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Miss Maxwell's Heart

By A. M. Davies Ogden

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Miss Maxwell was angry. Her blue eyes blazed like stars. Her red lips were quivering.

"But it was not safe," he declared, with much dignity. "You must wait until your boy turns up."

The people, beginning to come out from the posting house, cast curious glances in her direction.

"Can I be of service?" he asked. "I speak a little Norsk. What! You boy is lost? Oh, pray take mine."

"And I am so glad you did," declared Rita later. "I would just have hated to give up our place to that horrid man, who has been trying every day to get it."

In the long evening twilight the stout Englishman, Renfrew, joined the girls. "I hope that you did not consider me intrusive this morning," he began pompously.

"Almost the first present that Sir Lionel Carteret gave to his fiancée was a tiny heart all set in diamonds, and hidden within it, neatly folded, was a slip of paper, on which was heavily penciled the word 'Taken.'"



"AND YOU REALLY DID HAVE MY HEART ALL THE TIME, THEN?"

only the very poorest rooms and bargains for all his meals, while no one seems to know his name. Curious way to be traveling—in conscious superiority.

Miss Maxwell, her lip curling, drew back. "I thank you," she responded quietly. "We, as you say, have no desire to pick up acquaintances of any kind."

But up in her room the girl's face grew troubled. It was true that she had been talking with the tall young Englishman before dinner.

"And if I had would you expect from a mere mortal resolution enough to reject the gifts of the gods?" Before this response Miss Maxwell had beaten a hasty retreat.

A week slipped by uneventfully, and as the girl dressed one night for a dinner at the embassy a sigh rose to her lips.

lighted room. There the sight of a tall young fellow caused her heart to beat violently for a second, then stop. It could not be he! But the man, turning, caught sight of her, and seizing his opportunity drew her behind the heavy curtains of a convenient window.

"No, no. The man I mean is tall, and some people might call him good looking were it not for his lack of breeding. The fellow arrived with us last week. He could not be Sir Nigel's nephew. Why, he hasn't a penny."

"Yet I fear, just the same, that it would be Sir Nigel's nephew that you mean. He left here while ago for home and then suddenly for no rhyme or reason turns back at Bergen and, as you say, arrives without a penny."

But Renfrew was past speech. Miss Maxwell, in whose eyes a dawning wonder had banished aught else, glanced swiftly at the stricken Carteret, but at his expression of mingled entreaty and conscious guilt the corners of her mouth began to curve repressively.

"And—and you really did have my heart all the time, then?" she queried demurely. Carteret bent forward. "Have I?" he demanded. "Have I, indeed?" The girl reddened.

"Of course I mean the gold one," she retorted. Carteret produced the tiny golden symbol. "I saw you in a shop at Bergen," he confessed shamefacedly. "And then I found this, and it seemed a message of hope. At least it told me that you were free. Would you have had me give it back without a try? Did your challenge mean nothing?"

"Challenge?" repeated the girl. "Is it not a challenge to fate?" Opening the locket, he showed a paper inscribed with two words, "To let." The girl, uttering a little cry, felt the color flooding even to the tendrils of curly brown hair.

"I had forgotten," she gasped. "Rita put it there one day for a joke, and I had forgotten. You opened it, then?" with keen reproach. Carteret laughed. "I had to try for some clue," he declared, with a cheerful lack of contrition.

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