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By Anna Katharine Green, Author of "The Forsaken Inn," Etc.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

Continued.

You naturally wish me to accompany you back to New York," proceeded the other. "I do not wonder at this, indeed, it is my own wish to return there as soon as possible that I may make such explanations as will place me right with the authorities. But before I leave this town I demand the privilege of shaking the hand which shall put Miss Rogers beyond the power of these witches. I have already chosen my lawyer and, to-morrow morning, at 11, I hope to be in a position to visit Miss Rogers with this important document in my pocket."

"It is a serious step," objected the detective, "but if you are resolved upon it—"

"I am resolved." "I do not see that I have the right to protect you from taking it. But it seems to me you might wait."

"When waiting leaves her in continued danger? You ask too much of my generosity, Mr. Gryce. I will wait till one night, because it is impossible to do otherwise, and if no attempt is made upon her life I may consent to delay till I have shown my papers to the superintendence of police, but it, on the contrary, we find in the morning that my attempt has been made upon Miss Rogers' life during the night, and that her position is really so critical as we have reason to fear, then no power on earth can restrain me from putting an end to her danger by informing her the indispensable owner of Mr. DeGray's million."

You are a noble-hearted man," was the artist's enthusiastic comment. "Now consider my highest respect. I am not in a position to say more, when I write, and I wish—" this he added as he noted in certain haggard and unnatural looks in the other's countenance. "But I better understand your position and what this woman means when she sends you to me."

This was a startling apart. Mr. Gryce turned his gaze toward the door. Mr. DeGray, in silence, waited while the artist spoke frankly.

"Have you made myself clear?"

"Yes and no. I understand that Miss Rogers is to receive that for which she cannot be ever grateful to you, but I am not yet certain whether her old master will include a personal deduction which will rob me of my happiness."

Mr. DeGray's eyes, which had held the other's unchanged, fell with vague trouble.

"That question," said he, "will be better answered tomorrow. If you will come to me by being present in the interview which I have requested of Miss Rogers you will then have the opportunity to learn what is at present as much of an uncertainty to me as it can be to you."

"But—"

"I mean it, DeGray. I want your presence there, and it's about to ask it. The hour set is 11; join me here, and we'll go up to the house together."

The artist, assured of his master's earnestness, again shook his hand and prepared to leave. He had his own intentions with regard to the night, and was very anxious for the opportunity to carry them out. Mr. DeGray likewise evidently had his, and as for the detective, he was doubtless not without his plan also, for when he saw that this interview which I have just described was at an end, he stepped forward with the remark:

"It is late, but I must run up. By the way, I am anxious to know whether or not he has sojournered his name."

"And I," said the artist, "am going to join in Miss Aspinwall and ask her to take Miss Rogers into her room."

And I² added his namesake, "I am going to pass her grounds like a police sergeant, happy if I can be of any use in preserving the safety of one who, without any direct fault of my own, has been put in peril through my efforts in her behalf."

All three went down stairs. At the front door they stopped. A man was just entering in whom the artist and the detective recognized Mr. Bryd.

"Well," asked Mr. Gryce, pausing before his colleague,

"Ah! you here," was the quick reply. "That is good, but—". The young detective's words came slowly; evidently he was greatly astonished in seeing the two Mr. DeGrays in such amiable company with his superior. "I have not the best news to give you."

"Why?" "What?" exclaimed they, one and all. "Has the man escaped?"

Dumbfounded at this further evidence of their mutual understanding, he looked from one to the other and answered, vehemently:

"Yes. How did you know about it? He is gone, and I cannot tell whence."

Mr. Gryce at once turned toward the artist.

"Then it indeed behoves us to be on the alert. If he has gone, it is in his direction, and if he means mischief he will attempt that mischief to-night."

And beckoning to Bryd he led the way into the street, followed by his now thoroughly alarmed companion.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SECRET PROTECTORS.

The detectives and the DeGrays, on leaving the quarters of the Cleveland, at once turned immediately in the direction of Miss Aspinwall's house.

The sunniness, which had sounded

so loud and shrill, brought more than one head to the windows above, out when the door was opened. It was James they saw, and to him Mr. DeGray found it possible to say:

"Don't be alarmed, James. I do not want to disturb the house, but I have a message for Miss Aspinwall that will not keep till morning. Will you go to her to come down?"

The servant, who had been called by his mistress' father, bowed without shade of surprise on his respectful face, and ushering the two gentlemen in, carefully shut the door and guided away on his mission. As there was light burning in the hall, they were left entirely in darkness, fact for which they were thankful when a few minutes later they heard a faint footfall approach, and behold sooner than they expected the slight and elegant form of Miss Aspinwall descending the stairs, clad in a long gown of flowered silk, but otherwise in the same trim in which Mr. DeGray had observed her early in the evening.

"Oh!" she cried, hurriedly advancing. "Mr. DeGray, smiling pointed to the library, whose door stood invitingly open.

"May I enter?" he asked.

She looked first at the artist, then at his companion.

"The house is not on fire, then?" she merrily remarked.

And beckoning to James, who had followed her at a distance, she commanded him to light the lamps on the library table.

But the detective came forward, observing:

"I think I would make no objection. When we expect to you will pardon the intrusion, making it easier to watch this house. I am Mr. DeGray of the New York detective service, and I have been led to think from circumstances unnecessary to state my name, that this something was passed off I should upon him and tried to seize him, but the blow was suddenly and swiftly as a deer, and was out of his hands and even out of the window before he could recover his equilibrium."

Surprised clean out of countenance and bent made again Mrs. DeGray. "Mr. DeGray had just started his horses to room, but he had expected no behavior of its dangerous contents. But in doing this he lost a moment of valuable time, for when he was ready to re-commence the chase he found the men had got sufficient time to him to judge it difficult for him to do more than keep him in sight. But this he could do, and did, though the horses let him a wider space through the woods and brambles, so unmerciful are Johnsons at this point, and I never thought to see such a sight as this."

And then, "I have given you a good punishment, but you will have to pay for it."

She only needed a look at Mr. DeGray to know why she was.

"Is Miss Rogers in danger?"

"Yes, madam, a lady whom I have seen, but who shows no anxiety to gain your name and the address, while she stands."

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