

# THE COAT OF CHANCE

BY ESTHER C. LUCIA CHAMBERLAIN  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARGARET  
COURTNEY AND J. HERRILL CO.

## SYNOPSIS.

At a private view of the Chatworth personal estate, to be sold at auction, the Jeweled mysteriously disappears. Harry Cross, who was present, describes the ring to his fiancée, Flora Gilsey, and her fiancée, Mrs. Harry Cross. Harry Cross, an Englishman, is a well-to-do man, and his fiancée, Mrs. Harry Cross, is a well-to-do woman. Harry Cross is a well-to-do man, and his fiancée, Mrs. Harry Cross, is a well-to-do woman. Harry Cross is a well-to-do man, and his fiancée, Mrs. Harry Cross, is a well-to-do woman.

she thought with shame, to judge of Clara's honesty when she herself was leagued with a thief? "Clara," she said humbly, before this upholder of the right, "I can't pretend I'm not suppressing things. I've only asked you to see me before you do anything or now, you've come. Will you tell me one thing—did you bring the picture with you?"

Clara weighed it. "Well, if I did—"  
"This was the considering Clara, and Flora realized whatever she could expect from Clara's honesty when she herself was leagued with a thief? "Clara," she said humbly, before this upholder of the right, "I can't pretend I'm not suppressing things. I've only asked you to see me before you do anything or now, you've come. Will you tell me one thing—did you bring the picture with you?"

gers lightly clasped around her wrist. She saw that he looked pale, worn as he had not been last night, and what struck her most strangely, angry. The hand that held hers shook with the violent pulse that was beating in it. He turned to Clara.

crashing in the shrubbery. Then, in sudden panic at finding herself alone, she fled back down the willow avenue, and burst out on the broad drive in full view of the house.



hand—something flat and small and wrapped in a filmy bit of paper. On the chaos of her feeling rose the solitary thought—the picture which she had bought that morning, the picture of Farrell Wand. She watched it drawing near her with wonder. She sat up trembling. She had a great longing and a horror to tear away the filmy paper and see Kerr at last brutally revealed. She could not have told afterward whether Clara spoke to her. She was conscious of her pausing; conscious of the faint rustle of her skirt passing; conscious, finally, that the small swathed square was in her hand.

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## CHAPTER XXII.—Continued.

"Good morning," she said, and, pushing up her little misty veil, set down with her back to the deserted breakfast table, and waited meekly like one who has been summoned.

"I am very glad you've come," Flora said. Her eyes were still all a-flutter from the appearance of that little heap of gold. She came forward and stood in Harry's place. She was face to face with the person and the question, but before the great import of it, and before the front of Clara's patience she felt helpless. There was silence in the room, perfect silence in the garden; but moving along the hedged walk all at once she saw the flutter of Mrs. Herrick's gown, and there in profile she beheld her.

"What are you going to do with the picture of Farrell Wand?"

For the first time she saw Clara startled. Her lips parted, still the breath that came and went between them was audible. But she was herself again before she spoke. "Do with it? Why, I don't know." Her fingers drummed the table. "Whatever you do," Flora began, "please, oh, please, don't do anything immediately."

Clara's eyebrows rose like graceful swallows. "You seem to anticipate pretty clearly what I am going to do for you, Clara, won't you this time make it easy for me? I'm not asking you to give up the picture, I'm only asking you to wait."

Clara put her up with the last sweet meekness of her cleverness. "Whatever it's worth to you—and him."

Flora was in command of herself now. "There are some things I can't set a price on. If it is what you have come down for, we are simply waiting for you to name it."

"What is it worth to you?"

"Oh, two hours!" Flora objected. But Clara was firm. "No, I can't bring it sooner. It will make no difference in your affair. She was panting in her excitement. "In two hours you will have the picture here. I promise you."

Flora nodded toward the window, through which Kerr could still be seen with Mrs. Herrick. "On account of him?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

Left alone, Flora glanced rapidly around her. Now for a rally, now for a dash straight for Kerr. The short-cut way was what she wanted. Opening doors lately had led to too many surprises. She pushed aside the long curtains and stepped out through the French window upon the veranda.

"What is it worth to you?"

"I do, I know as well as you that this is a part of the Jeweled. I've known it all along, and when it comes I'm going to give it myself to Mr. Purdie, but not until that time."

flashed. I nearly fainted, too, but I got a glass of water and spilled it over her and she came to slowly. By that time I had the little ring off. After a while she held up her swollen digit, and tears came in her eyes. "Jim," she said, half angry, "you've spoiled my hand. How'll I ever come up that awful finger? It looks deformed, Jim, and you're to blame. Never mind, little girl," says I. "I'll get you an emerald engagement ring to cover it. How'll that do?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

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CHAPTER XLI.

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CHAPTER XLV.

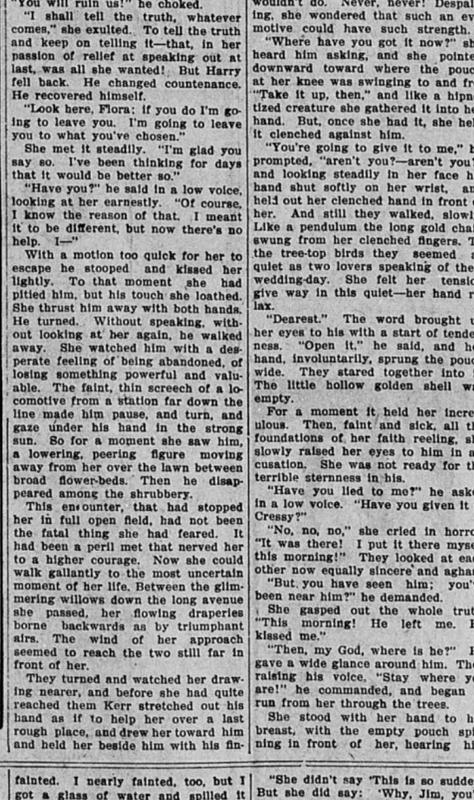
CHAPTER XLVI.

CHAPTER XLVII.

CHAPTER XLVIII.



Had Been Waiting for Him



What Is It Worth to You?



She Caught at the Chair to Save Herself.

CHAPTER XLIX.

CHAPTER L.

CHAPTER LI.

CHAPTER LII.

CHAPTER LIII.

Had Been Waiting for Him  
Newly Engaged Girl Had Decided Variation on "This Is So Sudden" Formula.  
"Women are the vain things," said the moody railroad clerk who had quarreled with "this girl" and couldn't help telling about it. Then he went on: "I've been calling on her a good while, but to-day when I got hold of her hand I noticed her third finger was swollen. I found a tiny ring on it cut deep into the flesh. She told me her grandmother, when she was dying, gave her that ring. The girl was seven then, but she's 18 now, and she never took it off. I found out the ring hurt her, so I pulled out the flat key and a nail file. I got the thin, flat key under the ring and then filed across it. She said it didn't hurt, but as I was nearly done she faltered. I nearly fainted, too, but I got a glass of water and spilled it over her and she came to slowly. By that time I had the little ring off. After a while she held up her swollen digit, and tears came in her eyes. "Jim," she said, half angry, "you've spoiled my hand. How'll I ever come up that awful finger? It looks deformed, Jim, and you're to blame. Never mind, little girl," says I. "I'll get you an emerald engagement ring to cover it. How'll that do?"