

THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

By CHARLES KLEIN.

A Story of American Life Novelized From the Play by ARTHUR HORNBLow.

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On hearing Stott's name, Shirley nearly fell off her chair. She turned pale and hurried to a French hair chair. Something ominous must have happened to bring her father's legal adviser to the Ryder residence at such an hour! She thought he was in Washington. Could it be that the proceedings in the senate were ended and the result known? She could hardly conceal her anxiety and instinctively she placed her hand on Ryder's arm.

"No, Mr. Ryder, do see Judge Stott! You must see him. I know who he is. Your son has told me. Judge Stott is one of Judge Rossmore's advisers. See him. You may find out something about the girl. You may find out where she is. If Jefferson finds out you have refused to see her father's friend at such a critical time, it will only make him sympathize more deeply with the Rossmores, and you know sympathy is akin to love. That's what you want to avoid, isn't it?"

Ryder still held the telephone, hesitating what to do. What she said sounded like good sense.

"Upon my word!" he said. "You may be right and yet—"

"Am I to help you or not?" demanded Shirley. "You said you wanted a woman's wit."

"Yes," said Ryder, "but still—"

"Then you had better see him," she said emphatically.

Ryder turned to the telephone.

"Hello, Jenkins, are you there? Show Judge Stott up here." He laid the receiver down and turned again to Shirley.

"That's one thing I don't like about you," he said. "I allow you to decide against me, and then I agree with you." She said nothing, and he went on looking at her admiringly. "I predict that you'll bring that boy to your feet within a month. I don't know why, but I seem to feel that he is attracted to you already. Thank heaven! You haven't a lot of troublesome relations. I think you said you were almost alone in the world. Don't look so serious," he added laughing. "Jeff is a fine fellow and, believe me, an excellent catch as the world goes."

Shirley raised her hand as if entreating him to desist.

"Oh, don't—don't—please! My position is so false! You don't know how false it is!" she cried.

At that instant the library door was thrown open and the butler appeared, ushering in Stott. The lawyer looked anxious, and his disheveled appearance indicated that he had come direct from the train. Shirley scanned his face narrowly in the hope that she might read there what had happened. He walked right past her, giving no sign of recognition, and advanced directly toward Ryder, who had risen and remained standing at his desk.

"Perhaps I had better go?" ventured Shirley, although tortured by anxiety to hear the news from Washington.

"No," said Ryder quickly. "Judge Stott will detain me but a very few moments."

Having delivered himself of this delicate hint, he looked toward his visitor as if inviting him to come to the point as rapidly as possible.

"I must apologize for intruding at this unseasonable hour, sir," said Stott, "but time is precious. The senate meets tomorrow to vote. If anything is to be done for Judge Rossmore it must be done tonight."

"I fail to see why you address yourself to me in this matter, sir," replied Ryder, with asperity.

"As Judge Rossmore's friend and counsel," answered Stott, "I am impelled to ask your help at this critical moment."

"The matter is in the hands of the United States senate, sir," replied Ryder coldly.

"They are against him!" cried Stott. "No, the senator I've spoken to holds a different view for him. If he is convicted, it will mean his death. Ineb by his life is leaving him. The only thing that can save him is the good news of the senate's refusal to find him guilty."

Stott was talking so excitedly and loudly that neither he nor Ryder heard the low moan that came from the corner of the room where Shirley was standing listening.

"I can do nothing," repeated Ryder coldly, and he turned his back and began to examine some papers lying on his desk as if to notify the caller that the interview was ended. But Stott was not so easily discouraged. He went on:

"As I understand it, they will vote on strictly party lines, and the party in power is against him. He's a marked man. You have the power to help him." Heedless of Ryder's gesture of impatience, he continued: "When I left his bedside tonight, sir, I promised to return to him with good news. I have told him that the senate ridicules the charges against him. I must return to him with good news. He is very ill tonight, sir." He halted for a moment and glanced in Shirley's direction, and, slightly raising his voice so she might hear, he added, "If he gets worse, we shall send for his daughter."

"Where is his daughter?" demanded Ryder, suddenly interested.

"She is working in her father's interests," replied Stott, and, he added

emphatically, "I believe with some hope of success."

He gave Shirley a quick, questioning look. She nodded affirmatively. Ryder, who had seen nothing of this byplay, said with a sneer:

"Surely you didn't come here tonight to tell me this?"

"No, sir, I did not." He took from his pocket two letters—the two which Shirley had sent him—and held them out for Ryder's inspection. "These letters from Judge Rossmore to you," he said, "show you to be acquainted with the fact that he bought those shares as an investment—and did not receive them as a bribe."

When he caught sight of the letters and he realized what they were, Ryder changed color. Instinctively his eyes sought the drawer on the left hand side of his desk. In a voice that was unnaturally calm he asked:

"Why don't you produce them before the senate?"

"It was too late," explained Stott, handing them to the financier. "I received them only two days ago. But if you come forward and declare—"

Ryder made an effort to control himself.

"I'll do nothing of the kind. I refuse to move in the matter. That is final. And now, sir," he added, raising his voice and pointing to the letters, "I wish to know how comes it that you own your possession private correspondence addressed to me?"

"That I cannot answer," replied Stott promptly.

"From whom did you receive these letters?" he asked Ryder.

Stott was dumb, while Shirley clutched at her chair as if she would fall. The financier repeated the question.

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worked on his sympathy and he—he took these letters for her sake, not to injure you. Oh, you must make some allowance for him! One's sympathy gets aroused in spite of oneself. Even I feel sorry for—these people."

"Don't," replied Ryder grimly; "sympathy is often weakness. Ah, there you are!" turning to Jefferson, who entered the room at that moment.

"You sent for me, father?"

"Yes," said Ryder senior, holding up the letters. "Have you ever seen these letters before?"

Jefferson took the letters and examined them. Then he passed them back to his father and said frankly:

"Yes, I took them out of your desk and sent them to Mr. Stott in the hope they would help Judge Rossmore's case."

Ryder restrained himself from proceeding to actual violence only with the greatest difficulty. His face grew white as death, his lips were compressed, his hands twitched convulsively, his eyes flashed dangerously. He took another cigar to give the impression that he had himself well under control, but the violent trembling of his hands as he lit it betrayed the terrible strain he was under.

"So," he said, "you deliberately sacrificed my interests to save this woman's father—you hear him, Miss Green? Jefferson, my boy, I think it time you and I had a final accounting."

Shirley made a motion as if about to withdraw. He stopped her with a gesture.

"Please don't go, Miss Green. As the writer of my biography you are sufficiently well acquainted with my family affairs to warrant your being present at the epilogue. Besides, I want an excuse for keeping my temper. Sit down, Miss Green."

Turning to Jefferson, he went on:

"For your mother's sake, my boy, I have overlooked your little eccentricities of character. But now we have arrived at the parting of the ways—you have gone too far. The one aspect of this business I cannot overlook is your willingness to sell your own father for the sake of a woman."

"My own father," interrupted Jefferson bitterly, "would not hesitate to sell me if his business and political interests warranted the sacrifice!"

Shirley attempted the role of peacemaker. Appealing to the younger man she said:

"Please don't talk like that, Mr. Jefferson. Then she turned to Ryder senior: "I don't think your son quite understands you, Mr. Ryder, and, if you will pardon me, I don't think you quite understand him. Do you realize that there is a man's life at stake—that Judge Rossmore is almost at the point of death and that favorable news from the senate tomorrow is perhaps the only thing that can save him?"

"Ah, I see," sneered Ryder senior. "Judge Stott's story has aroused your sympathy."

"Yes, I—I confess my sympathy is aroused. I do feel for this father whose life is slowly ebbing away—whose strength is being sapped hourly by the thought of the disgrace—the injustice that is being done him! I do feel for the wife of this suffering man!"

"Ah, it's a complete picture!" cried Ryder mockingly. "The dying father, the sorrowing mother—and the daughter, what is she supposed to be doing?"

"She is fighting for her father's life," cried Shirley, "and you, Mr. Jefferson, should have pleaded—pleaded—not demanded. It's no use trying to combat your father's will."

"She is quite right, father. I should have implored you. I do so now. I ask you for God's sake to help us!"

Ryder was grim and silent. He rose from his seat and paced the room, puffing savagely at his cigar. Then he turned and said:

"His removal is a political necessity. If he goes back on the bench every petty official will think he has a special mission to tear down the structure that hard work and capital have erected. No, this man has been especially conspicuous in his efforts to block the progress of amalgamated interests."

"And so he must be sacrificed?" cried Shirley indignantly.

"He is a meddling man," insisted Ryder, "and—"

"He is innocent of the charges brought against him," urged Jefferson.

"Mr. Ryder is not considering that point," said Shirley bitterly. "All he can see is that it is necessary to put this poor old man in the public pillory, to set him up as a warning to others of his class not to act in accordance with the principles of truth and justice—not to dare to obstruct the car of Juggernaut set in motion by the money gods of the country!"

"It's the survival of the fittest, my dear," said Ryder coldly.

"Oh," cried Shirley, making a last appeal to the financier's heart of stone, "use your great influence with this governing body for good, not evil! Urge them to vote not in accordance with party policy and personal interest, but in accordance with their consciences—in accordance with truth and justice! Ah, for God's sake, Mr. Ryder, don't permit this foul injustice to blot the name of the highest tribunal in the western world!"

Ryder laughed cynically.

"By Jove! Jefferson, I give you credit for having secured an eloquent advocate!"

"Suppose," went on Shirley, ignoring his taunting comments, "suppose this daughter promises that she will never—never see your son again—that she will go away to some foreign country?"

"No!" burst in Jefferson. "Why should she? If my father is not man enough to do a simple act of justice without bartering a woman's happiness and his son's happiness, let him find comfort in his self-justification!"

Shirley, completely unnerved, made a

move toward the door, unable longer to bear the strain she was under. She tottered as though she would fall. Ryder made a quick movement toward his son and took him by the arm. Pointing to Shirley, he said in a low tone:

"You see how the girl pleads your cause for you! She loves you, my boy!" Jefferson started. "Yes, she does," pursued Ryder senior. "She's worth a thousand of the Rossmore woman. Make her your wife, and I'll—"

"Make her my wife!" cried Jefferson joyously. He stared at his parent as if he thought he had suddenly been bereft of his senses.

"Make her my wife?" he repeated incredulously.

"Well, what do you say?" demanded Ryder senior.

The young man advanced toward Shirley hands outstretched.

"Yes, yes, Shir—Miss Green, will you?" Seeing that Shirley made no sign, he said: "Not now, father. I will speak to her later."

"No, no; tonight—at once!" insisted Ryder. Addressing Shirley, he went on: "Miss Green, my son is much affected by your disinterested appeal in his behalf. He—he—you can save him from himself. My son wishes you—he asks you to become his wife! Is it not so, Jefferson?"

"Yes, yes, my wife!" advancing again toward Shirley.

The girl shrank back in alarm.

"No, no, no, Mr. Ryder, I cannot; I cannot!" she cried.

"Why not?" demanded Ryder senior appealingly. "Ah, don't—don't decide hastily!"

Shirley, her face set and drawn and keen mental distress showing in every line of it, faced the two men, pale and determined. The time had come to reveal the truth. This masquerade could go on no longer. It was not honorable either to her father or to herself. Her self respect demanded that she inform the financier of her true identity.

"I cannot marry your son with these lies upon my lips!" she cried. "I cannot go on with this deception. I told you you did not know who I was, my people were. My story about them, my name, everything about me is false, every word I have uttered is a lie, a fraud, a cheat! I would not tell you now, but you trusted me and are willing to entrust your son's future, your family honor in my keeping, and I can't keep back the truth from you. Mr. Ryder, I am the daughter of the man you hate. I am the woman your son loves. I am Shirley Rossmore!"

[Continued next week.]

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