



Courtesy, Inc. by Bet Mate.

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"I need not inform so old a soldier as Col. Lagrange that the aiding, abetting, and even receiving information from a spy or traitor within one's lines is an equally dangerous service."

"Perhaps you would like to satisfy yourself, general," said Col. Lagrange, with an ironical laugh. "Pray do not hesitate on account of our uniform! Search us if you like."

"Not on entering my lines, colonel," replied Brant, with quiet significance.

Lagrange's cheek flushed. But he recovered himself quickly, and with a formal bow, said: "You will then perhaps let me know your pleasure?"

"My duty, colonel, is to keep you both close prisoners here until I have an opportunity to forward you to the division commander with a report of the circumstances of your arrest. That I propose to do. How soon I may have that opportunity—or if I am ever to have it—continued Brant, fixing his clear eyes significantly on Lagrange.

"depends upon the chances of war, which you probably understand as well as I do."

"We should never think of making any calculation on the action of an officer of such infinite resources as Gen. Brant," said Lagrange, politely.

"You will no doubt have an opportunity of stating your own case to the division commander," continued Brant, with an unmoved face. "And," he continued, turning for the first time to Capt. Faulkner, "when you tell the commander what I believe to be the fact—from your name and resemblance—that you are a relation of the young lady who for the last three weeks has been an inmate of this house under a pass from Washington—you will, I have no doubt, favorably explain your own propinquity to my lines."

"My sister, Tillie," said the young officer, impulsively. "But she is no longer here. She passed through the lines back to Washington yesterday. No," he added, with a light laugh, "I'm afraid that excuse won't count for to-day."

A sudden frown upon the face of the elder officer, added to the perfect ingenueness of Faulkner's speech, satisfied Brant that he had not only elicited the truth, but that Miss Faulkner had been successful! Nor did he doubt that his suggestion that her relationship to the young officer would incline the division commander to look leniently upon his fate—and he felt a singular satisfaction in thus being able to serve her. Of the real object of the two men before him he was convinced; they were "the friends" of his wife who were waiting for her outside the lines! Chance alone had saved her from being arrested with them, with the consequent exposure of her treachery before his own men—who as yet had no proof of her guilt, nor any suspicion of her actual identity. Nor was his own chance of conveying her with safety beyond his lines affected by this; the prisoners dare not reveal what they knew of her, and it was with a grim triumph that he thought of compassing her escape without their aid. Nothing of this, however, was visible in his face, which the younger man watched with a kind of boyish curiosity, while Col. Lagrange regarded the thenceforth a politely-repressed yawn. "I regret," concluded Brant, as he summoned the officer of the guard, "that I shall have to deprive you of each other's company during the time that you are here—but I shall see that you, separately, want for nothing in your confinement."

"If this is with a view to separate interrogatory, general, I can retire now," said Lagrange, rising with ironical politeness.

"I believe I have all the information I require," returned Brant, with undisturbed composure. Giving the necessary orders to his subaltern, he acknowledged with equal calm the formal salutes of the two prisoners as they were led away and returned quickly to his bedroom above. He paused instinctively for a moment before the closed door and listened. There was no sound from within. He unlocked the door and opened it.

So quiet was the interior that for an instant, without glancing at the bed, he cast a quick look at the window, which, till then, he had forgotten, and which he remembered gave egress upon the veranda roof. But it was still closed, and as he approached the bed he saw his wife still lying there in the attitude in which he had left her. But her eyes were ringed and slightly flushed, as if with recent tears.

It was, perhaps, this circumstance that softened his voice, still harsh with command, as he said:

"I suppose you know those two men?"

"Yes."

"And that I have put it out of their power to help you?"

"I do."

There was something so strangely submissive in her voice that he again looked suspiciously at her. But he was shocked to see that she was quite pale now, although the fire had gone out of her eyes.

"You my own—and this is the first time I have seen you since we parted."

"I mean to say that the existence of a confederate spy between this camp and the division headquarters is sufficiently well known to us to justify the strongest action."

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"She is here."

"Here?"

"Yes."

"How do you know it?" he asked, in quick suspicion.

"She was not to leave this place until she knew I was safe within our lines. I have some friends who are faithful to us." After a pause she added: "She has been already."

He looked at her, startled. "Impossible—I—"

"You locked the door. Yes, but she has a second key. And even if she had not there is another entrance from that closet. You do not know this house; you have been here two weeks; I spent two years of my life, as a girl, in this room."

An indescribable sensation came over him; he remembered how he had felt when he first occupied it; this was followed by a keen sense of shame on reflecting that he had been, ever since, but a helpless puppet in the power of his enemies, and that she could have escaped if she would, even now.

"Perhaps," he said, grimly, "you have already arranged your plans."

She looked at him with a singular reproachfulness even in her submission. "I have only told her to be ready to change clothes with me and help me color my face and hands at the time appointed. I have left the rest to you."

"Then this is my plan. I have changed only a detail. You and she must both leave this house at the same time, by different exits, and one of them must be private—and unknown to my men. Do you know of such a one?"

"Yes," she said, "beside the negro quarters."

"Good," he replied. "That will be your way out. She will leave here publicly, through the quarters, armed with a pass from me. She will be overhauled and challenged by the first sentry, near the guard house, below the wall. She will be subjected to some delay and scrutiny, which she will, however, be able to pass better than you would. This will create the momentary diversion that we require. In the meantime, you will have left the house by the wing, and you will then keep in the shadow of the hedge until you can drop down along the run, where it empties into the swamp. That," he continued, fixing his keen eyes upon her, "is the weak point in the position of this place, that is neither overlooked nor defended. But, perhaps," he added again, grimly, "you already know it?"

"It is the marsh where the flowers grow, near the path where you met Miss Faulkner. I had crossed the marsh to give her a letter," she said, slowly.

A bitter smile came over Brant's face, but passed as quickly.

"Enough," he said, quietly, "I will meet you beside the run and cross the marsh with you until you are within hailing distance of your lines. I will be in plain clothes, Alice," he went on, slowly, "for it will not be the commander of this force who accompanies you, but your husband, and, without disgracing his uniform, he will at least be your equal, for the instant he passes his own lines, in disguise, he will become like you, a spy, and amenable to its penalties."

Her eyes seemed suddenly to leap up to his with that strange look of awakening and enthusiasm which he had noted before. And in its complete prepossession of all her instincts she rose from the bed, unbuttoning her bare arms and shoulders and loosened hair, and stood upright before him. For an instant, husband and wife stood beside each other as unreservedly as in the nuptial chamber of Robles.

"When shall I go?"

He glanced through the window, already growing lighter with the coming dawn. The relief would pass in a few moments; the time seemed propitious.

"At once," he said. "I will send Rose to you."

But she had already passed into the closet, and was tapping upon some inner door. He heard the sound of hinges turning and the rustling of garments. She reappeared, holding the curtains of the closet together, with her hand and said: "Go! When she comes to your office for the pass, you will know that I have gone."

He turned away. "Stop!" she said faintly.

He turned back. Her expression had again changed. Her face was deadly pale; a strange tremor seemed to have taken possession of her. She dropped the curtain. Her beautiful arms moved slightly forward; it seemed to him that she would in the next moment have extended both her hands. But even then she said hurriedly: "Go! Go!" and slipped again behind the curtain.

He quickly descended the stairs as the sound of trampling feet on the road and the hurried word of command announced the return of the scouting party. The officer had little report to make, beyond the fact that a morning mist, creeping along the valley, prevented any further observation, and bade fair to interrupt their own communications with the camp. Everything was quiet in the west, although the enemy's lines along the ridge seemed to have receded.

Brant had listened impatiently, for a new idea had seized him. Hooker was of the party, and was the one man in the party in whom he could rely for cunning and coolness. He had

once made his way to the commissary wagons, one of which he knew Hooker used as a tent. Hastily telling him that he wished to visit the pickets without recognition, he induced him to lend him his slouched hat and frock coat, leaving with him his own distinguishing tunic, hat and sword. He resisted the belt and pistols which Hooker would have forced upon him. As he left the wagon he was half-amusedly conscious that his old companion was characteristically examining the garments he had left behind with mingled admiration and envy. But he did not know, as he slipped out of the camp, that Mr. Hooker was quietly trying them on, before a broken mirror in the wagon head.

The gray light of that summer morning was already so strong that to avoid detection he quickly dropped into the shadow of the gully that sloped towards the run. The hot mist, which scouts had seen was now lying like a tranquil sea between him and the pickets of the enemy's rear guard, which it seemed to submerge, and was clinging in moist tenuous swaths—like dew on out cotton wool—along the ridge, half obliterating its face. From the valley in the rear it was already stealing in a thin white line up the slope like the advance of a ghostly column, with a stealthiness that, in spite of himself, touched him with superstitious significance. A warm perfume, languid and treacherous, as from the swamp magnolia seemed to rise from the half hidden marsh. An ominous silence that appeared to be a part of this veiling of all things under the clear, opal tinted sky above was so little like the hush of rest and peace that he half yearned for the outburst of musketry and tumult of attack that might dispel it. All that he had ever heard or dreamed of the incursions south, with its languid subtleties of climate, and of race, seemed to encompass him here.

But the next moment he saw the figures he was waiting for stealing towards him from the shadow of the gully beneath the negro quarters.

Even in that uncertain light there was no mistaking the tall figure, the gaudily striped, clinging gown and turbaned head. And then a strange revelation of feeling, quite characteristic of the emotional side of his singular temperament, overcame him. He was taking leave of his wife—the dream of his youth—perhaps forever! It should be no parting in anger as at Robles; it should be with a tenderness that would blot out their past in their separate memories—God knows! It might be even a parting that at that moment was a joining of them in eternity. In his momentary exaltation it even struck him that it was a duty, no less sacred, no less unselfish than the one to which he had devoted his life. The light was growing stronger; he could hear voices in the nearest picket line, and the

sound of a cough in the invading mist. He made a hurried sign to the oncoming figure to follow him, ran ahead and halted at last in the cover of a hackmatack bush. Still gazing forward over the marsh, he steadily held out his hand behind him, as the rustling skirt came nearer. At last his hand was touched—but even at that touch he started, and turned quickly.

It was not his wife, but Rose!—her mulatto double! Her face was rigid with fright, her beady eyes staring in their china sockets; her white teeth chattering. Yet she would have spoken.

"Hush!" he said, clutching her hand, in a fierce whisper. "Not a word!" She was holding something white in her fingers; he snatched it quickly. It was a note from his wife—not in the disguised hand of her first warning, but in one that he remembered as if it were a voice from their past.

"Forgive my disobeying you to save you from capture, disgrace or death—which would have come to you where you were going! I have taken Rose's pass. You need not fear that your honor will suffer by it, for if I am stopped I shall confess that I took it from her. Think no more of me, Clarence, but only for yourself. You are in danger."

He crushed the letter in his hand. "Tell me," he said, in a fierce whisper, seizing her arm, "and speak low. When did you leave her?"



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rying to their posts, and knew that he was hopelessly surprised and surrounded.

He ran forward among his disorganized men. To his consternation no one seemed to heed him! Then the remembrance of his disguise flashed upon him. But he had only time to throw away his hat and snatch a sword from a falling lieutenant before a scorching flash seemed to pass before his eyes and burn through his hair, and he dropped like a log beside his subaltern.

An aching under the bandage around his head, where the spent bullet had grazed his scalp, and the sound of impossible voices in his ears were all he knew as he struggled slowly back to consciousness again. Even then it still seemed a delusion, for he was lying in the hospital of the headquarters, with officers of the division staff around him, and the division commander himself standing by his cot, and regarding him with an air of grave, but not unkindly concern. But the wounded man felt instinctively that it was not the effect of his physical condition, and a sense of shame came suddenly over him, which was not dissipated by his superior's words. For, motioning the others aside, the major general leaned over his cot, and said:

"Until a few months ago the report was that you had been captured in the first rush of the rear guard, which we were rolling up for your attack, and when you were picked up, just now, in plain clothes on the slope, you were not

recognized. The one thing seemed to be as improbable as the other," he added, significantly.

The miserable truth flashed across Brant's mind. Hooker must have been captured in his clothes—perhaps in some extravagant sally—and had not been recognized in the confusion by his own officers. Nevertheless he raised his eyes to his superior.

"You got my note?"

The general's brow darkened. "Yes," he said, slowly, "but finding you thus unprepared—I had been thinking just now that you had been deceived by that woman—or by others—and that it was a clumsy forgery. He stopped, and seeing the hopeless bewilderment in the face of the wounded man, added, more kindly: "But we will not talk of that in your present condition. The doctor says a few hours will put you straight again. Get strong—for I want you to lose no time—for your own sake—to report yourself at Washington."

"Report myself—at Washington!" repeated Brant, slowly.

"That was last night's order," said the commander, with military correctness. Then he burst out: "I don't understand it, Brant! I believe you have been misunderstood, misrepresented, perhaps maligned—and I shall make it my business to see the thing through—but these are the department orders. And for the present—I am sorry to say you are relieved of your command."

He turned away, and Brant closed his eyes. With it it seemed to him that he closed his career. No one would ever understand his explanation—even had he been tempted to give it, and he knew he never would. Everything was over now. Even this wretched bullet had not struck him fairly, and culminated his fate as it might. For an instant he recalled his wife's last offer to fly with him beyond the seas—beyond this cruel injustice—but even as he recalled it he knew that flight meant the worst of all—a half confession. But she had escaped. Thank God for that! Again and again, in his hopeless perplexity, this comfort returned to him. He had saved her. He had done his duty. And harping upon this in his strange fatalism, it at last seemed to him that this was for what he had lived, for what he had suffered, for what he had fitly ended his career. Perhaps it was left for him now to pass his remaining years in forgotten exile, even as his father had, his father—his breath came quickly at the thought—(God knows, perhaps as wrongfully accused. It may have been a providence that she had borne no child, to whom this dreadful heritage could be transmitted.

(To be continued.)

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CORVALLIS, June 17, 1893.  
H. L. WALDEN, H. B. LOWMAN,  
Agent, Albany. Agent, Corvallis.

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