sagely and said: "Yes, papa; and I talked all that over before you came home, Tom, dear. It is really the right thing for you to do. A man is so crude, so incomplete, you know, until he has seen something of the world, until he has measured himself by other standards. Now, there is Mr. Westover!"

Tom stared at the map of Europe with hot cheeks. Reason convicted him of having acted very like a fool at that juncture.

"Father or son?" he asked bluntly. "Son, of course," Olivia had answered sweetly. "He is only three years older than you, Tom, dear, but he is so polished, so cultivated, so broad, entirely owing to travel, you see."

"I admit his perfections," Tom had snapped with the rudeness of an untraveled donkey.

"I like him immensely," Olivia had retorted, with arched eyebrows and frosty emphasis, which had made Tom rejoice in the summons to the dining room. He had followed his lofty young hostess in meek silence.

He wondered if she would pin a napkin about his neck and cut up his food for him. She was assuming such vastly superior airs he was prepared for anything, everything. He was ready to snarl at everybody. His lovely vision was fading behind a bank of dark, leaden clouds.

Olivia looked at him furtively once or twice during the rather constrained meal. She wished her father had not thought it necessary to warn her against Tom's "boyish foolishness." It had made everything so difficult, so awkward, and it was "spilling the poor dear's holiday." But "papa had said" he would be seriously angered if she allowed Tom to pay her any sort of loverlike attentions.

And so the awkward dinner had dragged its slow length from soup to coffee, and Olivia had not followed the men into the library, as Tom had fondly hoped she would.

He could never clearly recall all his guardian had said to him during that prolix introductory talk about his own affairs. He knew it had contained hints about financial losses, investments that had not turned out as they should, depreciation in real estate, failure of railroad stocks to pay dividends, with a lot more of dry business talk which had nothing in the world to do with Olivia. At that juncture there was no other subject under the sun that held any interest for him.

But his conscience smote him with ingratitude to his guardian, who had

spent weeks mapping out a pleasant foreign trip for him, and so he closed his heart and opened his mouth with a valiant show of interest.

"And so from Berlin, you think, I had best go on to Vienna, sir?"

Mr. Matthews rubbed his chin reflectively, with eyes on the map. In the pause that followed Tom's question a great clatter of hoofs filled the air. Tom sat facing the yard gate. His elbows shook, and he sat up very stiffly in his chair.

Three horses had stopped in front of the gate. Clarence Westover was on one, and the Westover coachman was



Olivia sailed into the room buttoned to the chin in a pretty dark green habit, on another, leading a third on which was a lady's sidesaddle. Westover alone dismounted and strode briskly up the walk. Five minutes later Olivia sailed into the room buttoned to the chin in a pretty dark green habit. She held out one small gauntleted hand to Tom. "I'm so sorry, Tom, dear, that papa appointed today for you to spend with us. He didn't know then that Jeanne Westover had asked me to try a riding horse for her. She is awfully afraid of horses, but said if I liked this one she would keep it. Her brother says it is a darling."

Mr. Matthews got up from the table and walked out of the room by her side. Tom retained his seat and a sulky silence. All of a sudden the map of Europe developed an immense fascination for him. He glued his gaze to it to the exclusion of all the world besides. He could hear his guardian outside discussing the horse with Westover.

"You say it is a new horse, Westover, one you know nothing about?" "Nothing but what his previous owner tells me. He vouches for the beast's goodness of disposition. William, there, has tried him with a riding skirt, and I have been riding him for a week. Oh, I guess he's gentle and all that! But Jeanne wanted Miss Matthews' opinion of his gait. She says a man can't judge of what is pleasant riding for a woman."

"She is quite right," said Olivia, with decision. "He cannot." Then she tipped to kiss her father. "Now, don't go and spoil my lovely ride, papa, by conjuring up all sorts of imaginary dangers. You know I can manage a horse, if there is any one thing on earth I can manage, and Mr. Westover says he is perfectly gentle."

"Oh, yes, to be sure! A sheep is fery by comparison, 'pon honor, sir. My sister Jeanne is a notorious coward. You don't think I would let Miss Matthews run any risk?" This with an ardent look at Olivia.

The three walked down the steps together, Westover cutting at the shrubbery with his whip, Olivia holding her pretty head well up under the little gayly plumed riding hat, Mr. Matthews with his bare head gleaming white and venerable in the bright sunshine. Tom took it all in gloomily without once losing his interest in the map of Europe. There was certainly nothing about the new horse's appearance to inspire apprehension. He stood with his head hung dejectedly, as if he knew and resented the fact of having been recently and somewhat unfavorably criticised.

"Now, papa, does he look dangerous?" Olivia cried, laughing triumphantly as she ran lightly forward to mount the horse block.

"I can't say that he does. In fact, I think I may say positively that he does not. But be careful, my darling. Westover, don't let her be reckless. She loses her head when she mounts a horse. I think there must have been a jockey among her ancestors."

After watching the start the lawyer turned slowly back toward the house with his head bent and his hands folded behind his back. He was in no particular hurry to get back to the library. In spite of all that had been said, a lingering sense of uneasiness beset him. He was always uneasy when Olivia was out of his sight.

but if they must come Tom Broxton perhaps should have his opportunity. Under some circumstances Clarence Westover would be as acceptable as another. The Westovers held a fine position in the world and had the money to maintain it on. Olivia must have both. She was his idol, his all. For her sake he would—

He started and lifted his head. He was back in the library. Tom Broxton was looking at him with such keen directness that his own eyes fell before the boy's.

"I have been studying the map, sir, since you have been out of the room, and I am quite satisfied with the route as you have marked it out. And, Mr. Matthews—he rose from the table, pushing the map away with an irritated motion—"we need not discuss the matter any further. I am ready to start as soon as commencement is over, the sooner the better."

He was very pale, and his lips were set firmly at the corners. Yes, the day had been an utter failure, and he wanted to get back to Broxton before Olivia and Clarence Westover got back from their ride. He knew now why Olivia had no welcome to bestow on him.

"I suppose I will find my horse in the back lot," he ended abruptly. "Yes, I presume so. But, Thomas, my dear boy, this is a very abrupt termination to our talk. I have much to say yet about your own affairs. There are many points we have not touched upon."

"I am sorry, sir, but I shall start back to college very soon in the morning. If there is anything of importance, I presume it can be communicated by letter. There are some things at the Hall I want to look into before leaving again." He held out his hand and looked down into his guardian's face from his superior height frankly and affectionately. "And rest assured, my dear guardian, that whether we talk or don't talk, whether you write or don't write, I am content to leave my affairs in the hands of the man my dear father loved and trusted."

The lawyer's square set jaws quivered for a moment, but he wrung Tom's hand cordially. "Thank you, my boy, thank you. A guardian's position is not an enviable one at best. You have made mine much easier by your kind words."

As Tom rode away from the cottage, sore and disappointed about Olivia and smarting with a sense of defeat, it occurred to him that he was rather glad he had made that little speech to his guardian. It was like exercising forever any feeling of distrust that might have been aroused by that crazy nonsense of "Mother" Spillman's, which, in spite of him, had outbranded itself once or twice during the day.

Yes, he would go back to college early in the morning. He would not even wait to see Olivia again. He would start on his foreign tour straight from college. He would measure himself by broader standards before he should see her again. He must be without flaw in her eyes when he should finally ask her to be his wife.

Not for a moment did he relinquish that cherished purpose. And so he rode along under the sweet smelling locusts on the shady roadside revising his beautiful vision, but never once doubting the final outcome.

How silly he had been to flare up in that style at sight of Clarence Westover! It had all been so simple when explained. He hoped the dear little thing was having a real jolly ride. He pronounced himself a sulky doit. Inherently sunny natured and generous,



He swung rapidly through the door and up the stairway.

Tom could never attain to a fully developed case of the sulks. He rode forward whistling softly. He had all the quiet roads to himself.

He would spend this last evening in the old Hall writing a long letter to Olivia. He composed it as he rode slowly through the weedy paths on the outskirts of his own lands switching at the tall intrusive heads of sumac and sassafras bushes that brushed against his stirrups. He would tell Olivia how impossible it was for him to go so far away as Europe without letting her know of his love and asking her to wait awhile until he should come back less crude and incomplete, better proportioned for having measured himself by other standards. What a churl he had been for getting so vexed with her that morning! Everything she said showed her interest in him, and if she did prick him with her little patronizing airs it was the result of her being the sole companion of the man who had to look after him and his interests and who doubtless had often consulted her.

By the time he reached the outer gate to his own parklike inclosure Olivia stood absorbed in his loyal heart. She was altogether lovely and trustworthy. He, Tom Broxton, was an ill-mannered cub, not worthy to button her pretty boots. Sun never shone upon sweeter maiden. It was meet and proper he should go through some sort of probationary toil to ren-

der him less unworthy of her. He never could be quite worthy of her—oh, no, never! But she would be his after a little while, all his. His pulses bounded joyously. Life was assuming rosier tints with the passing of each moment. It made him glad to think it would be in his power to gratify her every wish, let her wish for never so costly or unattainable a thing.

For your sake, my sweet, I am glad of all the wealth that is mine, glad of the store of gems hidden away somewhere, all for you, Olivia—all for you, my beloved! The breath of wild clematis filled his nostrils; birds piped musically in the larch branches over his head; splashes of sunshine flecked the brown earth of the narrow path. He whistled aloud in the fullness of his boyish content. At a rapid canter he swung into the open before the Hall door.

A strange group clustered about his front doorsteps sent him forward with a bound. Jessy was there leaning over something that lay prone on the veranda floor. Martin, his own yard man, was flinging his legs over the horse Clarence Westover had ridden away from the Matthews gate an hour before. Westover was walking up and down, with bared head and blanched cheeks, wringing his hands and giving wildly impossible orders to everybody at once. Still, white and motionless, Olivia, his Olivia, lay the central figure of this excited group.

Tom's tall form was soon added to it. He pushed Westover away without apology. His grieved young face was terrible in its stern wrath.

"You have killed her. How dared you mount her on an untried horse?"

Westover was too utterly miserable to resent this masterful arraignment.

"An idiot fired a gun behind the hedge. Both horses bolted. Broxton, if she dies I'll blow my brains out."

"You have none to blow out," said Tom, with brutal candor. Then, stooping and lifting the unconscious girl in his arms, he swung rapidly through the door and up the stairway, followed by a wailing and useless group.

CHAPTER IX.

A SRIEK AT MIDNIGHT.

Clear, piercing, startling, a woman's voice rang out upon the solemn stillness of the Broxton house at midnight.

Mr. Matthews, starting from a troubled sleep, sprang hastily out of bed and immediately lost his bearings.

He had forgotten in the first frightened moment that he was sleeping in a strange bedroom. His surroundings baffled him. He could not find a door. The location of the matchbox, if such a thing existed in his old friend's chamber, was an unsolvable mystery. He struck his head violently against the corner of an old fashioned armor and recoiled against an unfamiliar table. Finally he stood stock still where he was, dreading other collisions.

Where was Olivia, and who had screamed?

Presently matters cleared themselves in his fully aroused brain. He had been sent for by Tom in wild haste. Clarence Westover himself had galloped after Dr. Govan. The two men had reached Broxton within a few moments of each other. They found Olivia seated on the sofa in the library solemnly berating Tom for having "raised such a to do about nothing" and incidentally for having abused Clarence Westover.

"I am not hurt at all, papa. It is too bad to give you such a scare. I was just a little stunned by the fall, but I never was unconscious. I heard, but could not talk. Tom was really quite rude to poor Mr. Westover when he was not at all to blame for my riding the horse nor for that stupid man's shooting on the other side of the hedge. He even told him he had no brains. I wish people would sometimes try to be more just to other people."

"I do, too," said Tom, turning angrily on his heel and leaving the room. Then Dr. Govan came and searched intelligently for broken bones without finding any, but he pronounced her distinctly feverish and badly shaken up. "She had best stay where she is for the night. Put her to bed at once and keep her there until I can see her again in the morning," was his decision.

So while the sun was still staining the western sky a vivid red, picked out with glorious purples and golds, Simon's wife had spread the great four poster in Miss Lucetta's room with sweet smelling sheets of fine old linen and thrown wide the shutters so that Olivia, lying under the blue brocade canopy, might gaze out at the sunset glories of the dying day. She had protested violently.

"There is nothing the matter at all with me, papa. I can perfectly well go home. I would rather after what I have said to Tom, for I can't possibly stay."

Tom, who found it impossible to keep very far away from the library door, heard her and here put in a useful face to say kindly:

"I wish you would not worry so to get away from here, Olivia. It is not as if I did not have plenty of room, you know. Your anxiety to get away is rather rough on me. If you are angry because I told Westover he did not have any brains to blow out, I'll ride over there and apologize to him tonight. I'll do anything you want done, Olivia. I'll even go down to Simon's house to sleep and efface myself."

This humble apology was received loftily.

"It is very good of you to make such large promises, Thomas, I'm sure, but I don't want to stay on any terms."

"She must," said Dr. Govan with authority. "She shall," said her father with decision.

taker's cottage to impress his wife Jessy into service as lady's maid. Between them all Olivia was treated like a queen temporarily disqualified from reigning. But to come back to that scream.

Horace Matthews' first thought was for Olivia. Something had frightened her. Gad, would he never find a door? He did finally and groped his way through it into the large dark central hall. Absolute silence enwrapped the house. He tiptoed across the hall to put an ear to the keyhole of Olivia's door.

Everything was quiet inside. He had a distinct recollection of how dimly that particular door creaked and groaned on its hinges. It would be scarcely worth while to arouse Olivia just to tell her that she had had a nightmare. Doubtless she had been dreaming of the runaway or perhaps of the many who had died in this gloomy old house. Personally he found it a most depressing spot.

The soft thud of slipped feet broke the deathlike stillness. Glancing nervously over his shoulder, he saw Tom, fully dressed, advancing with a lighted candle held high over his head.

"Hello, Mr. Matthews!"

"Well, Thomas?"

"I thought I heard a noise, a scream."

"How many times?"

"Only once."

"I heard it too. I imagine Olivia has been having bad dreams."

"But it came from down stairs. My room is immediately over the library, you know."

A clammy sweat broke out on the lawyer's forehead and bedewed the backs of his hands.

"A-h-er, what do you make of it, Thomas?" he asked nervously.

"Nothing at all until I investigate it. I am going down stairs. Will you come with me?"

"Why—well, yes, of course, if you think it worth while. But I am quite sure it came from my daughter's room. She is sleeping very quietly now, and I do not care to open her door because it creeps so infernally."

He had much to do to keep his teeth from chattering and displayed no conspicuous ardor for the expedition. Tom advanced resolutely toward the staircase.

"I think I shall feel better satisfied for looking the house over."

He was strongly minded to tell his guardian of the unpleasant experience that had befallen him on the memorable watch night. His guardian had an equally strong impulse to give his experience on the eve of Olivia's fate. Nothing came, however, of the fleeting inclination on either side.

Thomas proceeded to descend the steps with his candle held high. Matthews promised to follow as soon as he could get into his dressing gown. The gown proved elusive, and his progress was slow.

Presently a cry scarcely less startling than the one that had broken up his sound slumber ascended from the floor below. It was in Tom Broxton's voice.

"Olivia, Olivia, what on earth are you doing down there? By Jove, she is in a dead faint! Mr. Matthews, here, quick!" Before he had time to place his candle on the table his guardian was in the room looking like a man who has received his deathblow.

There, in a heap on the floor, her shining hair falling in a thick mass over her pallid face and closed eyes, lay Olivia. Her father gathered her to his heart with a frightened cry and laid her on a sofa.

Tom lighted a gas jet and rushed toward the dining room in search of water. Every receptacle was empty, of course. The outdoor cisterns were his only hope. When he got back, Olivia had regained consciousness, but was sobbing and clinging to her father's neck with a frightened clutch. Her eyes were wide with terror, and short irrepressible shudders ran over her body visibly every few seconds. She was pleading excitedly with her father.

"Take me home, father; take me away now, this very minute, papa. You know I did not want to stay. Oh, horrible, horrible!"

Tom held a glass of water to her quivering lips. His face was scarcely less pale than hers. "Drink this water, Olivia, dear, and then tell us what has frightened you. See, I will light every gas jet in the house so as to show you that you have been frightened by a nibbling mouse, and I will stay down stairs to keep the mice quiet all the rest of the night if only you won't say anything more about going home at midnight."

She drank the water eagerly. Then, finding her courage come back with the companionship of the men and the illumination of the house, she said more steadily:

"As if I could be frightened by a mouse! You are very good, Tom, to a most troublesome guest. I am sorry I was so ugly to you this afternoon. But I don't want to stay." She shivered and clung closer to her father. "Oh, father, father, it was so frightful, so distinct! I will never, never get over it!"

"Get over what, Olivia? I insist upon your calming yourself sufficiently to give me a lucid account of what has happened."

There was an unfamiliar sternness in her father's voice and manner which made her stare at him in surprise. She had no means of knowing that he was hiding his own fears behind that stern mask.

"Are you going to scold me, father, after all I have gone through? I never saw you look so cross before."

"I don't want to scold you at all, my darling. I only—mean—His strong square jaws were twitching convulsively. His nerves were rapidly getting the upper hand of him. He looked imploringly at Tom.

with tender soothing in his manner. "We are asking you to tell us what frightened you so badly, Olivia, dear, so as to punish him or them or it. We see, we want to be doing something about it, but we are all in the dark as far as that goes."

She shook her head mournfully. "Oh, there is nothing to be done. Tom; nothing you can do, nothing anybody can do. Sell the place, Tom, and let strangers live in it. You can never be happy here, Oh, papa, papa!"

Her father had himself seen in hand now. Then she had seen it too! But neither she nor Thomas must suppose that her experience was a repetition of her clinging arms from about his neck and holding her hands in a firm grasp. "Olivia, I insist upon your acting more rationally. What brought you down stairs at such an hour of the night?"

"Why, you made me go to bed at such a ridiculous hour of the day that by midnight I was wide awake, with no more sleep left in my eyes. Try as I might, I just got wider awake every moment. So I thought I could slip down stairs without anybody knowing it and get a book out of the library. I stole down just as softly as one of those mice Tom talks about, for I was afraid of the steps creaking and waking you up. And then, oh, father, oh, Tom, just as I stepped over the library doorsill I saw, just as plainly as I see both of you now, a tall figure in white standing by Colonel Broxton's desk! Whoever it was stood with his head bent low over the desk. A faint light that seemed to come from the bosom of—of—the thing shone on the desk. I screamed and dropped my candle and didn't know anything more until I heard Tom's voice, papa, and felt your arms about me. That is all!"

Her story told, she began to weep hysterically that further questioning would have been cruelty. Her father wrapped his arms about her and poured soothing endearments into her ears.

"Then she had seen it, too," was the unspoken thought of both men. The sound of Olivia's sobs nearly broke Tom's heart. His voice shook a little as he asked briskly:

"Wouldn't a glass of wine be good for her, Mr. Matthews?"

"No wine, thank you, Thomas; a little bromide now, if you could find such a thing about the house."

"There is a medicine cabinet in father's room. I'll explore it."

Olivia raised her head and listened until his footsteps could no longer be heard. Then she said:

"Papa, I would rather not have told that story in poor Tom's presence, but you made me. Her teeth were chattering, and she clung to him convulsively. "Father, do you believe there are such things as ghosts?"

"Of course I do not. No sensible person does," her father answered, with explosive violence.

"Not even after people have seen one, papa, with their own eyes?"

"No one ever has seen one, Olivia. You were unstrung by your accident, and prowling about at midnight in this gloomy old house did the rest."

"I was not at all unstrung, father. I slept like a baby until I had all the sleep I needed."

"And, having become sleepless in a strange bed, you grew fanciful. Rest assured, my love, you did not see a ghost."

"Then what did I see, father, there, right through the open glass door? You know I am not fanciful, and I know what I saw—a faint light shining on the ceiling of the study and something tall and white, as tall as old Colonel Broxton, leaning over his desk."

The lawyer's tongue felt dry and hot as it clove to the roof of his mouth. Clammy moisture stood in great beads on his forehead. He cleared his throat to gain command of his voice, but only



Her father wrapped his arms about her, a husky whisper escaped from his lips. "Who was it, father? What was it? Why don't you answer me?"

Her insistence irritated him. Her wide questioning eyes would not loose their hold of his agitated face. He took refuge in explanation.

"How can I explain away the vagaries of a frightened girl's imagination? I presume women always conjure up something grotesque when they find themselves awake at an unusual hour." He knew that he was maligning one of the bravest little souls in the world, but his necessity knew no law.

"Father, you are being absolutely unjust and cruelly unkind. You know I am not imaginative in that way. You know I am not a coward. But we will let it stop at that. I hear Tom coming back."

When Tom stood over her, proffering the bromide all mixed ready for taking, she looked up into his pale and worried face with one of her sweetest smiles. Suddenly she put out a hand and drew him down on the sofa by her side.

(To be continued.)

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