



My LADY of DOUBT

By RANDALL PARRISH

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"My Lady of the North," etc

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SYNOPSIS.

Major Lawrence, son of Judge Lawrence of Virginia, whose wife was a Lee, is sent on a perilous mission by Gen. Washington, just after the winter at Valley Forge. Disguised in a British uniform Lawrence arrives within the enemy's lines. The Major attempts a great feat and saves the "Lady of the Blended Rose" from mob. He later meets the girl at a brilliant ball. Trouble is started over a waltz, and Lawrence is urged by his partner, Mistress Mortimer ("The Lady of the Blended Rose"), to make his escape.

CHAPTER IV. (Continued.)

How I kept to the measure I cannot imagine, for, in an instant, all my house of cards crumbled into nothingness. She knew me, this blue-eyed girl, knew me, and sought to aid my mission, this daughter of a loyalist, this lady of the Blended Rose. It was inconceivable, and yet a fact—my name had been whispered by her lips.

Suddenly she looked up laughing, as though to make others feel that we conversed lightly. We passed Grant, even as I held my breath, almost afraid to venture with words. Yet they would not be restrained.

"You certainly startled me; how do you know this? Surely we have never met before?"

"I refuse to be questioned, sir; it means nothing how I know—the fact that I do should be sufficient."

"Must Mistress Claire—"

"Rather Mistress Mortimer."

"Yet the captain called you 'Claire.'"

"And we were children together—you can scarcely claim such familiarity."

"I warrant you can name me."

"Allen, is it not, sir?"

What was it the witch did not know! This was no guess work, surely, and yet how could her strange knowledge be accounted for? Sweet as the face was, greatly as it had attracted me, there was nothing to awaken a throb of memory. Surely I could never have seen her before, and forgotten; that would have been impossible. The music ceased, leaving us at the farther extremity of the hall.

"And now you will go?" she questioned eagerly.

"You mean, leave here?"

"Yes; you said once tonight, that but for me you would be riding yonder. I realized all you meant, and you must not remain. The guard lines are slack tonight, and you can get through, but if you wait until tomorrow it may be too late. Believe me, I am your friend, a friend of your cause."

"I do believe you; I could not connect you with deceit, but I am bewildered at this sudden exposure. Does Captain Grant also suspect my identity?"

"I think not—not yet, at least, for if he did you would be under arrest. But there are others here who would recognize you just as I have. There is no mystery about it. I was in Philadelphia when the Continental troops were here, and you were pointed out to me then. No, we have never met, yet I was sure I recognized you this afternoon."

"I was pointed out to you by whom?"

"My brother—my twin brother on the staff of General Lee."

"Did you not inform me your family were loyalists?"

"Yes; it is true," earnestly, her foot tapping the floor, as though annoyed at such persistent questioning. "I have a father and brother in the king's service—but one is a renegade, and I—"

"You are what?"

"I am merely a woman, sir, unable to determine whether to finally become a loyalist or rebel."

I looked gravely into her eyes until



"If I Leave You Now as You Request I Must First Have Promise of Welcome Again."

Day fell, veiling their revelation of truth behind long lashes.

"Mistress Mortimer," I murmured, bending so close to her pink ear, I felt the soft touch of her hair on my lips, "you dissemble so charmingly as to even puzzle me. But if I leave you now, as you request, I must first have promise of welcome again."

"Then you mean to return—a prisoner? I am always merciful to the suffering."

"No; we are coming back to Philadelphia victors, and soon. I am not afraid to tell you. I have learned much today, and go back to report to Washington that the exchange of British commanders means the early evacuation of the city. When we meet again you will not be a lady of the Blended Rose, nor will I be wearing this uniform."

Her eyes sparkled brightly into mine, then dropped demurely.

"I—rather like the colors you are wearing now, and am sure this dress is most becoming. I—I have a passion for masquerade."

"I recognize that, but have already discovered where I can read the truth beyond the masque—what is occurring now?"

She turned to look, attracted as I had been by the change and bustle about us. A few feet from where we stood conversing, large folding doors, previously concealed by draperies, were suddenly swung wide open, revealing a magnificent dining hall. Dazzled by the magnificent spectacle, I turned to my companion, unable to resist temptation. She must have instantly read the purpose in my face, for she grasped my sleeve.

"No; you must not think of remaining a moment longer. There will be a seat reserved for me, and Captain Grant is coming this way now. Something is wrong, I am sure; I have no time to explain, but promise me you will leave here at once—at once."

Her eyes, her words, were so insistent I could not refuse, although as I glanced about I felt convinced there was no danger in this assemblage, not a familiar face meeting mine. At the instant Grant came up, elbowing his way through the press, and staring insolently into my eyes, even as he bowed politely to the lady beside me.

"At least this is my privilege," he insisted, "unless there be another previous engagement of which I am ignorant."

"Oh, no," and she rested her hands on the green sleeve, smiling from her face into mine. "We were waiting for you to come. Goodnight, Lieutenant Fortesque."

They had taken a step or two, when Grant halted, holding her arm tightly as he glanced back to where I stood.

"Would Lieutenant Fortesque spare me a moment after I have found the lady a seat?" he questioned politely.

"Gladly, if you do not keep me waiting too long."

"Then there will be no delay. Shall we say the parlor below?"

I bowed, conscious of the mute appeal in the lady's face, yet with no excuse for refusal.

"As well there as anywhere, sir."

Once again we bowed with all the punctilious ceremony of mutual dislike, and he whispered something into her ear as they disappeared in the stream of people. My cheeks burned with indignation at his cool insolence. What could it mean? Was he merely seeking a quarrel? or was there something else concealed behind this request? In either case I knew not how to act, and yet felt no inclination to avoid the meeting. Studying over the situation I pushed my way through the crowd across the floor of the ball-room. There were a few people still lingering on the stairs, but, except for the servants, the parlors below were deserted. I walked the length of one of the great rooms, and halted in front of a fireplace to await Grant's coming. I was eager to have this affair settled, and he off. I comprehended now the risk I had assumed by remaining so long, and began to feel the cords of entanglement drawing about me. There was a door opposite where I stood, and, staring toward it, I saw it open slightly, and, back in the darkness, the beckoning of a hand. Startled, yet realizing that it must mean me, I stepped closer, gripping the hilt of my sword, half suspecting treachery.

"Quick," and I recognized the deep contralto of the voice. "Don't stop to question; there is not a moment to lose."

CHAPTER V.

The Threat of Swords.

Stepping from the glare of those gleaming parlor lights into the gloom of that narrow passage, blinded me for the instant, yet a moment later, I became aware of the distant glimmer of a candle, the faint reflection revealing the girl's face.

"Please do not talk; do not ask anything—yet," she urged hurriedly, noiselessly closing the door at my back, and as instantly gripping my sleeve. Her breath came quickly; her voice trembled from suppressed excitement. "Come with me, beyond the light yonder."

I followed her guidance, bewildered, yet having every confidence the reason for this mysterious occurrence must be fully justified. The passage curved slightly, terminating at a closed door. Scarce a reflection of the candle reached us here, yet my eyes were by now sufficiently accustomed to the gloom so that I could trace the outlines of her face. A vague doubt took possession of me.

"You are causing me to run away from Grant," I protested blindly. "You are making me appear afraid to meet him."

"No. It is not that," swiftly. "He was not coming to you personally at all—you were to be arrested?"

"What! He knew me then?"

"I am not sure—some one did, and mentioned his suspicions. Captain Grant was glad enough of an excuse, no doubt, but he," the soft voice faltering, "he made a mistake in twitting me for being friendly toward you."

"And you came to warn, to save me!" I exclaimed, pressing her hand.

"That was nothing; I could do no less. I am only glad I knew the way."

"You mean how you might reach me first?"

"Yes; it came to me in a flash when he first left me alone, only I was not certain in which parlor you would be waiting. I ran through the kitchen and down the back stairs; I helped the officers plan their decorations, and in that way learned of this private passage beneath the stairs. It was easy, but—oh, listen! they are in there now!"

We could hear voices through the intervening wall clearly enough to even distinguish words, as the speakers exercised little restraint. I felt the girl's slender figure press against me in the narrow space where we stood, and I clung to her hand, both remaining motionless and silent.

"That fellow has run, Grant," boomed some one hoarsely, "either afraid, or else what you say he is. See here, boy, did you see anyone in here lately in scarlet jacket?"

"I don't just remember, sah," answered a negro, hesitatingly. "I was busy over dar' clemm's do sideboard."

"Well, he's not here now, that's certain," broke in Grant impatiently, "and we've been in all the parlors! What next, MacHugh?"

"Try to head him off before he can get out of the city, of course. That's his game, probably. Osborne, have

I heard him telling about it an hour ago."

"Is that so? Where'd they go?"

"Covered everything, I judge, from Callowhill to the Lower Battery. Watts said he asked questions of everybody they met, but he didn't take any notes. He liked the fellow, but thought he was mighty inquisitive. Where is he now, sir?"

"The devil knows, I don't, and you'll have to find out. He'll head north-west likely; he'll never try to cross the river here. How many men have you?"

"Twenty."

"Scatter them to every north post. The fellow had no horse, and your troopers can easily get ahead of him. Hurry up now." Carter departed with click of steel, and MacHugh evidently turned to his companion.

"We'll catch the lad all right, Grant. Some of those outposts will nab him before daylight. No use our waiting around here; let's go back upstairs."

The girl's nervous grasp on my arm tightened, her lips pressed close to my ear.

"I—I must get back to my place at the table," she whispered. "Surely you know what to do; this is a rear door; there are stables a hundred feet away; you must get a horse, and ride fast—you—will you do this!"

"Yes, of course—but how can I thank you?"

"Don't try; don't ever even think of it again. I hardly know what mad impulse sent me here. Now I have but one thought—to hurry you away, and get safely back myself—you will go?"

"Yes—but—"

"Not now! there is no time for explanation, promises, anything. You heard what they said; every avenue of escape will be blocked within an hour. If you go at once you can outride them—please, please go!"

She held out her hand, and I grasped it warmly, unable longer to war against the pitiful appeal in her voice.

"If You Go at Once You Can Outride Them. Please, Please Go!"

Carter came here at once. Why didn't you nab the fellow upstairs, Captain? Fool play that, sending him down here."

"I didn't wish to create a row in the ball-room; he was with Claire Mortimer."

"Oh, I see," laughing coarsely. "Something besides military duty involved, eh?"

"I'll trouble you to be a trifle more careful, MacHugh," Grant said stiffly. "The fellow did her a small service in the afternoon, and she couldn't refuse dancing with him, as he was in uniform, and apparently all right. I advise you to drop that part of the affair. Here's Carter now."

I could hear the click of the newcomer's spurs as he crossed the room. MacHugh chuckled.

"Tonchy about it just the same, I see; however we'll pass up the lady. Carter, there has been a spy in here tonight, calling himself Lieutenant Fortesque, of the 42nd Regiment. He came through the lines this morning with despatches for Howe, I understand. Did you meet him?"

"No, sir, but one of my men was talking about with him all day—Watts;

fence alone promised concealment, and, holding my sword tightly, I crept in that direction, breathing again more freely as I reached its protection unobserved. There was a guard stationed before the stable door—a Grenadier, from the outline of his hat—and others, a little group, were sitting on the grass a dozen feet away. If they had not been already warned I might gain a horse by boldness, but the probability was that here was where Carter had mounted his squad, and I would merely walk forward into a trap. I had better chance the possibility that some visitor had left a horse tied in front, or to one of the stands. With this possibility in mind I turned, and skirted the house, making myself as inconspicuous as possible. There were soldiers on the outside steps; I heard their voices without seeing them, and was thus driven to run swiftly across an open space, memory guiding me toward the opposite pavilion. Breathless, with heart beating fast, I crouched low in the shadow, endeavoring to make out my more immediate surroundings. There were no horses there, but I could clearly distinguish the stamping of restless hoofs somewhere to the right. As I straightened up, determined upon discovering an empty stable if possible, the figure of a man advanced toward me.

"Hold on there! hold on!" he commanded shortly. "Who are you? What the devil are you skulking about out here for?"

It was Grant beyond a doubt; I would recognize the peculiar snarl of that voice in a thousand. He had not gone upstairs then; had not rejoined the lady in the dining-room. What would she think of his absence? What would she do when she realized its probable meaning? Someway I was not frightened, at thus meeting him, but glad—if those others would only keep away, and let us settle the affair between us. Here was his test—a coward would cry out an alarm, summon the guard to his assistance, but if the fellow's nerve only held, or if he hated me badly enough, he'd fight it out alone. All this came to me in a flash, and the words of challenge spoken before he even grasped the thought of who I was.

"So I have discovered you, have I? Why did you fall to keep our appointment within?"

He drew up sharply with an oath, peering at me through the dark, bewildered by my speech.

"The spy! Ye gods, what luck! Do you mean to insinuate I ran away, sir?"

"How else could I interpret it?" I questioned coolly, determined to taunt him to action. "I waited where you told me till I was tired. Perhaps you will oblige me by explaining your purpose."

He muttered something, but without comprehending its purport I went on threateningly.

"And I think you made use of the word spy just now. Did you mistake me for another?"

"Mistake you? No; I'd know you to hell," he burst forth, anger making his voice tremble. "I called you a spy, and you are one, you sneaking night rat. You never waited for me in the parlor; if you had you'd now be under arrest."

"Oh, so that was the plan?"

"Yes, that was it, Mister Lieutenant Fortesque."

"Well, Grant," I said sternly. "I've got just one answer to make you. You can call your guard, or you can fight it out with me here. Whichever you choose will depend upon whether you are a man, or a cur." I took a step nearer, watching him as best I could in the dark. "You are an unmitigated liar, sir," and with sudden sweep of the arm I struck him with open hand. "Probably you will realize what that means."

For an instant he remained so still I doubted him, even held him cheap; then the breath surged through his clinched teeth in a mad oath. He surged toward me, but my sword was out, the steel blocking his advance.

"You—you actually mean fight?"

"Why not? Isn't that cause enough? If not I will furnish more."

"I do not fight spies—"

"Stop! That silly charge is merely an excuse. You do not believe it your self. You wanted a quarrel yonder in the ball-room. The expression of your eyes was an insult. Don't evade now. I am here, wearing the uniform of the British army. I have every right of a gentleman, and you will cross swords, or I'll brand you coward wherever there is an English garrison."

I saw the sudden flash of his drawn blade, and flung up my own in guard.

"Wait; not here, Captain," I insisted quickly. "We're far too near your watchful friends yonder; besides the light is poor. Let's try our fortunes beyond the pavilion, where it can be simply man to man."

He turned without a word, and I followed, eager enough to have done with the business. The stars gleamed on the naked weapons held in our hands, but we exchanged no words until we had rounded the corner and come forth into the open space beyond.

The dark shadow of a bush,

SHARP PAINS IN THE BACK

Point to Hidden Kidney Trouble.

Have you a lame back, aching day and night? Do you feel a sharp pain after bending over? When the kidneys seem sore and the action irregular, use Doan's Kidney Pills, which have cured thousands.



A Texas Case—

J. H. Lee, 413 W. Walnut St., Cleburne, Tex., says: "For four years I endured misery from gravel. Morphine was my only relief. I had terrible pain in my back and it was hard for me to pass the kidney secretions. Doan's Kidney Pills cured me and since I took them I have been well."

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DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS
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Never judge a man by his coat; he may owe the tailor.

Mean Hint.
"Men are what their diet makes them."
"You must have been eating a great deal of sheephead fish lately."

Usual One.
"What is the latest thing which Mrs. Cooke has in the way of a pickle?"
"I guess it is her husband."

Unsophisticated.
"Darling," said the fond youth, producing a ring, "which is the right finger?"
"For goodness sake, Algy? responded the maiden, "don't you know? Nineteen years old and never been engaged to a girl before!"

Neglect and Cruelty.
"So you want a divorce?" said the lawyer.
"Yes," replied the woman with tear-stained cheeks. "He has been guilty of neglect and cruelty."
"In what respects?"
"He neglected to feed the bird while I was away and says the cruellest things he can think of about Fido."

Explains the Undertaker's Grouch.
"Who is that fellow sitting humped up and muttering to himself out there on the horse block?"
"Aw, that's Ezra Toombs, the undertaker," replied the landlord of the Skewee tavern. "He's feeling sore over the way his business has been going of late. You see, the doctor gave Judge Feebles two weeks to live; that was six weeks ago, and the judge is up and around now and figgerin' on marryin' again. Every time Ezra meets the doctor he asks him, 'How about it, bay?' and they have a row. And now he's sittin' out there watching a tramp painter gliding the weather vane of the church across the street. Ezra says, by Heck, he's about ready to move away, things is so dead here."—Kansas City Star.

Righteous Indignation.
Little Ruth was the youngest daughter in a very strict Presbyterian family that especially abhorred profanity. One day little Ruth became exceedingly exasperated with one of her dolls. In her baby vocabulary she could find no words to express adequately her disapproval of dolly's conduct. Finally, throwing the offending dolly across the room, she cried, feelingly:
"My gracious! I wish I belonged to a family that swore!"

"GOOD STUFF."
A Confirmed Coffee Drinker Takes to Postum.
A housewife was recently surprised when cook served Postum instead of coffee. She says:
"For the last five or six years I have been troubled with nervousness, indigestion and heart trouble. I couldn't get any benefit from the doctor's medicine so finally he ordered me to stop drinking coffee, which I did.
"I drank hot water while taking the doctor's medicine, with some improvement, then went back to coffee with the same old trouble as before.
"A new servant girl told me about Postum—said her folks used it and liked it in place of coffee. We got a package but I told her I did not believe my husband would like it, as he was a great coffee drinker.
"To my surprise he called for a third cup, said it was 'good stuff' and wanted to know what it was. We have used Postum ever since and both feel better than we have in years.
"My husband used to have bad spells with his stomach and would be sick three or four days, during which time he could not eat or drink anything. But since he gave up coffee and took to Postum, he has had no more trouble, and we now fully believe it was all caused by coffee.
"I have not had any return of my former troubles since drinking Postum, and feel better and can do more work than in the last ten years. We tell everyone about it—some say they tried it and did not like it. I tell them it makes all the difference as to how it's made. It should be made according to directions—then it is delicious."
Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason."
Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest. Ad.

GO BE CONTINUED