

PRICE FRANCIS LYNDE ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. D. RHODES

CHAPTER XVIII—Continued. "There was a man—be was looking in the window!" she returned in low tones. "I thought I saw him once before, but this time I am certain!"

CHAPTER XIX. Pitfalls. Within a week from the day when Raymer, angrily jubilant, had rescued his imperiled stock, it was pretty generally known that Kenneth Griswold, the writing man, had become the fourth member in the close corporation of the Raymer Foundry and Machine Works, and Wahaska was eagerly discussing the business affair in all its possible and probable bearings upon the Raymers, the Griswolds and the newly elected directors of the Piabore railroad.

CHAPTER XX. Broken Links. It was on the second day after the pistol-buying incident in Simmons & Kleffert's that Broffin, wishing for solitude and a chance to think in perspective, took to the woods.

CHAPTER XXI. Instantly the Primitive Instinct of Self-Preservation Sprang Alert. brackish waters of sheer worldliness. Then he saw how inadequate it would be; how utterly impossible it was to meet this charmingly vindictive young person upon any grounds save those of her own choosing.

CHAPTER XXII. "There are many things beyond you yet, dear boy; many, many things," she was laughing rejoinder. "from which it will be inferred that the episode in the Farmers' and Merchants' burglar-proof had become an episode forgotten—or at least forgiven."

CHAPTER XXIII. her of battle honors is one that has already been in the thick of the fighting in France, the King's Royal Rifle Corps. Always in the great war it was counted another Victoria Cross.

CHAPTER XXIV. Wonder of Mechanism. Half a century ago there was not a watch in existence capable of meeting the requirements of American railway service. The railway industry had not been originally rated in 1785 in the United States, when those states belonged to us, and was known then as the Sixtieth (Royal American) Regiment of Foot. It is supposed to have been the first regiment to be armed with the rifle—Peaslee's Magazine.

"It is good; it is a big story," she asserted, with kindling enthusiasm. "The plot, so far as you have gone with it, is fine; and that is where you leave me away behind. I don't see how you could ever think it out. And the character drawing is fine, too, some of it. Your Fleming is as far beyond me as your Fidelia seems to be beyond you."

"You don't know Fleming yet. Have you ever met Fidelia?" "Not as you have drawn her—no. She is so utterly fine. If she had a single shred of humanity about her, I should suspect you of meaning to fall in love with her, farther along—to the humiliation and despair of poor Joan, who, as you say, is a mere daughter of men."

"But how about Joan?" he fretted. "Is she out of drawing, too?" "Yes; you are distorting her the other way—making her too inhumanly worldly and insouciant. Then, with an abruptness that was like a slap in the face: 'If you didn't spend so many evenings at Doctor Bertie's, you would get both Fidelia and Joan in better drawing.'"

"We can't have that at all!" he said inclusively. "You did your whole duty in that bank matter; and it was a good deal more than most young women would have done. I'm not going to have you persecuted and harassed—not one minute! Where is this fellow stopping?"

"The daughter shook her head. 'I don't know. He gave me his card, but it has the New Orleans address only.' 'Give it to me and I'll look him up tomorrow.' The card changed hands, and for a few minutes neither of them spoke. Then the daughter began again.

"I've had another shock this evening, too," she said, speaking this time in low tones and with eyes downcast. "This Mr. Griswold—did I understand you to say that he had lost all his money?"

"Yes; practically all of it," said the father, without losing his hold upon what a certain great London physician was saying through the columns of the English medical journal.

But afterward, long after Charlotte had gone up to her room, he remembered, with a curious little start of half-awakened puzzlement, that someone, no longer ago than yesterday, had told him that young Griswold was rich—or if not rich, at least "well fixed."

"I wish you would tell me the secret of your marvelous cleverness," he exclaimed, on one of the June afternoons when he had been reading to her in the cool half-shadows of the Mercedes library. "You are only a child in years; how can you know with such marvellous certainty what other people would think and do under conditions about which you can't possibly know anything experimentally? It's beyond me!"

"You are losing your beauty sleep, little girl," he said, dropping into the chair lately occupied by the guest. "Did you find out anything more tonight?" "The daughter did not reply at once, and when she did there was a note of freshly summoned hardihood in her voice.

"We were both mistaken," she affirmed. "Coincidences are always likely to be misleading. I am sorry I told you about them. He has certainly been a present help in time of need."

"As before, the good little doctor had recourse to his pipe, and it was not until his daughter got up to go in that he said gently: 'One other word, Charlotte, girl; are you altogether sure that she isn't his father to the thought—about Griswold?'"

"Don't be absurd, papa!" she said scornfully, passing swiftly behind his chair to reach the door; and with that answer he was obliged to be content.

CHAPTER XX. Broken Links. It was on the second day after the pistol-buying incident in Simmons & Kleffert's that Broffin, wishing for solitude and a chance to think in perspective, took to the woods.

A letter from the New Orleans office had reopened the account of the Bayou State Security robbery. The mail communication had the significant and inconclusive: One Patrick Sheehan, a St. Louis cab driver, dying, had made confession to his priest. For a bribe of two hundred dollars he had aided and abetted the escape of a criminal on a day and date corresponding to the mid-April arrival of the steamer Belle Julie at St. Louis. Afterward he had driven the man to an up-town hotel (name not given). He could not recall the man's name. But the destination address, "Wahaska, Minnesota," was submitted with the confession.

Broffin felt himself short-sighted from the very nearness of things. The single necessity now was for absolute and unshakable identification. To establish this, three witnesses, and three only, could be called upon. Of the three, two had failed signally—Miss Farham because she had her own reasons for blocking the game, and President Galbraith. That was another chapter in the book of failure.

Broffin had learned that Mr. Griswold was stopping at the De Soto Inn, and he had maneuvered to bring Mr. Galbraith face to face with Griswold in the Grierson bank on the day after the pistol-buying. To his astonishment and disgust the president had shaken his head irritably, adding a rebuke. "No, no, no; your trade makes ye r-r-r-er-er-er-er-er-er-er. That's Mr. Griswold, the writer-man, and a friend of the Griersons. Miss Madge was telling me about him last week. He's no more like the robber than you are. Haven't I told ye the man was bearded like a 'fyke'?"

With two of the three eye-witnesses refusing to testify, there remained only Johnson, the paying teller of the Bayou State Security. Broffin was considering the advisability of wiring for Johnson when he passed the last of the houses on the lakeside drive and struck into the country road which led by cool and shaded forest windings to the resort hotel at the head of the southern bay. Presently a vehicle overtook and passed him. It was Miss Grierson's trap, drawn by the big English trap-horse, with Miss Grierson herself holding the reins and Raymer lounging comfortably in the spare seat.

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Stable Poitenness. Flatbush—I see cow barns are models of cleanliness in Holland. Some farmers place mats before the doors and visitors must wipe their feet before entering.

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