ANY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY CAN FIND SOMETHING INTERESTING HERE TO READ

STEALTHY TERROR

By JOHN FERGUSON

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THE STORY THUS FAR

[illegible] Abercromby, a young Scotch student completing his surgical education in [illegible] entered the Café Rosenkrantz one [illegible] noticed a strange air of [illegible] excitement. In investigating, he [illegible] a large crowd of Germans in a [illegible] room evidently waiting for some one. [illegible] their expected guest arrives he is [illegible] later casts furtive glances, first [illegible] Abercromby and then at the coffin-[illegible] clock. This the Scotsman interprets [illegible] a mute appeal.

[illegible] something amiss, Abercromby [illegible] the party, which conducts the [illegible] out of the building, the leader [illegible] is Dewinski, a slim, Jewish man. [illegible] sounds of a scuffle reach Abercromby [illegible] and he comes upon the tussling [illegible] in the Keppelstrasse, but not until [illegible] a policeman has been laid low and [illegible] man shot. In ministering to the [illegible] man he finds a small cloth [illegible] which the victim wishes safe-[illegible]. "Over," he says. "Over! Over!" [illegible]cromby does not understand, but [illegible] the packet.

[illegible] next day he is visited by Herr [illegible]hauptt, who says he has come for [illegible]pers taken from Otto Henschel, in [illegible] Keppelstrasse, and gives Abercromby [illegible] 8 o'clock to return them. Of course, [illegible]cromby, realizing by Wohlenhaupt's [illegible]ness that something significant lay [illegible] the papers and the murder of Hen[illegible], refuses. He goes out to visit the [illegible] of the preceding night's events and [illegible] his return walk home is nearly killed [illegible] reckless automobile driver. When [illegible] of his would-be rescuers attempts to [illegible] through his pockets Abercromby at [illegible] becomes suspicious and wonders. In [illegible] midst of his thoughts a taxi driver de[illegible]utely refuses an aged woman pas[illegible] and vainly attempts to "pick up" [illegible]cromby—three curious events.

CHAPTER III—(Continued)

[illegible] ROOMS began to seem much far[illegible] off. I had a queer thrill of ex[illegible]tion, wondering what would happen [illegible] but keeping alert as I threaded my [illegible] along the narrow pavement of the [illegible]richstrasse. I knew better than to [illegible] the usual and direct way home. [illegible] certain that if I was indeed sur[illegible] by unseen and methodical ene[illegible] a good many traps would already [illegible] set along the route. So I did not [illegible], knowing that I was fairly safe [illegible] anything but apparent accidents [illegible] as I kept to the more crowded [illegible]oughfares. I kept on the move, [illegible] a roving eye for the various small [illegible]ents of the streets. I tried to see [illegible] I had that sense of being watched. [illegible] which one sometimes hears in works [illegible]tion, and came to the conclusion [illegible] it is a feeling one can engender in [illegible]lf by simply suspecting the pres[illegible] of watchers behind one.

[illegible]metimes in my leisurely promenade [illegible]ould stop at a corner of some shop [illegible]ow and cast a casual glance around. [illegible] not once did my eye light on any of [illegible] pedestrians who seemed to be dog[illegible] me. I tried, too, to memorize the [illegible]ple, and from time to time would [illegible] them to see if I could identify one [illegible] already seen, but I never did. If [illegible] being watched it was by people [illegible] gave no sign.

[illegible]nally I bethought me of a dodge [illegible] might draw them. There is an [illegible]rican bar just where the railway [illegible] the streets, and this bar, I knew, [illegible] two exits, a main one in the Fried[illegible]rasse and another farther down [illegible] side street that faces the railway [illegible]. Suppose I went in. They would [illegible]inly expect me to leave by the [illegible] door if they suspected I knew of [illegible] surveillance, if indeed it was not [illegible]ancy, of which I was by no means [illegible]. It was an hour at which the [illegible] was sure to be deserted. Well, I [illegible], and standing at the counter [illegible] my poison" of the approved [illegible]rican mixture. Save for two swell [illegible], lolling in graceful attitude at [illegible] far end of the bar, I had the place [illegible]yself. "Now," I said to myself [illegible] I sipped the cool iced drink grate[illegible], "we'll see if I am watched," for [illegible] that they would not dare to let [illegible] out of their sight. So I waited for [illegible] door to open. It was a thrilling [illegible]ment!

The Flower Seller

[illegible]don't know what I expected. Cer[illegible] not the figure that did actually [illegible] the door open—a little wretched [illegible]ure of a flower seller, with a dozen [illegible] of buttonhole roses arranged on [illegible] tray supported by a strap round [illegible]ck. He threw a hasty glance [illegible] and, when he saw the flam[illegible]-colored gentlemen, made straight [illegible], passing me without a second [illegible]. Evidently he knew where his [illegible] lay. I watched the trafficking [illegible]usement. So also did two other [illegible] then came in. The negro gen[illegible] did not appear to be well posted [illegible] language, and the negotiations [illegible]nducted chiefly by gesture. The [illegible]ers, though thirsty, were pre[illegible] affable and quickly detected [illegible]ce of my amusement at the [illegible] of the bar. Presently, after [illegible]ticulation and raising of eye-[illegible] the bejeweled colored gentlemen [illegible] buttonholes and the rest of [illegible]ortments, and the flower seller [illegible]ed us, beaming at his own suc[illegible].

[illegible], however, was destined to be [illegible]ed. One of the late arrivals, [illegible] turned to speak to the bar-[illegible]that, I believe, is the correct [illegible]tion—did not observe the hawk-[illegible]proach, and in extending his foot [illegible]ently tripped the man up just as [illegible] to me, so that he fell and his [illegible] were scattered on the floor. [illegible] helped him to his feet he was [illegible]dinarily enraged, and the other [illegible] hotly, and at the same time [illegible] on the fallen blooms, we soon [illegible] prospect of a nasty row. The [illegible]seller appealed to me, and the [illegible] had caused the accident ap[illegible] his friend. I was taken aback [illegible] promptness of the storm.

[illegible] so much so as to miss its [illegible]ignificance. It was all so very [illegible]airly confident that I had got [illegible]mation I sought by my entry [illegible] place. I did not stay to inter[illegible] the squabble, as no doubt I was [illegible] to do, if they were the people [illegible] I took them.

[illegible]ed as far as the Brandenbur[illegible]. The sense of being shadowed [illegible]sed in me, and I didn't like it. [illegible] before had I experienced that [illegible] and I recalled it then. After [illegible]tionally hard session in the [illegible]chool I had taken a holiday at [illegible] set in one of the valleys among [illegible]piana. One day night over[illegible] the way back after a long [illegible] the high moors. The road ran [illegible]ottom of the valley and the [illegible] so close that the branches [illegible] met overhead. There was [illegible] it like that—so dark that I [illegible] the road at my feet. It [illegible]lent as the grave, too; but [illegible], in the silence, I began to [illegible] soft voices and whisper[illegible]ound me. My reason kept [illegible] there was nothing there, [illegible]ing else in me, for which sci[illegible] yet no name, made reason [illegible] the sane being, and, taking [illegible] control, forced me to run [illegible] of that eerie place.

[illegible] that the half-forgotten ex[illegible] came back to me in the [illegible] the sense of being a [illegible] rather fatigued, but it [illegible] Physical fatigue is a [illegible]wholesome thing, and this [illegible] a faintly nauseating sen[illegible] of the mind and soul. [illegible] against Germans. Hither[illegible] sympathies were French I [illegible] that account, felt any [illegible]ity for Germans. A sort [illegible] gripped me. I turned on [illegible] neither to right [illegible] straight for [illegible]

[illegible] evening was wearing [illegible]

From somewhere within the inclosure a thrush made the quiet square resound with his liquid, flutelike notes. No one was in sight. Whatever gentry were on my heels had had a pretty sharp walk. I slipped my latchkey home and entered. Here, at any rate, was a haven in which I could be at peace awhile.

I determined to go early to bed, for it had been altogether an exhausting day. But first I would satisfy myself as to the contents of the papers in my possession; there could be no sleep until after that had been done. In the morning I might perhaps find it well to go over the town to consult with Peter Dunn, the one man, a postgraduate student like myself, in whom I could place reliance in any rough and tumble business. If I had been wise I would have gone to Peter's instead of coming home, but I was tired, and the thought of the restfulness of my rooms drew me to them; and, besides, I did not yet realize the danger in which I stood. Accordingly, it seemed to me that I could handle the affair, such as it was, myself, and have a good story that would make Peter lift his eyebrows when I told him of it afterward.

The Changed Room

So, after Trudchen had brought me hot water and I had had a wash, I entered the sitting room, determined that this time no one should balk me of my inspection of the mysterious papers. To this end I had told the girl not to admit any one, and when she said that Frau Loeb had gone to visit a sick relation and might be away till very late, if she did return that night, and that as she herself was proposing to retire, having had a busy day with the mistress of the house absent, no one could be admitted unless I myself descended to admit them, I was satisfied on that point, and readily gave her the permission to retire, for which she asked in her heavy, sullen way.

No sooner had I snapped on the light than I saw that there was something funny about my room.

I stared around a while without at first grasping what it was. The place had somehow an unfamiliar look. What was it? Then suddenly I saw. It was all so scrupulously neat, so perfectly arranged. No stray papers littered the floor and my books were all in their places. Even my MS. notes of lectures were on my desk, kept in place by the paper-weight, which was, indeed, heavy enough to be proof against a gale of wind, much less a draught from open windows, being a thing of red Aberdeen granite, a replica in miniature of the memorial erected to a deceased professor of theology, a solid, square heathenish sarcophagus from Egypt or Babylon.

My amusement, however, was short-lived when I found that, as is usual in rooms arranged by deft feminine fingers, I could not find what I searched for—the scissors to cut the finely drawn threads of my packet. Finally, I concluded that the girl must have taken them for her own use, and fearing she might be gone to bed if I hunted longer, I rang rather sharply, being in the usual state of heat that such a well-arranged room arouses in most men.

She seemed a long time in answering. I waited awhile and rang again. Down below I could hear the bell jangling and then gradually die into silence. There was still no response. Then I went out to the top of the stairs and called down, peering over the banisters. The girl certainly could not yet have gone to bed, for even if I had missed hearing her mount to her attic she had not had time. Yet down the dark well of the staircase I could see no chink of light anywhere. I called more loudly, and my voice raised echoes that were like many voices answering me. In the sudden, dead stillness that followed I began to feel that eeriness that comes over one who is alone in a house when dusk has fallen. I went back to my lighted room, my irritation gone. The girl must have gone out on some domestic errand she had forgotten, perhaps to remind some forgetful tradesman. And yet it could not be that, for all the shops must have been closed for some time.

As I stood irresolute, the precision of my room again caught my eye. Perhaps it had been searched! Not, of course, in the hope of discovering the papers—they were not such fools as to have that hope—but for some useful purpose. They are such a thorough race! No small fact that related to my tastes, habits or character would be overlooked. The precise manner in which everything had been replaced would be itself a concealment. Still, though I dismissed this from my thoughts as far-fetched, I began to be uneasy in my mind. Trudchen had never been a person to be called amiable or engaging; but it seemed to me now that she had been more sullent and farouche than was her wont. And what did this absence portend? I became restless.

Utter Silence

Where was the sense of security I had promised myself in returning to my rooms? What a fool I had been to come. I ought to have gone to Peter Dunn's when I had the chance. Then I shouldn't have been left alone in the house, trapped in it, with the long night rapidly advancing. Was it really too late to go?

I am ashamed to say it, but I tiptoed out to the landing again, and again peered down into the black [illegible] nous well of the staircase, listening intently. Dearly would I have liked to ring again; but I could not, I couldn't endure the sudden, strident clang of that bell bursting upon this silence. A[illegible] perhaps there was no Trudchen to answer. Perhaps I had done the dull, honest girl an injustice in thinking her an accomplice of these men. She herself might be a victim; and I pictured her lying extended on the kitchen floor suddenly strangled, her face blackening, the tongue protruding horribly, and that bell in violent and ineffectual motion overhead.

The intense stillness and darkness took me by the throat. There were certainly men waiting for me down there! I remembered, and now understood that prayer of Ajax when the attack came on Troy, that he might have light to see his enemies' face. Certainly I swore at myself for a fool—and still listened as I did so. I must get out of this house. Now I was sure I had been followed. No doubt remained. The place was a trap. I would go over to Dunn's. Peter was a man of mind as well as muscle. It would be quite easy yet. But the chief thing was to get away, anywhere, out of this house.

But the thought of a step by step descent of that staircase made me shudder. It was all so portentously still and quiet, and I would have thought that time itself stood still but for the loud knocking of my heart. And then, as I made a step forward, there seemed to break into the immense silence the murmur of voices whispering together down there. It was that accursed wood over again, only this time they were real! And as I leaned far over the banister to catch at confirmation my ear seemed to find it, as some voice struck a chance sibilant in a word that carried farther than the deep gutturals. Then somewhere below the stairs creaked.

I drew back as if I had been shot and, lifting my clenched fists in the darkness, cursed myself for a blind fool. I had been impervious to warnings. Incidents, full of significance, had come to me, and had fallen, like the good seed, on stony ground, had bounced off my understanding like hail off a slate roof. I had indeed put up a poor fight. Fight! there had been no fight! They had simply followed me about, and now they were going to take the papers. Incidentally they would also take my life; but that merely on account of the trouble to which I had put them, and not because it was anything to which they attached value or significance.

I stood back against the wall and waited. A sentimental sadness came over me. It was such a futile thing to end one's life so, incontinently, on a lodging-house staircase. True, I might hide myself in some corner, or cupboard, in the upper regions of the house; but I should inevitably be discovered in the ignominious shelter, and only die five or ten minutes older, my person covered with cobwebs and dust. It behooves a man to die always with fortitude, and, if possible, with dignity. Thus the coward and the sentimentalist in me.

Plans for Escape

The fact is I was pretty far through. There may be men who could pass through my recent experiences and apprehensions and show neither physical nor nervous exhaustion. A wonderful and unnatural breed! In my experience bravery is almost always connected with fear; and perhaps the bravest deeds in the history man have been done in a reaction from fear. The brave man is not the man who never fears, for there is no such man; he is the man who reacts against fear. And the difference between a brave man and a coward is simply this, that the one does and the other does not react.

The first step on the road back to sanity was made when it occurred to me that, even if I myself must be taken by these cruel and bloody men, I could prevent them from taking that which they valued most, the "Henschel" papers. With the notion of getting rid of the papers I stole back to my room. There was no fire, of course, which fact saved me from my first foolish thought—foolish because, for all I knew, to destroy the papers might be all they themselves desired. So I turned to the window, thinking to throw the packet far. It was thin and firm in its American leather cover, and would skim like a slate, perhaps even into the gardens, where it might chance to be found by an honest person.

But even as I got ready for the throw, a better course of action came into my mind. It is a fact that ever since I knew where they were there, preparing to steal on me unawares, that is to say, ever since the danger had not in it anything of that dread of the unknown which is probably man's inheritance from the stone age, when his ancestors lived in a mysterious and strangely peopled world, I had been getting back to myself. Once I saw that the danger was what men call "real" I ceased to fear it. My wits became active. There would be a fight for it yet!

Kicking off my shoes, I went and removed the three bulbs from the electric pendant which illuminated the room. Then I picked up the heavy granite paperweight and slipped behind my half-open door, listening.

Then, distinctly, I heard the stairs creak twice. I had not left myself much time. Presently there was a soft shuffle of feet on the landing, and then a pause outside the half-open door. They were perhaps at first puzzled at the darkness and silence. Perhaps they thought I had fallen asleep in my chair. Then some one entered the room. It was so still that I could hear his finger-tips passing over the wall paper and woodwork, searching for the switch, and there was a sudden, metallic click as it was found and pressed down. But the room did not leap into light! After the briefest interval I heard the second switch go down; but with the bulbs removed, there was again no result. I felt that men had come into the room, and knew that I had but to extend a hand to touch them. In that tense moment their breathing was audible, and I feared they must hear the beating of my heart.

The Attack in the Dark

I imagine they stood a while, intent, every sense strained to discover in what part of the room I was. If I only could get them separated! Then I heard a sound that told me some one had gone down on hands and knees, and was beginning to creep stealthily over the floor. I was convinced they knew the exact position of every article of furniture, and had in their mind's eye the whole contents of the room. Anyhow, the man on the floor avoided collision with the things and made no noise that would have awakened the lightest sleeper. He was making progress, too. I heard the soft sweep of his hands on the floor close to the corner in which I stood, and knew that the moment for action was upon me.

I gripped my paperweight tight—that memorial to the eminent theologian—and hurled it into the far and opposite corner of the room. It made a perfectly infernal racket as it struck that flimsy fretwork erection, for, as I have said, it was fashioned out of solid Aberdeen granite. I fancy it brought the whole erection down; it certainly laid Kaiser Wilhelm low, for I saw that his white ghostly face had disappeared.

They jumped to the conclusion that I had been trying to conceal myself behind the cabinet. There was a rush of feet across the room. I think some of them fell over the man on the floor. There were deep, guttural German oaths. Two shots rang out. They had got separated, and were as likely to kill each other as to kill me.

In the midst of the hubbub I was round the door and down the stairs in a flash. The back door was ajar. This door led out on to a narrow, cobbled alley that emerged on a traversing side street at each end. I did not at once rush into this alley, but prospected it first from the shelter of the door. And it was well I did so. There was some one standing in the shadow of the opposite wall.

As far as I could make out he was watching the upper windows. The shots and the shouting had probably drawn his attention. No doubt he thought there was good reason for supposing the guard was no longer necessary. Anyhow he come toward the door, and as he passed almost touched me where I stood, in the dark, against the wall. Had I been a minute later we would have met on the stairs. I slipped out, and ran for the exit to the street lower down, the rough cobbles hurting my feet cruelly.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

When I helped the flower seller to his feet he was extraordinarily enraged, and the other, who tripped him, replying hotly, we soon had the prospect of a nasty row. But I had got the information I had sought and did not stay to intervene in the squabble

THE DAILY NOVELETTE

The Unspoken Promise

By ROBERT DEWITT MARSTON

A BEAUTIFUL young girl formed the central figure in a cozy drawing-room scene. She had sketching material on a small stand in front of her, and the evident result of her own labor she was studiously and thoughtfully surveying, a pen and ink portrait.

It was a strong face that she had built up from memory solely—a face more of intelligence and character than real masculine beauty. Its possessor was no ordinary individual. The lineaments showed strength, pride. The eyes were clear, almost stern, yet a kindly light showed in their depths.

Anita Warden had fancied she was alone, but a mirthful mischievous face was all unaware peering over her shoulder. It was that of Mary Deane, her best girl friend, who had stolen upon her solitude on tiptoe.

"At last!" she cried, half interrogatively.

Anita started and blushed, bid the portrait under a folder and faced her friend now with less of embarrassment than a species of sadness.

"You know who it is?" she inquired softly.

"Your hero, of course!" smiled the sprightly Mary.

"He is a hero, yes," replied Anita seriously. "It is Clyde Merriel, a man, a stranger who has done for us what money and friends and kin could not do. When brother Egbert was lost in the wilds of Alaska, we learned that Mr. Merriel had been over all that territory. We sought him out to find him a careless, reckless Bohemian, a poet, writer and wanderer. He was in pawn—"

"In pawn?" repeated the astonished Mary.

"Yes. It seemed to be a failing of his to care for the unfortunate. At the poor cheap rooms he called home we found a crippled artist and two penniless newspaper men. Mr. Merriel had given them refuge. To pay rent and secure food for them he had gone to a money loaner who provided the needed cash, but insisted that the barrower remain a prisoner with him until he had turned out some travel-sketches that were readily salable."

"An original character, surely!" commented Miss Deane.

"He was grim, unresponsive when Father offered him any amount provided he would undertake the search for Egbert. I feared he would refuse. I took both his hands in mine, pleading for his aid. I felt him tremble. Just once his eyes were lifted to mine, when I told him a lifetime of gratitude, yes, of love should be his. Then, gallant as some courtier, he kissed my hand. It seemed to me that he wrung from me a sacred promise, and—I love him!"

Miss Deane gently stroked the fair head of her companion in sympathy.

"He has found Egbert," went on Anita, "and he will be home tomorrow. Oh, think of our joy! And in a month Mr. Merriel will return. He suffered some accident in reaching my brother and is in a hospital in Oregon. When he comes"—the voice of the speaker was thrilling,—"how can we ever thank him!"

Tears were in her eyes, love in her heart. Her brother had written her of the grandly heroic efforts of his rescue. Clyde Merriel had faced the rigors of a two-hundred-mile trail through the lonely wilderness. He had been attacked by wild men and wild beasts. Famished, weak, nearly collapsed, he had discovered young Warden in the hands of savages who had made of him a slave. At the risk of his life he had rescued him, receiving a wound from a poisoned arrow.

Egbert's Return

Egbert Warden came home two days later to receive a glad, loving welcome. He had one constant theme—the sterling courage and devotion of Clyde Merriel. He told of the strangely silent yet resolute bravery of the stranger who had confronted innumerable perils because—because of Anita! What else?

Anita wrote to the invalid in the hospital. She could not wait to thank him in person. She could not but show her interest in the man as in his heroic deeds. He responded by letter modestly, unassumingly. Her father wrote, too, asking Clyde to come to them, offering him half his fortune for what he had done.

It was real love with Anita. The picture of the strong resolute-faced hero was constantly before her mind's vision. His deeds had glorified him in her estimation. Then a few days later there came a shock that prostrated her.

A woman, bold, vicious, determined, came to the house one day. She asked for Clyde Merriel. Her manner disturbed Anita and she demanded to know her business with him.

"He is my husband," was the grim reply, and the woman produced a marriage certificate evidencing a marriage between Clyde Merriel and Eva Lind, two years previous.

Weary days followed, then illness; Anita was heartbroken. She shut herself in her room and would see nobody but Mary Deane. When Clyde Merriel left the hospital and returned to his friends, there was a meeting with Mr. Warden, an offer of an unlimited reward, which was proudly refused, and Clyde did not see Anita. She dared not trust herself in the presence of the man she loved.

And Clyde—all that had inspired his intrepidity and sacrifice had been a thought of the unspoken promise in the eyes of Anita Warden when he had started out on his perilous journey.

The Truth

On his return trip from Alaska, Clyde had come across a rich mining claim. He had sold it for a liberal sum. He was able to care for his friends now. They told him of the visit of a woman, Eva Lind, during his absence. It set him to thinking. She had indicated her address in another city. Thither he went and found her.

"You are Eva Lind," he said, "and I am Clyde Merriel."

"You!" cried the woman. "No! Clyde Merriel is my husband."

"You mistake," declared Clyde. "I will tell you a story."

It was brief. He who had ever sacrificed himself for others, had learned that a reckless friend had married under his name. The friend had soon repented of his act and had left his wife. Later he had died. Clyde convinced the woman of the truth of his statement. He learned from her that she had visited Miss Warden.

"Wrong enough has been done already," said the woman. "I shall write to this Miss Warden the truth."

"Clyde Merriel, poet, writer and wanderer, sat completing a travel article one week later, when some one entered the room.

It was Anita. She was pale, but lovely as ever. Her eyes bore a wearied expression, but in their depths was the returning light of courage.

"I have been ill," she faltered. "I am better now, and I have come at last to thank you."

He could read what had transpired in her expressive face. He could hope in the light of the tender gratitude she tried to tell him of.

"The day I left you," he said steadily, "I had but one wish—that you would think of me when I was away."

"Every moment!" she fluttered, and whisperingly, "Oh!"—and there she drooped her head, but not until the unspoken promise of the past was clearly emphasized as a living token of the present.

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Tomorrow's complete novelette—"The Moment's Judgment."

"DREAMLAND ADVENTURES"

By DADDY

"THE BEAUTIFUL STRANGER."

A complete new adventure each week, beginning Monday and ending Saturday.

CHAPTER II

The King Proves a Hero

(Yesterday it was told how Peggy was called to the far Northland by the King of the Wild Geese and there asked to aid him in finding his lost love, the Beautiful Stranger.)

"BEFORE I can help you find the Beautiful Stranger I must know more about her," said Peggy.

"Alas! I know so little," sadly answered the King. "But I will tell you my remarkable story.

"Some days ago—I do not know how many, for the Sun runs around in such a queer way up here that he's not much good as a timekeeper—I had wandered from my flock seeking a better feeding field. I had found this pleasant marshy lake where we now are and was scouting around looking the ground over for possible enemies before bringing my people there. The place seemed deserted and safe.

"Suddenly the silence was shattered by terrorized honks for help.

"Instantly I took quick flight, for self-preservation is the first law of the Wild Geese—a selfish law of which I do not approve but necessary if our species is to live. As I rose into the air, however, I felt that it was cowardly to run away, so I turned back to see if I could give aid.

"The honks of distress were coming from behind a clump of undergrowth close to the water's edge. As I flew over this clump a fearful sight was disclosed. There struggling in the dreadful clutches of a cruel Mink was the most beautiful Goose I had ever seen—a Blue Goose, of a species utterly strange to me."

The King paused for a moment, while big tears rolled down his face.

"The Beautiful Stranger! Oh, how awful!" sobbed Peggy.

"Yes, it was the Beautiful Stranger," continued the King. "The Mink had evidently surprised her while she was resting. She had taken flight, but was a moment too late. He had leaped and seized her by the web of one foot. As I arrived she was struggling bravely in an effort to break away, but the Mink held on tight, knowing that in a moment she would be exhausted and then would be easy prey for him.

"I knew that to go to her rescue was risking death. I knew, too, the stern, heartless law of the Wild Geese—'flee from danger.' All my instincts told me to save myself and leave the Beautiful Stranger to her fate."

"Oh, but you didn't, you didn't!" cried Peggy. "I know you didn't."

"No, I didn't," the King smiled sadly. "The minute I saw her I knew that I would willingly die to save her."

"I thought fast. I had no weapon that would avail against the teeth and claws of the Mink, but if I could force him to turn to attack me he would let go of the Blue Goose and she would escape.

"Honking to her not to give up, I dashed into the face of the Mink, buffeting him with my wings. He was a wise, crafty old Mink, however, and knew her strength was almost gone. To him a Goose in the mouth was better than two in the air, and he tried only the harder to drag her down.

"Fired by the terror in the face of the Beautiful Stranger, I made a bolder attack. I went right for the eyes of the Mink with my beak. It gave him a chance at my neck—one quick snap meant my death—but it was the only way to save my beloved.

"He saw me coming and knew what I meant to do. He was ready in an instant. Letting go of the Blue Goose, he struck savagely at me. His sudden move caused me to miss his eyes, but my beak caught him squarely on the nose. The beak was hard; the nose was soft. Behind the blow was all the strength of my long, muscular neck. He let out a squeal and jumped back. It was just a second's respite, for he instantly leaped for me again, but all he got was a mouthful of tail feathers.

"The Blue Goose mounted high into the air the moment the Mink let go. I found her terribly scared but not seriously hurt. The web of her foot had been torn a bit, but that would quickly heal.

"I had fallen in love with the Beautiful Stranger the moment I saw her in the Mink's power, but now, as she agitatedly thanked me for risking my life for her, I knew that my life would always belong to her—that I had found my true mate.

"Her beauty was beyond even my fondest dreams of love. Her head and neck were a brilliant white; her dress was a soft brownish gray, almost blue; her bill and feet were a dainty red; her eyes were a pretty brown. I gave her all my heart in instant surrender.

"As she thanked me she explained that she had become separated from her flock shortly before and was resting when the Mink attacked her.

"I asked her the name of her flock. To my surprise, she appeared distressed and hesitated to answer. Then she looked at me bravely and replied, 'I am of the Blue Goose tribe.'"

"Alas! I might have known," moaned the King.

"Why, what is the Blue Goose tribe?" asked Peggy.

"It is the bandit tribe of the Wild Fowl," explained the King. "It has been at deadly enmity with my band, the Canada Geese, and with all other Geese for many years. Too cowardly to battle other bands of equal strength, it has made itself feared and hated by raids in which it has attacked and killed such Geese as it could find in small numbers.

"I was horrified at this revelation, but my love did not waver. Indeed, it grew stronger when I found that she was an unwilling member of the bandit flock, and was eager to escape because her father had promised her in wedlock to Rusty Face, chieftain of the Blue Geese, a scoundrel whom she despised.

"Even as she told me this, a blue cloud arose from a neighboring marsh.

"'Fly, fly quickly!' she cried in keen fear. 'Here comes Rusty Face and his murderers. They will tear you to pieces.'"

(Tomorrow it will be told how a mysterious message from the sky calls the King of the Wild Geese and Peggy to rescue the Beautiful Stranger from the bandit chieftain.)

A fearful sight was disclosed

Alice Kent and the Day's Work

The Story of a Business Girl Who Would Not Fail

By MARTHA KEELER

II

I NOW entered upon dark days. Too young to realize the deeper meaning of her passing, I missed mother grievously—missed the creature comforts her hand had prepared, missed the telling of stories and the tucking into bed of nights, missed the daily companionship of one who even to the last was never too weary to listen to the prattle of a chatterbox. Grandfather was an austere man and his spinster sister, Jane, who kept house for him, shared his belief that "children should be seen and not heard." She was always complaining of my looks and lamenting that I didn't "take after" any of her relatives. Yet, comparatively speaking, she was mild. What Aunt Jane considered a calamity grandfather counted a personal affront. Indeed he eyed me with marked disfavor from the first, because of my striking resemblance to my father, who had openly defied him—who, when forbidden to set foot inside the house proceeded to meet mother at the home of friends and to persuade her to marry him, whom grandfather had branded as "the scapegrace son of a land-poor aristocrat." The "scapegrace" brand was false, but my father did trace descent through long lines of distinguished names. Mother's father, on the other hand, conscious of humble origin, affected to despise this lineage and nursed resentment against a marriage which, offending only his prejudice, left his prophecy unfulfilled. Truly it would seem that he grudged the young couple their happiness. He never answered any of their letters, never accepted their oft-repeated invitation to come and see with his own eyes how well the marriage had turned out. Even the announcements of my birth and Barbara's were unacknowledged and grandfather refused to attend my father's funeral, although afterward he did indicate willingness to receive his widowed daughter into his home.

If mother cherished any hope beforehand that the child who accompanied her would further the entire reconciliation for which she longed, that hope perished as soon as grandfather saw me. Mother loved me the more because I was so like father, but that very likeness excited grandfather's hostility. Discerning this, mother then kept me out of his way in so far as possible. After her death I soon discovered why.

At first with the spontaneity of the child of love, who wants to be friends with every one, I would watch at the window for my grandfather's home-coming at twilight and would run to meet him halfway down the hill. But the rebuff I always met marked the dawning of self-consciousness. My resentment, too, was roused by the tone of grandfather's frequent references to father in conversations with Aunt Jane which he may have thought me too young to comprehend. Aunt Jane herself, under the lifelong domination of grandfather's iron will, was only a degree less stern, though I am sure she never meant to be unkind. But it had been a long time since she was a little girl, the language of childhood was foreign to her now, and the intervening years had held no experience which would serve her as interpreter. Then, too, at her age it was hard to be burdened with responsibility for the training of a child. But there was nobody else; father, like mother, had left no brothers or sisters and neither of his parents was alive. For Aunt Jane I had scant love, but time has softened now her harsh outlines, and looking down the vista of past years I see only a woman who did her duty according to her light. Any one dependent on grandfather deserved much sympathy; and in addition I owe her gratitude, for besides sending me to the village school (where I acquired at least the rudiments of an education) and placing my little feet in the established path of rectitude, she sometimes, in a frigid fashion of her own, mitigated grandfather's severity. But the atmosphere of repression stifles a healthy youngster sooner or later, and then comes the life-or-death struggle for fresh air.

At fifteen I justified my heritage by defying grandfather.

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"CAP" STUBBS—Ma Arrived Upon the Scene Just in Time

By EDWINA