

SWEET REVENGE

By
Captain F. A. MITCHELL,
Author of "Chattanooga," "Cliché," etc.

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CHAPTER III.

"W"ILL this unkind word never heal? Time flies, and I, who should be up and doing, am engaged like a tiger walking back and forth within the limits of its inclosure."

This was my complaint as I paced my room one morning shortly after the accidental reopening of my wound. My indignation was not without cause. I had come south, as I have said, with two objects to find my enemy and to gather information. I had failed in finding my enemy, but had gained a complete knowledge of the points essential to the capture of north Alabama and was carrying it to the rear on the day I was shot. It had occurred to me before setting out that, after finishing my military mission, I might still wish to continue my search for my enemy. Besides, there were other contingencies, such as arrest or illness, which needed to be provided for. I had therefore arranged that the general's favorite scout should be at Huntsville on the morning of the 1st of April to receive any communication I might find it necessary to transmit. If I were prevented from meeting him, I was to send a messenger and had devised a code of signals by which he might be recognized. The appointed day was drawing near, I was not able to keep my appointment, and there was no one at hand to whom I could trust the message.

I chafed till I had exhausted my small store of strength, then threw myself on my couch. Little Ethel came in and, like a soft ray of sunlight breaking through storm clouds, turned my thoughts into gentler channels. She held in her hand a bouquet of flowers which, it was easy to see, she intended for me, but needed encouragement to offer. I finally induced her to do so and to admit that she had been out long while looking for them for me especially. I tried to unloosen her tongue, to induce her to confide in me, but in spite of all I could do she remained shy, and there was ever present that awe she had shown before of one who had taken a life.



"Why do you look at me in that way?" I asked.

She made no reply, casting down her eyes at my brown hand, which held her dimpled fingers.

"You mustn't dread me because I am obliged to fight," I continued. "These are war times. There are a great many soldiers in the land who think nothing of killing one another. I was looking long while looking for them for me especially. I tried to unloosen her tongue, to induce her to confide in me, but in spite of all I could do she remained shy, and there was ever present that awe she had shown before of one who had taken a life."

"Yo, Buck! Yo hidin' somethin'!" said the power of reticence. Ten to one he had been instructed not to talk to me about the mysterious occurrence.

"Buck," I asked, "who came to the house awhile ago?"

"A sick man, wasn't it?"

"No, he wasn't sick."

"I thought you said no one came?"

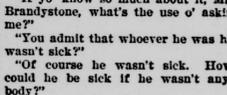
"No one did."

"Of course no one came; he was carried."

"If yo' know so much about it, Mr. Brandystone, what's the use o' askin' me?"

"You admit that whoever he was wasn't sick?"

"Of course he wasn't sick. How could he be sick if he wasn't anybody?"



"There was a sudden rustling in the hall and Helen swept into the room, her eyes flashing fire."

"Buck, leave the room!" she commanded in no uncertain tone. Buck gave a glance at his sister, which told him he had better obey, and walked out reluctantly.

"You have been listening," I said curtly.

"I have not. I was coming through the hall and heard your last remark."

"And you infer that I was trying to get a secret which does not at all concern me?"

"I must assuredly do."

"You are mistaken. I care no more for what occurs in this house than for the color of the dress you happen to wear. I had another object in questioning your brother."

"I wish to discover if he could keep a secret."

"I dare say you did."

"I have intended nothing dishonorable."

"Fudge!" She snapped her fingers and her eyes at the same time.

"You don't believe me. Very well, I don't believe that you were not eavesdropping."

"I was not eavesdropping!" she cried hoarsely. "You have the word of a southern lady."

"And I was not trying to get your secret. You have the word of a—"

"I stopped short. I had run against a snag. She gave me a glance of contempt and triumph. Her head was up, a little to one side, her nostrils dilated, her breath slow and measured."

"Miss Stanforth," I said—I was near betraying what I demanded secrecy—"I will prove to you before night—no, not before night, but soon—that I had another object in questioning your brother. I will no longer remain in a house the inmates of which—"

"I made a step toward the door."

"Mr. Brandystone?"

"Miss Stanforth?"

"In addition to snaling under false colors you are now going to endanger your life by—"

"Fudge! What is my life to you?" I snapped my fingers.

"A good deal just now. It is unpleasant to have a person die on one's hands."

"I was in no condition for this encounter. A buzzing was going on in my ears, a tingling sensation in my limbs. My knees were giving way, and I was obliged to sit down on the sofa. I looked longingly at a bottle of brandy that stood on the table, but was too proud to ask for it. In a moment Helen had poured some of the liquor into a tumbler and held it to my lips. I drank a reviving draft. She put her hands on my shoulders and gently forced me to lie down."

"This must not occur again," she said. "You have no strength to go, and I have no right to excite you while in your present condition. I believe what you tell me." She put out her hand.

"Fardon," I said humbly. "When calm, I would as soon think of accusing you of eavesdropping as I would accuse Diana of unchastity. I have been ungallant, rude—rude to a woman."

"Forget it. Lie still, and you will soon be yourself again." She sat down by a table and took up a book. "I will sit here and read while you recover your strength."

"I want to ask you one question."

"Ask it."

"Where did you come from the day the shooting occurred?"

"Huntsville."

She had asked the one question and had received her reply. I knew by her expression that she wanted to ask another.

"I suppose you were there long enough to become acquainted with the city. It's a beautiful place."

"I was there a week."

The limit of one question having been overstepped in this indirect fashion, it was easier for her to proceed.

"What were you doing there?"

"Looking for some one."

"A man?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

I did not reply at once. I was thinking of some plan by which to put an end to her catechizing.

"If I tell you," I said presently, "will you promise to ask me no more questions?"

"If you prefer that I should not."

"You wish to know why I was seeking my man at Huntsville?"

"I do."

"You will keep what I tell you a secret?"

"Yes."

"To kill him."

CHAPTER IV.

WON OVER.

LITTLE BUCK had stood my test to his retention of my well and I was at such desperate straits for a messenger that I resolved to use him. After breakfast I waited for awhile, hoping that he would come to my room, but as he did not I feared he was deterred by the atrocious Lib. I called Jackson and told him to tell the boy I wished to see him. I took a Confederate bill from my pocket and handed it to the darky, but he went off grumbling that he didn't want no Yankee money, and that he wouldn't hab no niggar o' his'n takin' money from a stranger nobody. He sent Buck to me, who came in looking somewhat astonished that I should take sufficient interest in him to call for him.

"Buck," I said, "I have something important to say to you."

"What is it, Mr. Brandystone?"

"Brandystone. Please don't make that mistake again."

"I won't, sho."

"Buck, I'm thinking of sending you on an errand, but it's a great secret."

The boy's eyes grew as big as saucers. I looked at him for a few moments to observe the effect of my announcement and then went on:

"If you should tell any one, it might cost me my life. You wouldn't tell, would you?"

"Tell! Why, sooner 'n tell I'd—rather be a—a—dead rat out in the back yard."

"I believe I'll trust you. Do you know the road to Huntsville?"

"I reckon so. I've been over it more'n a hundred times."

"Got a pony?"

"Yes; Pete. He'n, she drives him in the buggy. She calls him hern, but he isn't. He's mine. I got a big dog too."

"Never mind the dog. Could you get out your pony and ride into Huntsville?"

"If yo' promised to ask me no more questions."

"True. I beg your pardon."

Another woman would have pouted, coaxed, done everything but asked openly to have her curiosity gratified. Helen Stanforth was made of sterner stuff. She turned and looked me in the face. "He has occasioned you some great sorrow—done you some mighty wrong?"

"You promised to ask me no more questions."

"True. I beg your pardon."

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"You would also like to know whether his death would bereave any one—a father, mother, sister, brother, woman who hangs upon every word he says when he is with her and dreams of him constantly when he is away?" I spoke the words bitterly. I was thinking of my loss.

"I believe I would like to know that too."

"I can't satisfy you. I have seen him only once and then at a distance."

"Does he wish to kill you?"

"No; I don't believe he is aware of my existence."

"Singular," she murmured thoughtfully. "Then she turned and looked me in the face. "He has occasioned you some great sorrow—done you some mighty wrong?"

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Notice of Sale of County Property.

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an order of the Board of County Commissioners of said county, at a meeting held on the 4th day of February, A. D. 1917, and legal notice thereof having been given according to law in the matter of the proposed sale of certain hereinafter described property belonging to said county, the sheriff of said county will, at 10 o'clock A. M. on Saturday, the 24th day of March, 1917, at the front door of the Court House at Olympia, in said county, offer for sale at public auction to the highest and best bidder therefor, all the right, title and interest of said county of Thurston, in and to the following described property, together with appurtenances thereto, to-wit: Lots 1 and 2, Block 80, Woodland, Addition to Olympia, Lots 4, 5 and 6, Block 72, West Olympia, Lot 7, Block 6, Hodgson's Addition to Olympia, north 25 ft. of Lots 5 and 6, Block 10, Hodgson's Addition to Olympia, Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, Block 59, West Olympia, Lots 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, Block 129, Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, Block 120, West Olympia, Block 120, all in West Olympia. The E. 1/2 of the SW 1/4 and W 1/2 of NE 1/4 of section 10, Township 19 N., Range 12 E., NE cor. of tract of land in W 1/4 of Block 18, Acker's Addition to Olympia, Block 18, Cont. 6.00 ac. NE cor. of said Block 18; thence South 100 ft. thence East 100 ft. to Washington Terms of sale—Cash at time of sale. Dated at Olympia, Washington, this 15th day of March, A. D. 1917. G. E. MCKENZIE, County Auditor.

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