



**ILL WITH DISMAY**

Lynne went to it as soon as they had gone; it was a heavy cedar-wood door studded with nails; a hopeless-looking door from the point of view of anyone who had not the key to it.

She divested herself of the hood and veil, and the clinging folds of the native garment Julian had thrown over her. She was shaking all over, and felt ill with dismay; the passionate desire to get out, to find Guthrie, to get the Cups of Alexander from Enzill before Julian could take them, was gnawing her vitals; added to all this was the shock of finding out about Julian, knowing who he was and what he was and being here at his mercy in spite of it.

The possibility of getting to Enzill in the face of such ruthless opposition looked remote; where she was now she had no idea; she could only walk up and down the room, in a fever of anxiety.

Then an idea struck her. The window was nine feet from the floor, but there were hangings on the walls. Five minutes later carpets and tapestries were hanging ripped from the walls, witnessing her vain efforts to look out.

She thought of putting the divan against the wall, ladder-wise, and climbing on top to reach the window. But she found that it was a useless thing composed of mattresses, bolsters and pillows.

These were littered all over the floor and she was standing in sullen exhaustion, when Julian came, accompanied by a dark and bearded individual in the noble robes of a Persian gentleman. Julian took no notice of her, but spoke to his companion in English.

"I fear she is a little restless," he said with a glance round at the disordered room. "But Your Excellency will I hope, excuse that! Like all Englishwomen she is wilful, being unwisely brought up."

"So I see," said the Persian in a guttural voice. They both appeared perfectly calm and amiable.

"You are to stay here, Lynne," said Julian. "This gentleman is going to take care of you for me for a while."

"Who is he?" said Lynne. "Where are we? If you think you can keep me here, you're very much mistaken! I won't stay here. As soon as I leave here I'll go to the police and I'll tell the whole story. I don't care what happens!"

She was so wrought up she hardly knew what she was saying. The gentleman in the noble robes, however, took no notice of her whatever, but remarked to Julian:

"The woman is very thin. English

women are all like that; one would think there had been a famine!"

Lynne was agast at this calm deafness to her protests. She turned to Julian, drawing deep breaths, as her wrath and emotion almost overcame her.

"How long am I to be here?" she inquired.

"His Excellency will keep you here or a week or perhaps ten days. Just so oblige me, you understand. If you behave sensibly and don't make trouble you'll leave here at the end of that time. If not—then, my dear Lynne, you know how long you may be here?"

"What is this place?" Lynne asked. "A private house. A Persian home—in a large scale, of course. You should be honoured, my dear Lynne, at being made a member of so high class an establishment. But we won't say what Persian home or whose establishment; because when you leave here, my dear Lynne, you'll go as you came, with a bandage over your eyes. It's no good trying to tell the police."

The robed Persian laughed and said: "I do not bother very much about the police."

He laughed again; and as though this finished the discussion he moved towards the door. Lynne stood in helpless anger. Suddenly becoming serious Julian advanced towards her and said in a tone of menace:

"Now look here, there's to be no nonsense! You'd better behave and be quiet, and you'd better not annoy my friend here. Do you think I care a damn whether you come out of here or not?"

"I realize that," was all Lynne said. Julian and the Persian went out. The two fat men in turbans came in, and locking the door behind them tacked up the hangings on the wall and gathered together the scattered pillows of the divan; Lynne sat on the couch and gazed at them with a world of dislike in her eyes; finally they went out and left her alone.

Julian haggled for some time with the noble Persian, about how much that gentleman needed to recompense him for the trouble of keeping Lynne shut up in his house for a week. Finally they decided on the price—Julian paid half then, and half was to be paid later—and Julian drove away in his car again; this time towards Enzill.

The noble Persian went back to the broom, the outer apartment of the house, reserved for privileged males, and sat down to smoke his kailan.

"She is very thin," he said to his secretary, an American who wore a European dinner jacket day and night. "She is much too thin. I do not think I shall keep her here more than a week. However the feringhi gives me fifty English banknotes to keep her here, so we will do what we can. Hussein, you can tell them to dress her like the other women; for if she should be seen here looking like an Englishwoman, questions might be asked."

**CHAPTER XXI**

**LYNNE IN DISGUISE**

For Lynne, it was quite the worst form of captivity. Here she was, shut in this strange and mysterious place, with nothing whatever to do but to think about all her past mistakes and misdeeds. And every hour that passed saw the possibility of making any retribution for them, growing fainter and fainter. She made further attempts to reach the window and failed. She tried to pick the lock of the door with a hairpin and gave up, in exasperation at her own folly.

That afternoon was the worst she had ever spent in her life; they brought her food and coffee, but she could not eat. She drank the coffee, and felt better for it.

At last, when her tortured nerves could hardly stand the suspense any longer her two fat warders came for her. They led her along a passage and down a flight of stairs, and Lynne wondered what on earth was going to happen next.

At the bottom of the stairs was a large stone chamber containing a sunken bath. There was a divan, and a low table covered with endless little pots, jars, and dishes containing all the paints and cosmetics with which Persian women disguise their natural complexion. There were three old women, who took charge of her, while her two warders posted themselves outside the door lest she should make a dash for freedom.

The three old women made her undress; and after the fatigues of the day, Lynne found the hot bath almost grateful. Afterwards she saw her own clothes being taken away, and the women servants gave her a pair of short blue silk trousers reaching to the knees, and a loose thin jacket; all the time, while they were making up her eyes with kohl, she was looking about seeking a possible means of escape from the room. They widened her eyebrows with indigo, and with the same paint drew little flowers on her cheek bones and throat. Finally they stained her finger nails and the palms of her hands and covered her red curls with a big herchief.

It was bad enough to have to allow all this, without having to wonder what it was, all for Lynne had no idea what was going to happen next.

But she remained quite quiet and docile, with the idea that if she was placid enough she might put her captors off their guard, and find an opportunity to give them the slip.

And that was what happened.

"GET THE POLICE!"

As she came away from the bath, feeling very strange in her extraordinary clothing, she kept her eyes open; her two fat warders were not quite so wary as they had been. She saw a passage ahead, an open doorway at the end of it. As the two men were leading her away to the right up the stairs again, she broke away from them, ran along the passage and through a door-way. The room was filled with the shrill murmur of feminine chatter which stopped and was followed by cries of surprise, as she ran through it. She glimpsed only the ladies of the harem lounging about on silk covered divans, as she made a dash for the sunlit courtyard she could see beyond.

She ran outside, dodged between beds of flowers and along a narrow passage way which ran between the house and its high surrounding walls. She heard the clamour of the crowded street on the other side of the wall, and her heart leapt with hope.

"Help! Help! Help!" Her cry echoed back to her from the walls; but there was no answering voice from the street outside. In front of her was a second open yard, and in the wall on the other side of it was a hole barred by an iron grille. In an instant Lynne was holding the bar shouting through it:

"Help! Help! Help!"

"Brown faces stared at her curiously through the grille. The clamour outside in the packed native street altered its pitch slightly as the crowd turned towards this strange interruption.

"Tell the British Consul!" Lynne shouted, into the uncomprehending face which was nearest her own. "Tell—!"

Her cry was cut short as a brown hand went over her mouth and strong arms dragged her violently away from the grating. Fists struck her. Dazed and half stunned, her captors bundled her away through the nearest doorway into the house. Recovering herself she began to struggle again but this time they seemed to have no care as to how they got her along. When Lynne found herself being hauled up some stairs by the hair, she gave in and went quietly; and in a few minutes she found herself back in her stuffy little room bruised and breathless and not much

better for her attempt to communicate with the world.

But had she known it, her effort had caused a good deal of consternation in the house. The master of it was violently angry with the servants who had let her give them the slip. He beat one of them over the head with his slipper and ordered the other the castinado. He fumed and swore and exclaimed that it was not worth fifty pounds to him to look after such a wild and dangerous Englishwoman in his own house. The crowd had heard her shouting; who knew but that people might not come asking questions? The police even might think that something queer was going on. They might even search the house, they might find her; fifty pounds would not cover a risk like that.

**LYNNE'S LIFE THREATENED**

The upshot of it was that half an hour later Lynne was dragged out of her room, four men being thought necessary to do the job on this occasion, and taken before the master of the house.

The noble Persian seemed to be in a frantic rage; he crisped his fingers, abused her violently in Arabic, and Lynne began to be certain that something frightful was about to befall her. At last the man controlled himself sufficiently to be able to say in guttural English:

"So you do not like it here, eh? You run about, and scream and shout to make people come. And if they come, what do you think they will find—eh? What do you think?"

Lynne was too terrified to make any suggestions.

"They will find nothing—nothing!" The Persian snapped his fingers. "Not a thing. We shall cut your throat, make a hole in the floor put you in and put the stones over, and who do you think would ever find you?"

So many people had offered to do this to her, that Lynne began to feel that her efforts to find adventure in Persia had made her altogether unpopular.

The Persian burst into Arabic again, and finally cried in English:

"Take her away! Take her away!"

Lynne was dragged away not knowing whether the threat was about to be put into action, or what.

But they took her back to her room; shut up again, alone, she lay exhausted on the divan. It was growing late in the day and the ray of evening sun striking through the narrow window was beginning to fade. Lynne wondered if she would ever see the sun rise again. It seemed impossible that she would ever get out of this alive; it seemed impossible that she would ever see Aunt Sophie, or the Trents—or Guthrie—again. She would have given anything to be back in Beaumont Magna before she had ever heard of the Cups of Alexander and had nothing to fear, and nothing to regret.

The sun sank and it grew dark. Soon after nightfall she heard the sound of her captors at the door again, and started with terror, wondering if they had really come to kill her.

They came in; she was terrified when they laid hands on her. But all they did was to tie her up and gag her. She was smothered in the folds of a great black chadar, the garment worn out of doors by Persian women; and then carried like a sack over the shoulder of a huge man-servant along the passage down the flight of stairs and out of the house.

She was thrown into the back of some sort of cart which was drawn by a mule, and smelled of hay.

As the cart drove away and she lay bumping on the floor in the back, Lynne's hopes returned. If they had been going to kill her, surely they would already have done so. She could not see where they were going, the sides of the cart prevented that; but she could see the night sky spangled with stars overhead. Out here, though as helpless as ever, she felt nearer to help.

The cart must have trundled on for nearly an hour before it stopped. A fresh breeze had been blowing for some time which had given Lynne the idea that they had come out into the open, and as soon as the three men who had come with her from the house had lifted her out of the cart she saw that she was right. The night sky was wide overhead, and the only building she could see was a dark shape rising high into the sky before them.

There was something sinister about this solitary tower rising up all alone in the night, as Lynne, with no idea of the purpose of her hostile companions, was carried towards it. Beside it she could see the shape of a small hut, and at first she thought they might be taking her there. But they went on towards the tower.

(To Be Continued)

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Waits around the bend in the next

car's faltering brakes, in the trail of some chance driver who loves to "jockey" in a line of traffic or swish past another car on a curve or hill. In the street, on the open highway, what matter where? Death waits and does not announce his coming.

We are marked down to die. The great god called Statistics has written down our names in his big book and by actuarial laws we are doomed.

We do not know it, but Death is coming.

Some of us are little children. Our death will be more horrible, more tragic, than others. But die we will. Parents, teachers and professional life-savers with all their earnest warnings will avail us not. We are marked down.

We are careless now. We do not take thought. Have you never been a child? Do you not know what it is to be a stranger to responsibility, to depend on others for care, for shelter, for protection?

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