

**MRS. GAINSBOROUGH'S DIAMONDS.**  
**JULIAN HAWTHORNE**  
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CHAPTER IV.



Clasped the necklace around her throat.

Mr. Birchmore shook my hand cordially, yet I fancied that he betrayed signs of embarrassment or uneasiness. He seemed glad to meet me on my own account, and yet to feel constrained by my presence. Had he any reason for wishing to conceal from me the fact that he had a daughter? It now occurred to me for the first time that in her conversation with me Miss Birchmore had never alluded to her mother. Perhaps her mother was dead—had died in her child's infancy. Perhaps the silence concerning her arose from some other and less avowable cause: there might be some matrimonial disgrace or tragedy at the bottom of the father's and daughter's reserve. The idea had a certain plausibility, and yet I found it unsatisfactory. The true explanation of the mystery might not be worse than this, but I fancied it must be different—it must be something more unusual and strange.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," said I, for the sake of saying something, as we descended the steps down the river embankment to the ferryboat. "The world is not so large a place as people pretend," replied Mr. Birchmore. "Have you been long in Dresden?"

"A week or so. I've been doing the neighborhood and was told that Saxony Switzerland must not be left out of the list. I came near going by the boat"—(Here I suddenly recollected that if Mr. Birchmore had gone by boat, as his daughter said he had, his presence in Schandau before us was wholly inexplicable.) "How did you manage to get here so quickly?" I exclaimed; "the steamer can't be due for three hours yet!"

He looked at me in apparent perplexity, and Miss Birchmore, too, seemed taken aback rather than sharing my own astonishment. There was a pause of a few moments; then she said, in a low, hurried tone: "You know, papa, I got word that from some misunderstanding you had taken the steamer instead of the train."

"Ah, to be sure," he rejoined, with a short laugh. "I see the difficulty. You must look upon me, I suppose, as a sort of magician, able to transport myself about the country on some new telegraphic principle. Well, I'm afraid I can't lay claim to any such supernatural power. I shall lose credit by the explanation, but you shall have it nevertheless."

"No, no; give us room for the exercise of our imagination," cried I, laughing. The fact was I felt as if my query had been in some way unfortunate. There was a certain effort in Mr. Birchmore's manner and a want of spontaneity in his laugh, and the awkwardness seemed shared to some extent by his daughter. In my ignorance of the true lay of the land I was continually making some irritating blunder, and the more I tried to make myself agreeable the worse was my success.

Mr. Birchmore, notwithstanding that I deprecated it, chose to make his explanation. "Kate was right," said he. "My first intention was to go by train. Afterward I decided on the boat, and left the hotel with the purpose of getting our passage that way and sending Kate word to meet me at the landing. But the boat turned out to be so crowded that I changed my mind again. It was then so late that I hadn't time to reach the Central railway station. My only chance of catching the train was to jump into a drosky at the steamboat landing and drive as the 'kutscher' never drove before for the lower station, which was half a mile nearer. I got there barely in time, and Kate, it seems, was waiting at the Central all the while!"

have seldom beheld. His body and arms were long, but his legs were short and bowed outward. His features were harsh, forbidding and strongly marked, but there was an expression of power stamped upon them which fascinated my gaze in spite of the ugliness which would otherwise have made me glad to look away. It was not the power of intellect, for although there was plenty of a saturnine kind of intelligence in the countenance, it was not to be supposed that a fellow in his position of life would be remarkable for brains. No; this power was of another kind. I do not know how to describe it, but I believe some people would get out of the difficulty by calling it magnetic.

Whatever it was it produced a very disagreeable impression on me, and I could not but wonder that Mr. Birchmore should have chosen to take such a creature into his employ. I had the sense, however, on this occasion to keep my speculations to myself; I was resolved not to make a fool of myself again if I could help it—at least not with this particular family. I noticed that whenever Mr. Birchmore had occasion to address this man he did so in a peculiarly severe and peremptory tone, very different from his usual low voiced style. There was seemingly no great affection for him on his master's part, therefore, and certainly the valet looked incapable of a tender feeling toward any human creature.

Possibly, however, he was invaluable as a servant and his unpropitiating exterior might cover an honest and faithful heart. Only, should such turn out to be the case, I would never again put faith either in physiognomy or my own instinct of aversion. I disliked to think of this ill favored mortal being in daily association with my lovely Kate Birchmore—for already, in my secret soul, I called her mine—and I made up my mind that if ever fortune granted me the privilege of making her what I called her, I would see to it that monsieur the valet formed a part of any one's household rather than ours.

Meanwhile the ferryman had poled and paddled us across the river, on the shore of which a swarm of hotel porters stood ready to rend us limb from limb. But Mr. Birchmore put them all aside save one, to whom he pointed out my trunk and gave him some directions which I did not hear.

"I take the liberty," he then said, turning to me, "to so far do the honors of this place as to recommend you to the most agreeable hotel in it, the Badehaus, at about half a mile up the valley. These hotels that front the river would give you better fare perhaps and less unpretending accommodations, but if quiet and coolness are what you are after, not to mention the medicinal spring water and a private brass band, the Badehaus is the thing."

"The Badehaus be it, by all means." This attention surprised me, not because I mis doubted my friend's courtesy, but because I had imagined that his courtesy would not stand in the way of an unobtrusive attempt to withdraw himself and his daughter from my immediate companionship. Yet so far was this from being the case that he had taken some pains to secure our being together—for of course the Badehaus must be his own quarters. I glanced at Kate, who had taken her father's arm and was pacing beside him thoughtfully, with downcast eyes. Was she glad as well as I?

We passed through a narrow alley, between two friendly buildings, which seemed strongly inclined to lean on one another's shoulders; crossed the rough cobblestones of the little market place and, gaining the farther side of the bridge, found ourselves on a broad, level walk, which skirted the southern side of the small valley wherein the village lies. On our right hand was a series of stuccoed villas, built against the steep side of the hill; on our left a strip of meadow, with a brook brawling through it; and beyond this again the straggling array of the village and the hill on the other side. Overhead the spreading branches of low trees kept off the glare of the sun. Had Kate and I been there alone, methought the charm of the place would have been complete.

"What delightful little villas these are!" I exclaimed. "Aren't they better than any hotel—even the Badehaus?" "If you think of spending any great time here—I believe they don't let for less than a week. But probably these are all full at this season. Higher up the valley, two or three miles beyond the hotel, you will find detached farmhouses, whose owners would no doubt be glad of a lodger. If you are not broken into a traveler's hardships, though, you'll prefer the Badehaus."

"I think I shall prefer it as long as you are there."

"Well, I'm sorry to say that won't be long—we shall move tomorrow morning. If I had expected you, I—I should have been happy to have arranged matters otherwise. But the fact is, I have engaged rooms at one of the farmhouses I spoke of, and tomorrow they will expect us."

My spirits fell at this news like a feather in a vacuum, and I dare say my face showed it. There could be no doubt now that Mr. Birchmore was resolved to get rid of me. That he would go tomorrow to some distant farmhouse I did not question, but as to his having intended any such thing before he saw me alight from the train I confess I didn't believe it. It was an unreasoned-

lated expedient, and his inviting me up to the Badehaus was only a polite mitigation of the shock.

"I am very sorry" was all I could say. Kate turned her face a little toward me at the words and her eyes met mine sidelong. Only that look—she did not speak—but I saw, or thought I saw, enough in it to make our parting at such brief notice a sentimental impossibility. At whatever sacrifice of the laws of ceremony and civilized reserve, I determined that my acquaintance with her, so well begun, should not thus be ripped in the bud. I would sooner win her as a barbarian than lose her as a man of the world. How to execute my determination was a problem to be solved at my leisure.

We sauntered on to the hotel, chatting discursively; my mind was too much preoccupied to be thoroughly aware what we were talking about. Arrived at our destination, I followed my trunk to my room, having arranged to take an early dinner with my friends. It was nearly two hours before we met again. The dinner passed with the same sort of desultory conversation that we had affected during our walk. Mr. Birchmore's manner was serious and rather cold. Kate, too, was subdued and grave; not the brilliant, laughing Kate of the railway carriage. We were waited upon at table by the saturnine valet, whom his master called Slurk—a name that seemed to me to suit him excellently well. He waited on us in perfect silence from the beginning of the meal to the end, though several times peremptorily addressed by his master. There was to me something disagreeably impressive in the fellow's very taciturnity—it seemed to indicate reserved power. Kate, I noticed, was careful never to speak to him, but I saw his glance several times directed fixedly upon her.

After dinner Mr. Birchmore produced a cigar and said: "I must take a drosky over to our farmhouse. Do you young people care to come, or would you rather stay here?"

"I think I'll stay, papa, please," answered Kate. "And I, to see that nobody runs away with her," I added, with an easy smile. "Slurk, get me a carriage," said Mr. Birchmore, and nodding a goodbye to us he went out.

"How far is it from here—this farmhouse, Miss Birchmore?" I asked when we were alone. "I believe about two miles," "I should like to know its exact situation."

"Why didn't you go with papa, then?" "Can't you imagine?" She had been absent prying her handkerchief into folds in her lap. Now she looked up.

"Why do you wish to know where we are going?" "Because I've taken a great fancy to—Mr. Slurk, and I can't bear to think of losing sight of him!" I had expected her to laugh and perhaps blush, instead of that an expression of something like terror swept over her face, and she laid her finger on her lip.

"Don't talk of him!" she whispered. Her emotion had so astonished me that I could only stare in silence. Here was another mystery—or start! could it be that Slurk was at the bottom of all those strange signs and enigmas that I had been puzzling myself over from the first? I was prepared to believe whatever amount of evil concerning the fellow might be required. But what could he have done, or have in his power to do, that could so affect Miss Birchmore? Had he held her life or fortune at the mercy of a word, she could hardly have betrayed more dismay at my jesting satire.

"It's nothing," she said, recovering herself after a moment. "Only I don't like him much, and you said I wasn't expecting to hear his name just then."

"Heaven knows it is a very different name I should have expected!" "No, no!" You have amused yourself with me today and tomorrow you must find some one else to amuse you, that's all!"

"Amused myself, Miss Birchmore?" "Well, Mr. Gainsborough, I'm sorry if I failed to entertain you. I'm sure I tried hard. But it's so difficult to entertain an Englishman!"

"Upon my word, I believe you've been laughing at me from the beginning! But however ridiculous I may be, Miss Birchmore, I can have thoughts and feelings that are not ridiculous!" "Oh, please—please don't be angry. And I'm sure I never thought you ridiculous—I—oh, anything but that!"

The tone, the look which accompanied these last words made me forget caution and self-possession for a moment. "Miss Birchmore—oh, Kate! I cannot lose sight of you—I cannot lose you! Do you care—is it nothing to you if we never meet after today? Kate, I love you!"

him, seemed impelled by a power stronger than her own will to meet it, though slightly shivering at the while with pure aversion. For my own part I lunged with all my heart to kick the varlet into the hall or throw him out of the window. But prudence warned me to bide my time. If I obtained the footing to which I aspired in Mr. Birchmore's family I would settle summarily with Mr. Slurk; meanwhile I should best consult my interests by conducting myself with all due quietness and decorum. I offered Kate my arm to lead her from the room, but with a barely perceptible gesture she declined it, and walked swiftly before me through the doorway, Slurk making another deep obeisance as we passed. The fellow had a smooth, unimpeachable way of getting the better of one that made my blood boil. I commanded myself, not without an effort, and nursed my wrath to keep it warm.

When we reached the court the brass band had established itself in the little pagoda erected there for its accommodation and was just striking up, and there, sure enough, were a table and chairs awaiting us beneath the trees. But neither of us was in a humor to face a crowd of people, and by a tacit agreement we turned to the left and, crossing the little plank bridge which spanned the narrow stream that skirted the hotel grounds, we found ourselves on the high road leading up the valley. Along this we walked for some distance, both of us silent. At length the opening of a path presented itself, which climbed by a zigzag route to the summit of the pine clad hill. Into this we turned, and in a few moments were out of sight of alien eyes amid the thick growing hemlocks. The ascent was steep, and at the first turning in the path my beautiful companion paused for breath.

"Will you take my arm now, Kate?" I said. With a faint smile she complied. "Just for this once," I heard her murmur, seemingly speaking to herself. "Never again—but this once I will."

"Now, Kate," I said resolutely, bending forward so as to catch her eye, "let us have done with mysteries. No more 'never agains' and 'just this onces,' if you please! First, I want you to tell me whether you love me."

She drew her breath hard. "I can tell you nothing, Mr. Gainsborough!" "You shall not call me 'Mr. Gainsborough.' If you can't call me 'Tom,' call me nothing; but I will never be 'Mr. Gainsborough' to you again!"

"I thought we were to have no more 'never agains'!" she rejoined, with a passing sparkle of the old playfulness in her air.

"None of yours, I meant." "I will call you 'Tom,' if you please, on one condition."

"What condition?" "That you let it be 'just this once.'" "Kate, do you love me?" (To be continued.)

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 LAND OFFICE AT OREGON CITY, OREGON, April 9, 1892. I hereby give notice that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the United States land office at Oregon City, Oregon, on June 7, 1892, viz: James F. Nelson, homestead entry 877 for the lots 2 and 3 of section 26, town 4 south, range 2 east. He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon and cultivation of said land, viz: Silas Wright, Robert Wright, William White and J. B. Jackson, all of Multnomah post office, Clackamas county, Oregon. J. T. APPERSON, Register.

**Final Settlement.**  
 I hereby give notice that I have filed in the county court of Clackamas county, Oregon, my accounts and vouchers for final settlement, as administrator of the estate of Christian Wagley, deceased, and the court has appointed Tuesday, May 3, 1892, as the day for examination and settlement of the same. JOHN N. HOWLETT, Administrator of the estate of Christian Wagley, deceased. Dated March 15, 1892. 4-14-92

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**NOTICE.**  
 Notice is hereby given that my wife, Lydia D. Hoyt, has without my knowledge and consent, and the public is hereby warned against harboring or trusting her on my account, as I will not be responsible for bills of her contracting. JOHN N. HOWLETT, Eagle Creek, Oregon, April 11, 1892. 4-15-92

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**NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.**  
 LAND OFFICE AT OREGON CITY, OREGON, March 19, 1892. I hereby give notice that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the United States land office at Oregon City, Oregon, on May 10, 1892, viz: Robert McCall, homestead entry No. 602 for the north of the south 1/2 of section 20, town 4 south, range 4 east. He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon and cultivation of said land, viz: Jesse C. J. Johnson, Lyons, Michael Hollman, Job Kerns, all of Springwater, Clackamas county, Oregon. J. T. APPERSON, Register.

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 Notice is hereby given that the final account of the undersigned as executor of the estate of John Frank, deceased, has been filed in the county court of the state of Oregon, county of Clackamas. And the 3rd day of May, 1892, at 10 o'clock, a. m., has been set by said court for the final hearing of objections to said account and the settlement thereof. A. H. BURTON, Executor of the estate of John Frank, deceased. Dated Oregon City, Or., March 21 1892. MILLER & MILLER, Attys. for Executor. 3-25-92

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**Final Settlement.**  
 I hereby give notice that I have filed in the county court of Clackamas county, Oregon, my accounts and vouchers for final settlement, as administrator of the estate of Elias D. Edwards, deceased, and the court has appointed Monday, May 2, 1892, as the day for examination and settlement of the same. Dated March 25, 1892. JANE EDWARDS, ADMR. W. C. JOHNSON, Atty. 3-25-92

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**NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.**  
 LAND OFFICE AT OREGON CITY, OREGON, March 19, 1892. I hereby give notice that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the Register and Receiver of the United States land office at Oregon City, Oregon, on May 9, 1892, viz: James Ward, homestead entry No. 659 for the east 1/2 of north-east quarter of section 9, town 4 south, range 3 east. He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon and cultivation of said land, viz: J. M. Parrish, A. Harrington, E. Harrington, A. R. Felows, all of Highland post office, Clackamas county, Oregon. J. T. APPERSON, Register.

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**Final Settlement.**  
 I hereby give notice that I have filed in the county court of Clackamas county, Oregon, my accounts and vouchers for final settlement of the estate of Frederick Bookman, deceased, and the court has appointed Monday, the 2nd day of May, A. D., 1892, as the time for the examination and settlement of such accounts. 4-4-92 MARY BOOKMAN, Executor.

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