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HIGHEST AWARD—ST. LOUIS, 1904.


# A Dark Shadow;

## Or, A Coming Vengeance

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued).

Mina's hands grasped each other so tightly that the nails threatened to cut into the flesh; but still she said nothing; she waited, and after a pause Sara, bending still further forward, continued, persuasively, insinuatingly:

"You understand? I have made you understand? And you are a good girl. You will not come between my mistress and the man she loves? I do not ask you for her sake. You do not know her, love her, as I do; it is not to be supposed; but I ask it for his. You care for him—a leetle? Ah, yes! I thought so. I see it in your face, in your eyes. If you do, you will not ruin him, will not stand between him and his fortune, between him and my mistress, whose father will make him great, will help him to rise to lofty heights, to power, in your State. You will break with him, will cast him off—before it is too late?"

Her piercing eyes, her intense scrutiny could glean nothing from the white face before her. Mina sat motionless, almost expressionless. Sara looked round the room.

"You are poor. Is it not so?" she said in a friendly, confidential way. "You earn your living like the rest of the poor people. If you decide to go away from him, out of his sight, it will be difficult for you without money. I do not offer you money to buy him of you. No, no! But you will not refuse to accept a small sum for—for the expenses of the removal, your journey?"

She took a gold-netted purse from the recesses of her voluminous skirt, and pushed it slowly and gently across the table. Mina looked at it, her eyes fell on it, mechanically; she did not touch it.

"If you will take the advice of a friend—for I am now your friend, Mees Mina; now that I know you are good—you will go away, to a great distance, where he cannot find you; and you will stay hidden till he is married. After that, if you come to me, write to me, I will help you all I can."

She paused and scanned Mina's face; but there was no response in it. She stretched out her hand to pat Mina's arm; but Mina shrank back out of her reach.

"You are sorry, unhappy? Ah, yes, it is natural. It is the way with us women! These men, these sahibs, they make love to us, they swear to be true to us, but they trample on our hearts while they caress us with their kisses. It is the lot of us women, here in England, India, everywhere; man is all alike in every country! We love, we suffer. But we must be wise. Be you wise, my pretty child. Cast him away; do not be misled, deceived. He means you no good. Why should he? He will marry my mistress, my dear mistress, the Lady Edith."

Mina rose, her hands gripping the table, her head thrown up, her eyes flashing.

"It is a lie!" he said. "He will not marry her—he will marry me. I know it!"

The words sprang from her lips, from her heart. Behind her natural gentleness, humility, and modesty there burnt in Mina a spirit which now sprang into a fierce flame. Mingling with this woman's persuasive tones, Clive's voice murmuring, "I love you, I love you!" had been ringing with convincing force. It was not the timid girl who had shrunk in terror from the gang of hooligans, but the girl who had stood between Clive and certain death, that confronted Sara at this moment. Love is the strongest passion that man knows: it is far stronger in woman than in man; and at this moment it absorbed, engrossed the whole of Mina's being.

As she stood there with white face and parted lips and flashing eyes, she was an inexperienced, unsophisticated girl no longer; but a woman fighting for that which women hold dearer than all else in the wide world—the possession of the man she loves. Clive she knew, trusted, and believed in. This woman, with the strange face and dress, she did not know, did not believe; she cared nothing for her or for her vaunted mistress. It was just possible that Clive might have intended to marry this Lady Edith; but that he intended to do so now was simply incredible; for only a few short hours ago he had told her, Mina, that he loved her, had asked her to be his wife; had told her that he would come in two days' time to repeat his avowal of love, to ask her for her betrothal pledge.

It was Clive against this strange woman; and her heart did not hesitate in its arbitrament, its decision. She might be standing between Clive and his ambition, his worldly welfare; but the woman's heart in her knew that the fullness of her love for him, the wealth of her passion, would more than console, compensate him for anything he might lose by marrying her.

She belonged to the common people; she was, as this woman had said, of lower class and caste; but her schooling had taught her much; unconsciously, intuitively, if you like, she felt at that supreme moment that she could make her lover happy, and that happiness, especially such happiness as she could give him, would far outweigh any worldly success which he might obtain by marrying Lady Edith. So she stood erect, almost defiant, and spurned the suggestion so insinuatingly made by this strange woman.

Sara leant forward, and stared at the slight figure, straight as an arrow, the beautiful face, white as death, but eloquent of an immovable determination.

"Sob!" she hissed rather than spoke. "You refuse my offer! You will not release the sahib, will not go?"

"I will not," responded Mina, her bosom heaving, her hands clenched.

Sara leant back, and laughed contemptuously.

"You are a fool!" she said, with a shrug of her shoulders, her brown fingers turning the bangles on her wrist. "You have listened to what I say—and you refuse? You are a little English fool. And you will be sorry—when it is too late. When he has cast you off and you are deserted—and he will cast you off and desert you, oh, yes!—you will think of what I have warned you, and you will be sorry. You are pretty; ah, yes!" She nodded and smiled, a forced smile which the fury in her dark eyes belied. "But the sahib will tire of your prettiness. They always do. Because, you see, you are not of his caste. If he marry you, he will sink to your level; he will ruin himself; will be no longer one of your Parliament, and great in public life. You will have dragged him down to your level, your low caste, and he will be sorry for what he has done. He will be like a man who has tied a stone round his neck, and cast himself into the Ganges. He will be a nobody, a mere nobody. Then he will think, 'Why did I marry this foolish, common girl; I, a noble of the higher caste?' He will cast you away, desert you. Do I not know?" she demanded vehemently. "I have lived with these people, these great people; I know her ways, the thoughts they think; they are all alike. They cannot herd, cannot wed, with the lower caste." Her mood changed, and she went round the table, and put her hand on Mina's shoulder. "Come now, be a sensible girl," she said persuasively, with a friendly, confidential smile. "Do not be misled by him. Give the sahib up while there is time. While there is time!—You will, will you not? You will take the money and fly before it is too late?"

Mina shook off the thin, claw-like hand. "I will not!" she panted. "I do not believe what you say, what you tell me! He loves me; and—I will marry him."

Sara recoiled, and, clasping her arms across her bosom, looked Mina up and down from head to foot.

"You will not?" she hissed, her eyes flashing balefully, her lips stretched, showing the white, even teeth. "You will not give him up? You will come between him and my mistress, my beloved mistress? You shall not! Nothing shall come between her and anything she desires. You think you can hold him, this sahib, whose shoe-strings you are not worthy to tie? You are a common girl, of a low class. You dare to lift your eyes so high! He marry you! Bah! You mock yourself! I tell you, you shall not." In her fury she broke into Hindustanee, and poured it like lava over Mina. "Idiot! Slave! You to come between my mistress and the man she loves!" She laughed scornfully. "We shall see! Sara will see!"

She snatched up the purse, drew her shawl round her with an angry, passionate gesture, and strode to the door. There she turned, and cast a malignant eye over the girl's slight but still erect form.

"Beware!" she panted almost inaudibly. "Rather than see you come between them, I would lay you and him—and him!—mark me!—dead at my feet!"

The door slammed on her, the room seemed to sway with the fury of her passion; but for some moments Mina stood still, her hands clenched, her bosom heaving, her eyes flashing with indignation, with all a woman's anger; and it was not until Sara's footsteps had died away that the girl she had tortured sank into the chair, gasping for the breath that seemed to choke her in its coming.

CHAPTER XVII.

Perfect love casteth out fear. Mina's love for Clive was as perfect a one as we imperfect mortals are capable of; and, notwithstanding the impressiveness of the Hindoo woman's appearance, and the well-nigh tragic force with which she had carried through her part of the interview, and the fact that Mina had herself heard the name of "Lady Edith" on Clive's lips when he was unconscious, Mina would not permit herself to yield to the doubt and fear which insidiously attacked her. She believed in his truth as she believed in her own. As she had said to Sara, whatever feeling he may have had for this Lady Edith, this beautiful daughter of a great nobleman, he now assuredly loved her, Mina.

She would not doubt him, she would not be depressed. She would say nothing to Elisha or Tibby; but would go on just as usual; indeed, she would practise longer than she ordinarily did, would work harder at her lessons, so as to fit herself to be the wife of the great man the strange woman had declared Mr. Clive to be.

Singularly enough, Mina was not frightened or awed by the discovery of the vast difference between their social positions. All along she had known that his station was above that of hers, so very far above, indeed, that the knowledge of his high birth did not affect her as it might have done. She had been unworthy of him when he was to her an ordinary gentleman, "Mr. Clive"; she was little more unworthy of him now that he proved to be the son of an earl. He could not stoop any lower than he had stooped in asking her to be his wife; and the girl, suddenly transformed into a woman by her love and the terrible ordeal to which she had been subjected by Sara, felt, how she knew not, but instinctively, as all such feelings come, that her great love levelled all distinction.

When he came the day after to-morrow to tell her again that he loved her, and again to ask her to be his wife, she would show him her heart plainly, tell him all that was on her mind, all that the Hindoo woman had said, and leave the decision to him.

And even at that moment, when every nerve was racked by the woman's visit and tragic threat, she had no fear of the result. True love is quick to recognize its kin; she knew in her innermost heart that he loved her, and with a strength remarkable in a girl so young, so unsophisticated, she possessed her soul in patience.

She practised for a great many hours that day, and begged permission, which was readily granted, to remain at the school a longer time than usual, so that she might pick up her lost lessons.

But though she strove, by incessant occupation, to drive away the remembrance of the Hindoo woman, it obtruded itself at odd moments and harassed her; and she was looking pale and tired when she came in to supper.

Tibby looked up sharply from the fried sausages and potatoes which she was eating and said, as she set a portion of that savory dish before Mina:

"You're lookin' orf color to-night, Mina. Too much practisin', too many lessons—and too much nursin': I'm precious glad that's over, at any rate. The nex' time I see a man downed in a row and I've anything to do with the business, he goes to the 'orspital, if I 'ave to drag 'im there by the 'air of 'is 'ead wiv my own 'ands. You don't want any sorsages? What are you goin' to 'ave, then? Would you like a little cold peasant or a bit o' salmon or a slice of haspic jelly?" she inquired, waving her hand over the table as if it were spread with the delicacies she had named.

"I've a headache," said Mina; "and I think I will have a cup of tea. No; I'll get it, Tibby, dear."

Elisha looked round rather sadly and regretfully. "Seems very dull to-night," he said. "I suppose we miss Mr. Clive—and so do you in your heart, Tibby, for all you're so rough on him, and your talk of 'orspitals."

"Oh, do I?" snorted Tibby, as she pushed Mina away from the loaf and cut some thin bread and butter for her. "You remind me of the gent at the music 'all who sang 'Will They Miss Me?' and a man at the back called out, 'Give me a gun, and see if I miss yer!' I think his room is better than 'is company, and I think I told 'im so more than once, and pretty plainly."

"He's been a good friend to us, Tibby," said Elisha.

"And we've been a good friend to 'im," she retorted. "Mina here saved his life at that silly 'all, and nursed 'im, too."

"You forget that you helped me, Tibby," said Mina in a low voice, and with a faint color.

"Yes, that's because I'm juggins enough to let yer 'ave yer own way, an' to stand by you instead o' puttin' me foot down and slappin' the silly notions out o' yer 'ead. But there, thank goodness, it's all done with now.—Father, if you wanted sorsages cold instead of 'ot, why didn't yer say so, instead of lettin' 'em freeze into ice on yer plate? You're as bad as Mina.—What's the matter with the bread and butter, that you can't eat it? It's the best fresh, let me tell you, not margarine. 'Pears to me this family's got dainty since its rise in the world.—You don't mean to say you're goin' practisin' with a headache?" she demanded indignantly, as Mina went towards the piano.

"Only for a little while, Tibby, dear," said Mina, pleadingly.

"Let 'er alone, Tibby," growled Elisha.

"Oh, I'll let 'er alone," retorted Tibby. "An' I 'ope to goodness other people 'ull do the same!"

Mina lay awake all that night; but she was neither anxious nor fearful. There was another day to live through as patiently as she could; and then——

It was a long day in all conscience, though she worked hard and left herself but little time for thought. She slept that night soundly, and woke with a swift, eager reflection: "It is the day. He will be here. I shall see him, hear his voice; all will be well."

She would remain at home all day; he might come at any moment. She was practising hard in the morning, when she heard a step on the stairs, and her heart leapt; but the step was Elisha's.

"Why, back already!" she said. "Is anything the matter?"

Elisha shook his head, and did not look alarmed.

"No," he said with a laugh; "but my pupils are going away. It seems that those sort of people, the haristocracy, leave London, and go into the country at this time of the year. It's a kind o' fashion. Funny, isn't it? You'd think they'd go directly the weather got 'ot, and the country was nice and fresh; but they wait all through the 'ot weather and until gets quite smelly; then they go; and I suppose stop away while it's cool and pleasant."

"Then you've lost your pupils?" said Mina with dismay.

"Not a bit of it; at least, only for a time," he said cheerfully and proudly. "It's only a 'oliday; and the best of it is, I'm to take one too. I dessay the swells 'as their faults, like other people; but I'm blessed if they can be as bad as some people try to make 'em out. Would you believe it, Mina, that nearly every one of 'em 'as given me five-poun' note so that I can take a 'oliday like the rest of 'em! And I'm to carry on the lessons when they come back."

Mina's face flushed and her heart swelled: she knew who had prompted this piece of generosity: perhaps the money had come out of his own pocket?

"An' I'm thinking," continued Elisha, "that we might really take a 'oliday. What should you say to Margit, or Southend-on-Sea, or some sich swell place?" he demanded, his face beaming, his eyes twinkling roguishly; then his face fell, and he scratched his head as he added, "of course, that's allowin' that Tibby's agreeable. I think," with an air of simple cunning, "that you might 'int it to 'er, Mina. She'd take it better from you; and, besides, she said herself that you're orf color. We needn't spend much," he went on reflectively. "We shouldn't want to put up at the Grand 'Otel—though, mind you, I believe the money wou'd run to it; I do, indeed! We could take some cheap lodgings, and perhaps I could get an engagement at one of the 'Alls-by-the-sea or in one of the bands."

Mina looked alarmed, and her heart beat fast. Go away, away from London, away from him! But she forced a laugh. It seemed so unlikely that Tibby would agree to the extravagance Elisha meditated. She would want to put the money by, or to purchase some clothes for her, Mina.

"We'll talk it over," said Elisha, "an', so as we can 'ave all the argyments at our finger-ends, I'll step down to the railway office and inquire about the excursion fares."

Mina put her arm round him, keeping her face from his sight.

"You won't want—want to go for a day or two, dear?" she asked in a low voice.

(To be continued.)


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## THE MORMON MEMBER.

Martin Woolf, the member of the Alberta Legislature for Cardston, is making his influence felt in the Provincial Parliament. Last year Mr. Woolf was honored with the Premier's request that he second the speech at the opening of the session. This year the Cardston member made grave charges

Mr. Martin Woolf.

against an employe of the Dominion Government in one of the Western Provinces, and Western papers are reporting that his speeches are the most brilliant that have been heard in the house.

At home Mr. Woolf is a farmer, having a large tract of land south of Cardston, the Temple City of Canada. In religion he is a Mormon, and because of his religious belief, grave fears for the future of the Province have been expressed. Contrary to general belief, Mr. Woolf is not a polygamist, although he believes in the principle of polygamy. He is the only Mormon in the Alberta Legislature, but the time cannot be far distant when a redistribution must be made to take in another large tract settled by Mormons, and in all probability another Mormon will have a seat in the House.

## AN INFLAMMABLE CARGO.

### Mineral Water and Sodium Make a Bad Combination.

In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, water, if applied in sufficient quantity, will eventually quench any fire. But the thousandth case, when water not only proves ineffectual, but actually kindles and nourishes the fire, is a perfectly possible occurrence. The Boston Herald prints an account of an extraordinary fire at sea that shows how helpless is man in fighting the flames when deserted by his ally, water.

When the freighter Hardy steamed out of Le Treport, France, she carried, besides the mineral water in her hold, a number of small wooden cases marked "metallic sodium."

The Channel was rough. The vessel rolled and pitched violently. The captain saw that the ship was listing to port, and suspecting that the cargo was shifting, sent a boatswain below to investigate. As the boatswain entered the hold, he saw that several cases of mineral water had broken, and that the water was swishing about in the hold. Then suddenly he saw one of the wooden cases marked "sodium" burst into flame.

Immediately he gave the alarm, and the crew rushed to their fire stations. The captain directed the men to play the hose into the hold. As the first stream of water struck the burning case, there were several explosions, as package after package within the case caught fire. By this time two other cases of sodium had broken open, and their contents, as they came in contact with the water from the hose, burst into flames.

The crew could not believe their eyes. The more water they poured on the fire, the more intense grew the conflagration. Then suddenly two cases flew into the air, crashed against the overhead beams, and spread out in sheets of fire, the smaller pieces dropping back only to bounce and dance about, hot balls of flame, in the half-swamped hold.

Panic-stricken, the crew dropped the hose lines and fled above decks. But the captain ordered the cargo flung into the sea, and led his men back into the hold. They succeeded in throwing several of the cases overboard. But as each case hit the waves, it rebounded into the air, a flaming ball.

The superstitious crew was fast becoming unmanageable, and the captain saw that, in any case, he must abandon the ship. He ordered the crew to the boats not one moment too soon, for as the boats rowed away from the blazing hulk, several loud explosions came from the hold. Then there was one mighty detonation; the freighter broke in two, and plunged out of sight.

The origin of the fire was, of course, in the sodium. Sodium is a peculiar metal, which oxydizes rapidly when water touches it, and flames as soon as the water becomes warm. According to the chemist's classification, it is the second member of the alkali group that includes lithium, potassium, rubidium and caesium. All of these elements have the same characteristics as sodium in greater or less degree. The sodium should have been shipped in hermetically sealed tin cans enclosed in wooden cases. But the rolling of the ship and the careless stowing of the cargo broke open some of these cases, and the sodium, which was not properly packed, was liberated.


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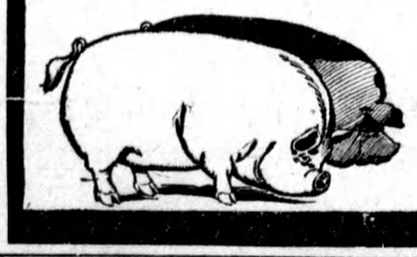

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