

Black Is White

Illustrations by RAY WALTERS

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Various Ways of Receiving a Blow. James Brood's home was a remarkable one.

At the top of the house were the rooms which no one entered except by the gracious will of the master.

Worlds separated the upper and lower regions of that fine old house; a single step took one from the sedate Occident into the very heart of the Orient.

His secretary and amanuensis was Lydia Desmond, the nineteen-year-old daughter of his one-time companion and friend, the late John Desmond.

Brood, on hearing of his death, immediately made certain the condition of Lydia's room, adjoining her mother's, was on the third floor at the foot of the small stairway leading up to the proscribed retreat at the top of the house.

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By nature he was slow to respond to the advances of others; his life had been such that avarice accounted for all that he received from others in the shape of respect and consideration.

At first he held himself aloof from the Desmonds; he was slow to surrender. He suspected them of the same motives that had been the basis of all previous attachments.

old state of reticence, his very joy might have made a nuisance of him. He followed Mrs. Desmond about in very much the same spirit that inspires a hungry dog; he watched her with eager, half-famished eyes.

It was his custom, on coming home for the night, no matter what the hour may have been, to pause before Lydia's door on the way to his own room at the other end of the long hall.

For the past three months or more he had been privileged to hold her close in his arms and to kiss her good-night at parting!

On this night, however, he passed her door without knocking. His dark, handsome face was flushed, and his teeth were set in sullen anger.

"I'm—I'm sorry, dearest—" he began, his first desire being to account for his oversight.

"Tell me what has happened? It can't be that your father is ill—or in danger. You are angry, Frederic; so it can't be that. What is it?"

"You are still angry," she said, laying her hand on his arm.



"Tell Me What Has Happened."

tall, slender girl. Her eyes were almost on a level with his own. "Don't you want to tell me, dear?"

"He never gives me a thought," he said, compressing his lips. "He thinks of no one but himself. God, what a father!"

"Freddy, dear! You must not speak—" "Haven't I some claim to his consideration? Is it fair that I should be ignored in everything, in every way?"

"She is a strange man," she said. "He is a good man, Frederic."

"To everyone else, yes. But to me? Why, Lydia, I—I believe he hates me. You know what—"

"Hush! A man does not hate his son. I've tried for years to drive that silly notion out of your mind."

"Oh, I know I'm a fool to speak of it, but I—I can't help feeling as I do. You've seen enough to know that I'm not to blame for it either. What do you think he has done to all of us?"

She did not answer. "Well, I'll tell you just what he said in that wireless. It was from the Lusitania, twelve hundred miles off Sandy Hook—relayed, I duced miles off Sandy Hook—relayed, I supposed, so that the whole world might know—sent at four this afternoon. I remember every word of the cursed thing, although I merely glanced at it."

She smiled. "No. They had their own theory about the message. The storm strengthened it. They were positive that your father was in great peril. They were determined to charter a vessel of some sort and start off in all this blizzard to search the sea for Mr. Brood. Oh, aren't they wonderful?"

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"Married?" she gasped. "Your father married?"

"Put the house in order for its new mistress," he almost snarled. "That message was a deliberate insult to me, Lydia—a nasty, rotten slap in the face. I mean the way it was worded. Just as if it wasn't enough that he has gone and married some cheap show girl or a miserable foreigner or heaven knows—"

"Freddy! You are beside yourself. Your father would not marry a cheap show girl. You know that. And you must not forget that your mother was a foreigner."

"His eyes fell. 'I'm sorry I said that,'" he exclaimed, hoarsely. Lydia, leaning rather heavily against the door, spoke to him in a low, cautious voice.

"Did you tell Mr. Dawes and Mr. Riggs?"

"He stopped short. 'No! And they waited up to see if they could be of any assistance to him in an hour of peril! What a joke! Poor old beggars! I've never felt sorry for them before, but, on my soul, I do now.' What will she do to the poor old chaps? I shudder to think of it. And she'll make short work of everything else she doesn't like around here, too."

"Your mother, Lydia—why, God help us, you know what will just have to happen in her case. It's—"

"Don't speak so loudly, dear—please. She is asleep. Of course, we—we shan't stay on, Freddy. We'll have to go as soon as—"

"It's a beastly, beastly shame, darling. Oh, Lord, what a fool a man can make of himself!"

"You must not say such things," she murmured, stroking his cheek with cold, trembling fingers.

"But why couldn't he have done the free, sensible thing, Lydia? Why couldn't he have—have fallen in love with—with your mother? Why not have married her if he had to marry someone?"

"Freddy!" she cried, putting her hand over his mouth. She kissed him swiftly. Her cheek lay for a second against his own and then, with a stifled good-night, she broke away from him.

The next morning he came down earlier than was his custom. His night had been a troubled one. Forgetting his own woes—or belittling them—he had thought only of what this news from the sea would mean to the dear woman he loved so well.

His eyes traversed the front page rapidly. There were reports of fearful weather at sea. The Lusitania was reported seven hundred miles out and in the heart of the hurricane. She would be a day late.

He looked up from the paper. Mrs. Desmond was coming toward him, a queer little smile on her lips. She was a tall, fair woman, an English type, and still extremely handsome.

"She is a stanch ship, Frederic," she said, without any other form of greeting. "She will be late but—there's really nothing to worry about."

"I'm not worrying," he said confidently. "Lydia has told you the news."

"Rather staggering, isn't it?" he said with a wry smile. In spite of himself he watched her face with curious interest.

"Rather," she said briefly. "I suppose you don't approve of the way I—"

"I know just how you feel, poor boy. Don't try to explain. I know."

"You always understand," he said, lowering his eyes.

"Not always," she said quietly. "Well, it's going to play hob with everything," he said, jamming his hands deep into his pockets.

"I am especially sorry for Mr. Dawes and Mr. Riggs," she said. Her voice was steady and full of earnestness.

"Do they know?"

"They were up and about at day-break, poor souls. Do you know, Freddy, they were starting off in this blizzard when I met them in the hall!"

"The deuce! I—I hope it wasn't on account of anything I may have said to them last night," he cried, in genuine contrition.

She smiled. "No. They had their own theory about the message. The storm strengthened it. They were positive that your father was in great peril. They were determined to charter a vessel of some sort and start off in all this blizzard to search the sea for Mr. Brood. Oh, aren't they wonderful?"

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"By George, Mrs. Desmond, they are great! They are men, bless their hearts. Seventy-five years old and still ready to face anything for a comrade! It does prove something, doesn't it?"

"It proves that your father has made no mistake in selecting his friends, my dear. My dear husband used to say that he would cheerfully die for James Brood and he knew that James Brood would have died for him just as readily. There is something in friendships of that sort that we can't understand. We have never been able to test our friends, much less ourselves. We—"

"I would die for you, Mrs. Desmond," cried Frederic, a deep flush overspreading his face. "For you and Lydia."

"You come by that naturally," she said, laying her hand upon his arm.

"Blood will tell. Thank you, Frederic." She smiled. "I am sure it will not be necessary for you to die for me, however. As for Lydia, you must live, not die for her."

"I'll do both," he cried, impulsively. "Forgive me."

"There is nothing to forgive," she said simply. "And now, one word more, Frederic. You must accept this new condition of affairs in the right spirit. Your father has married again, after all these years. It is not likely that he has done so without deliberation. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that he is bringing home with him a wife of whom he at least is proud, and that should weigh considerably in your summing up of the situation. She will be beautiful, accomplished, refined—and good, Frederic. Of that you may be sure. Let me implore you to withhold judgment until another and later day."

"I do not object to the situation, Mrs. Desmond," said he, the angry light returning to his eyes, "so much as I resent the wording of that telegram. It is always just that way. He loses no chance to humiliate me. He—"

"Hush! You are losing your temper again."

"Well, who wouldn't? And here's another thing—the very worst of all. How is this new condition going to affect you, Mrs. Desmond?"

"She was silent for a moment. 'Of course I shan't stay on here, Frederic. I shall not be needed now. As soon as Mrs. Brood is settled here I shall go.'

"And you expect me to be cheerful and contented!" he cried, bitterly.

"Something of the sort," she said. "My father objects to my going into business or taking up a profession. I am dependent on him for everything. But why go into that? We've talked it over a thousand times. I don't understand but perhaps you do. It's a dog's way of living."

"Your father is making a man of you."

"Oh, he is, eh?" with great scorn. "Yes. He will make you see some day that the kind of life you lead is not the kind you want. Your pride, your ambition will rebel. Then you will make something out of life for yourself."

"Well, it looks to me as if he means to make it impossible for me to marry, Mrs. Desmond. I've thought of it a good deal."

"And is it impossible?"

"No. I shall marry Lydia, even though I have to dig in the streets for her. It isn't that, however. There's some other reason back of his attitude, but for the life of me I can't get at it."

"I wouldn't try to get at it, my dear," she said. "Wait and see. Come, you must have your coffee. I am glad you came down early. The old gentlemen are at breakfast now. Come in."

He followed her dejectedly, a perceptible droop to his shoulders.

Mr. Dawes and Mr. Riggs were seated at the table. Lydia, a trifle pale and distraught, was pouring out their third cup of coffee. The old men showed no sign of their midnight experience. They were very wide-awake, clear-eyed and alert, as old men will be who do not count the years of life left in the span appointed for them.

"Good morning, Freddy," said they, almost in one voice. As he passed behind their chairs on his way to Lydia's side, he slapped each of them cordially on the back. They seemed

to swell with relief and gratitude.

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He was not in the habit of slapping them on the back.

"Good morning, gentlemen," said he. Then he lifted Lydia's slim fingers to his lips. "Good morning, dear." She squeezed his fingers tightly and smiled. A look of relief leaped into her eyes; she drew a long breath.

She poured his coffee for him every morning. Her hand shook a little as she lifted the tiny cream pitcher. "I didn't sleep very well," she explained in a low voice. His hand rested on her shoulder for a moment in a gentle caress.

"Poor old Jim!" sighed Mr. Dawes. "He'll probably have to ask us to vamoose, too. I imagine she'll insist on making a spare bedroom out of our room, so's she can entertain all of her 'infernal relations. Jones, will you give me some more bacon and another egg?"

"And I thought it was nothing but a shipwreck," murmured Mr. Riggs, plaintively.

Frederic hurried through breakfast. Lydia followed him into the library. "Are you going out, dear?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, I've got to do something. I can't sit still and think of what's going to happen. I'll be back for lunch-noon."

Half an hour later he was in the small bachelor apartment of two college friends, a few blocks farther uptown, and he was doing the thing he did nearly every day of his life in a surreptitious way. He sat at the cheap upright piano in their disorderly living-room and, unhampered by the presence of young men who preferred music as it is rendered for the masses, played as if his very soul was in his fingers.

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State of Ohio, City of Toledo Lucas County, ss.

Frank J. Cheney makes oath that he is senior partner of the firm of F. J. Cheney & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and State aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by the use of HALL'S CATARRH CURE.

FRANK J. CHENEY.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 8th day of December, A. D. 1886. A. W. GLEASON. (Seal) Notary Public.

Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally and acts through the Blood on the Mucous Surfaces of the System. Send for testimonials free. F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo O. Sold by all druggists. 75c. Hall's Family Pills for Constipation.

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We have a good stock of other Feed on hand, which we are offering at following prices in ton lots:

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Oatmeal Millers.



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