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away is not to find out this girl and marry her unknown to me. I don't mind your losing your heart, but don't lose your head. Give me your hand on it."

See that it is mailed tonight. That's all. Mr. Bagley bowed and retired. Mr. Ryder turned to the secret service agent.



from Europe. My son Jefferson came home on the same ship. They are a little more friendly than I care to have them. You understand. I want to know if my son visits the Rossmores, and if he does I wish to be kept informed of all that's going on. You understand?"

Jefferson reluctantly held out his hand. "If I thought that you would marry that girl unknown to me I'd have Rossmore sent out of the country, and the woman too. Listen, boy. This man is my enemy, and I show no mercy to my enemies. There are more reasons than one why you cannot marry Miss Rossmore. If she knew one of them she would not marry you."

"What reasons?" demanded Jefferson. "The principal one," said Ryder slowly and deliberately, and eying his son keenly as if to judge of the effect of his words, "the principal one is that it was through my agents that the demand was made for her father's impeachment."

"Think it well over, Jeff. Don't be hasty." A few minutes later Jefferson left the house. The door opened and Mr. Bagley entered, followed by a tall, powerfully built man, whose robust physique and cheap looking clothes contrasted strangely with the delicate ultrafashionably attired English secretary.

"Take a seat, sergeant," said Mr. Ryder cordially, motioning his visitor to a chair. The man sat down gingerly on one of the rich leather upholstered chairs. His manner was nervous and awkward, as if intimidated in the presence of the financier.

"Are the national committee still waiting?" demanded Mr. Ryder. "Yes, sir," replied the secretary. "I'll see them in a few minutes. Leave me with Sergeant Ellison." Mr. Bagley bowed and retired. Ryder, with his customary bluntness, came right down to business.

"Here is \$500 for you." Mr. Ryder took a blank check from his desk and proceeded to fill it up; then, handing it to the detective, he said: "Here is \$500 for you. Spare neither trouble nor expense."

"That's about all, I think. Regarding the other matter, we'll see how the letter works." He touched a bell and rose, which was a signal to the visitor that the interview was at an end. Mr. Bagley entered.

"Sergeant Ellison is going," said Mr. Ryder. "Have him shown out and send the national committee up."

was her last thought as she dropped off to sleep. The following morning Shirley went out for a walk. She preferred to go alone so she would not have to talk. Hers was one of those lonely, introspective natures that resent the intrusion of amiable chatter when preoccupied with serious thoughts.

Every now and then Shirley espied in the distance the figure of a man which she thought she recognized as that of Jefferson. Had he come, after all? The blood went coursing tumultuously through her veins only a moment later to leave her face a shade paler as the man came nearer, and she saw he was a stranger.

As she neared the cottage on her return home, she caught sight of the letter carrier approaching the gate. Instantly she thought of Jefferson, and she hurried to intercept the man. Perhaps he had written instead of coming. "Miss Shirley Rossmore?" said the man eying her interrogatively.

"That's I," said Shirley. The postman handed her a letter and passed on. Shirley glanced quickly at the superscription. No, it was not from Jefferson; she knew it handwriting too well. The envelope, moreover, bore the firm name of her publishers. She tore it open and found that it merely contained another letter which the publishers had forwarded. This was addressed to Miss Shirley Green and ran as follows:

Dear Madam—if convenient, I should like to see you at my office, 25 Broadway, in relation to your book, "The American Octopus." Gladly I inform me as to the date and hour at which I may expect you. Yours truly, JOHN BURKETT RYDER.

Shirley almost shouted from sheer excitement. At first she was alarmed—the name John Burkett Ryder was such a bogey to frighten children with, she thought he might want to punish her for writing about him as she had. She hurried to the porch and sat there reading the letter over and over, and her brain began to evolve ideas. She had been wondering how she could get at Mr. Ryder, and here he was actually asking her to call on him. Evidently he had not the slightest idea of her identity, for he had been able to reach her only through her publishers, and no doubt he had exhausted every other means of discovering her address. The more she pondered over it the more she began to see in this invitation a way of helping her father. Yes, she would go and beard the lion in his den, but she would not go to his office. She would accept the invitation only on condition that the interview took place in the Ryder mansion, where undoubtedly the letters would be found. She decided to act immediately. No time was to be lost, so she procured a sheet of paper and an envelope and wrote as follows:

Dear Sir—I do not call upon gentlemen at their business office. Yours, etc. SHIRLEY GREEN. Her letter was abrupt and at first glance seemed hardly calculated to bring about what she wanted—an invitation to call at the Ryder home, but she was shrewd enough to see that if Ryder wrote to her at all it was because he was most anxious to see her and her abruptness would not deter him from trying again. On the contrary, the very unattractiveness of any one thus dictating to him would make him more than ever desirous of making her acquaintance. So Shirley mailed the letter and awaited with confidence for Ryder's reply. So certain was she that one would come that she at once began to form her plan of action. She would leave Massapequa at once, and her whereabouts must remain a secret even from her own family. As she intended to go to the Ryder house in the assumed character of Shirley Green, it would never do to run the risk of being followed home by a Ryder detective to the Rossmore cottage. She would confide in one person only—Judge Stott. He would know where she was and would be in constant communication with her. But, otherwise, she must be alone to conduct the campaign as she judged fit. She would call at once to New York and take rooms in a boarding house where she would be known as Shirley Green. As for funds to meet her expenses, she had her diamonds, and would they not be filling a more useful purpose if sold to defray the cost of saving her father than in mere personal adornment? So that evening while her mother was talking with the judge she beckoned Stott over to the corner where she was sitting. "Judge Stott," she began, "I have a plan."

He smiled indulgently at her. "You said that no one on earth could resist John Burkett Ryder, that no one could fight against the money power. Well, do you know what I am going to do?" "What will you do?" he asked with a slightly ironical inflection in his voice. "I am going to fight John Burkett Ryder!" Stott looked at her open mouthed. "You?" he said.

"Yes, I," said Shirley. "I'm going to him, and I intend to get those letters if he has them." Stott shook his head. "My dear child," he said, "what are you talking about? How can you expect to reach Ryder? We couldn't." "I don't know just how yet," replied Shirley, "but I'm going to try. I love my father, and I'm going to leave nothing untried to save him." "But what can you do?" persisted Stott. "The matter has been sifted over and over by some of the greatest minds in the country." "Has any woman sifted it over?" demanded Shirley. "No, but"—stammered Stott. "Then it's about time one did," said the girl decisively. "Those letters my father speaks of—they would be useful, would they not?" "They would be invaluable." "Then I'll get them. If not?" "But I don't understand how you're going to get at Ryder," interrupted Stott. "This is how," replied Shirley, passing over to him the letter she had received that afternoon.

As Stott recognized the well known signature and read the contents the expression of his face changed. He gasped for breath and sank into a chair from sheer astonishment. "Ah, that's different!" he cried. "That's different!"

Briefly Shirley outlined her plan, explaining that she would go to live in the city immediately and conduct her campaign from there. If she was successful, it might save her father, and if not no harm could become of it.

That same evening her mother, the judge and Stott went for a stroll after dinner and left her to take care of the house. They had wanted Shirley to go, too, but she pleaded fatigue. The truth was that she wanted to be alone, so that she could ponder undisturbed over her plans. It was a clear, starlit night, with no moon, and Shirley sat on the porch listening to the chirping of the crickets and idly watching the flashes of the mysterious fireflies. She was in no mood for reading and sat for a long time rocking herself, engrossed in her thoughts. Suddenly she heard some one unfasten the garden gate. It was too soon for the return of the promenaders. It must be a visitor. Through the uncertain penumbra of the garden she discerned approaching a form which looked familiar. Yes, now there was no doubt possible. It was indeed Jefferson Ryder.

She hurried down the porch to greet him. No matter what the father had done, she could never think any the less of the son. He took her hand, and for several moments neither one spoke. There are times when silence is more eloquent than speech, and this was one of them. The gentle grip of his big, strong hand expressed more tenderly than any words the sympathy that lay in his heart for the woman he loved. Shirley said quietly: "You have come at last, Jefferson." "I came as soon as I could," he replied gently. "I saw father only yesterday."

"You need not tell me what he said," Shirley hastened to say. Jefferson made no reply. He understood what she meant. He hung his head and hit viciously with his walking stick at the pebbles that lay at his feet. "I know everything now. It was foolish of me to think that Mr. Ryder would ever help us." "I can't help it in any way," blurted out Jefferson. "I have not the slightest influence over him. His business methods I consider disgraceful. You understand that, don't you, Shirley?"

The girl laid her hand on his arm and replied kindly: "Of course, Jeff, we know that. Come up and sit down." He followed her on the porch and drew up a rocker beside her. "They are all out for a walk," she explained. "I'm glad," he said frankly. "I did want a quiet talk with you. I did not care to meet any one. My name must be odious to your people."

Both were silent, feeling a certain awkwardness. They seemed to have drifted apart in some way since those delightful days in Paris and on the ship. "I'm going away, but I couldn't go until I saw you." "You are going away?" exclaimed Shirley, surprised. "Yes," he said, "I cannot stand it any more at home. I had a hot talk with my father yesterday about one thing and another. He and I don't chin wale together. Besides this matter of your father's impeachment was completely discouraged me. All the wealth in the world could never reconcile me to such methods! I'm ashamed of the role my own flesh and blood has played in that miserable affair. I can't express what I feel about it. I can't express what I feel about you. But what are you going to do?" he asked. "These roundings are not for you!" He looked around at the cheap furnishings which he could see through the open window, and his face showed real concern.

"I shall teach or write, or go out as governess," replied Shirley, with a tinge of bitterness. Then smiling sadly she added: "Poverty is easy. It is unmerited disgrace which is hard." "The young man drew his chair closer and took hold of the hand that lay in her lap. She made no resistance. "Shirley," he said, "do you remember that talk we had on the ship? I asked you to be my wife. You led me to believe that you were not indifferent to me. I ask you again to marry me. Give me the right to take care of you and yours. I am the son of the world's richest man, but I don't want his money. I have earned a competence."

By the time the evening had passed Shirley had read the letter she had received that afternoon. She was her last thought as she dropped off to sleep.

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