

# The Imprudence of Prue

## A Tale of a Maid and a Highwayman

### By Sophie Fisher

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**SYNOPSIS.**  
In the time of Queen Anne, Lady Prudence Brook, widowed at 16 and still a widow at twenty, while journeying in a coach to London with her cousin Peggy, is accosted by a highwayman who, however, takes nothing from her except a kiss.

CHAPTER III—(Continued.)  
"Dearest Prue, pardon me for suggesting anything that could for one moment distress you; it was but my eagerness to punish the scoundrel for his crimes. Let us relegate him to oblivion. Such subjects are not for the lips and ears of Beauty. Tell me, sweet Prue, when may I see you? Drumloch and I implore her sanction to my suit."

"I have already broken the matter to her," replied Prue, "but, as we anticipated, without any great success, at present. She is, as you know, an ardent Jacobite and cannot be expected to approve your politics, which are considerably more important to her than my happiness. Mayhap, when she becomes acquainted with you she may blame me less. You must exercise your eloquence on her as you did on me," she added, with a coquettish smile, "and then I think I can safely leave our cause in your hands. My prayers shall accompany you, and if necessary we will kneel side by side and implore the ancestral benediction."

### CHAPTER IV.

#### THE MONEY LENDER INTERVENES.

Either her hysterics or her gout kept my Lady Drumloch in her chamber long enough to try the pretence of Prudence Brooke. Sir Geoffrey, secure of his bride, was less impatient, for after all, the grandmother's consent was a mere matter of form, although he had reasons—upon which he did not elaborate—for wishing to propitiate the old lady, and secure her good graces.

He came to Mayfair as frequently as his parliamentary duties permitted, and never without sending up to the sick room the most sympathetic messages, accompanied by bouquets of rare flowers, baskets of hot house fruit and dainty porcelain or enameled boxes of French bon bons, and his gifts to Louton were as lavish, though of a different character.

Finding no abatement in her grandmother's austerity, about a week after Sir Geoffrey's arrival, Lady Prudence ordered a chair, and concealing as many of her charms as could be hidden by a cloak and hood, made a pilgrimage to the city.

Almost under the shadow of Aldgate church, at the entrance of a narrow court, of quiet appearance but sinister reputation, lived a certain Mr. Moses Aarons, reputed fabulously wealthy. Few were the gay inheritors of paternal acres to whom the little office of Aldgate was unfamiliar, and in the safes and deed boxes that encumbered the upper floors of the dingy house many a bond and mortgage told a history of vast estates held by a hair, and noble fortunes of which little remained but the name.

Mr. Aarons was a man of unpretending appearance, with very little about him to suggest the Jew money lender. Immaculately dressed, in a suit of fine plum-colored cloth, with silk stockings of the same hue, and wearing his own iron gray hair slightly powdered, and gathered in a black ribbon, he might have passed for a respectable lawyer or merchant, had not some suggestion of power in his smooth voice and heavily lidded eye, belied the modesty of his appearance.

The chair of a fine lady was no unaccustomed object at his door—nor, indeed, was the Viscountess Brooke a stranger. When his clerk bowed the lady into Mr. Aarons's sanctum, he rose to greet her, and returned her sweeping courtesy with a bow as ceremonious. "My Lady Brooke! This is, indeed, a condescension," he said. "My poor place is not adapted for the entertainment of such fashion and beauty."

"Most excellent Aarons," cried Prue, "a little haughtily, 'a truce to your compliments, which are only meant in ridicule, I fear.' She threw back her hood, however, not disdaining to try the full effect of her charms upon this Jew, from whom she had come to cajole a few hundred pounds, if possible, without security.

"Your ladyship's long absence from London had surely been to some magic spring," said the usurer, with an exaggerated deference that bordered on insolence. "We heard you were breaking squirrels' hearts in Yorkshire, but I saw 'twas some southern sun that has been ripening the peaches on your cheeks."

Prue burst out laughing. "Are you turning poet, Mr. Aarons?" she inquired flippantly. "Take my advice, and keep to your own trade; no one will ever read the verse of Shakespeare or Milton with half as much interest as the magic prose that can turn a scrap of dirty paper into golden guineas."

him for a £1,000! Do not admit him, good Mr. Aarons, I beseech you—" "Take Sir Geoffrey upstairs, Jacob, and tell him I am engaged, but will wait on him anon," said the Jew. Then turning to his fair client with an insinuating smile, he added, "Now, if your ladyship chooses, you may have an opportunity of judging between my statement of this gentleman's finances and his own."

He indicated, by a gesture, a door in an obscure corner of the room. "What! play the spy upon my betrothed husband? Never, never!" exclaimed Prue indignantly. Yet she did not go away, and her pliant form seemed to sway toward the little dark door, as though a stronger will than her own controlled her muscles.

"This no harm," said the Jew, in his sibilious tones, as he opened the door leading into a room scarcely bigger than a closet, but light, and furnished with a single chair, and a table littered with papers and thick with dust. Half-involuntarily, Prue yielded, and the door closed upon her. "I need not listen," she said, half-apologizing to herself for an action she disdained. But the room was small, and that, perhaps, was why she did not think it worth while to move away from the door.

The blood rushed to her head when she heard Sir Geoffrey's voice, and for some moments she was conscious of nothing but a confused murmur, out of which, at last, her own name rang sharp and clear. "The lady Prudence Brooke has honored me by accepting my hand," she heard Sir Geoffrey say, in a tone that was evidently intended to discourage adverse comment.

"I congratulate your Honor," said Aarons politely. "The lady's charms do credit to our choice. But such luxuries are costly, and I am not surprised that you need money. It is unfortunate that times are so hard and money so scarce. I have just suffered a terrible loss. The death of Lord Boscommon, whose father survives him, had turned £10,000 worth of post-obit into waste paper, and the failure of Johnson and—but this does not interest your Honor. Be as I am, I shall be able to accommodate an old and valued client like yourself, no doubt, if the security you estimate well as have good security to offer, of course?"

"Oh! it is no use beating about the bush with you, Aarons. I have no fresh security, but you can surely let me have a couple of thousand more on the Yorkshire estate." "Not a stiver," said the money lender firmly. "Even the entailed property is encumbered beyond its utmost value. Had you come to announce your marriage with Miss Chessman, the daughter of a daughter, or Mrs. Goldwaite, the banker's wife, I do not say I would have refused the necessary funds for the courtship and wedding on your note-of-hand. But the Viscountess Brooke is dowdier—over head and ears in debt, and without a penny of expectations."

"Miserable little Jew," muttered the fair dame he so pitilessly anatomized; "Geoffrey will kill him!" "Dowdier yes; over head and ears in debt, possibly; but not without expectations," said Sir Geoffrey, displaying none of the anticipated fury. "You overlook the fact that she is the favorite granddaughter of Lady Drumloch, who, for all her miserly ways, I am credibly informed, is enormously wealthy."

"Oh!" cried the Jew, maliciously enjoying this display of a motive not altogether flattering to the unsuspected listener. "Your honor is not quite so simple as I began to fear."

"Did you really think I was fool enough to leap before looking?" retorted Sir Geoffrey, with a fatuous laugh that set Prue's ears tingling. "To be sure, the wealth of Golconda could not add to the Lady Prue's charms, but in this wicked world one can not live on love alone. I have little else to offer, I rejoice, for her sake, as well as my own, that she has a rich grandmother who cannot, it is to be hoped—I should say, lamented—live long to enjoy her hoards. They will, I am convinced, be put to excellent use by Lady Prudence Beadesert."

"But how, if I could prove to you, Sir Geoffrey, that Lady Drumloch, instead of being a rich miser, is a very poor old woman, whose kinsman loans her a house to live in, and whose sole income is an annuity, from which she has—perhaps—saved enough to bury her? I know not who may have told you of this fabled wealth, but I am pretty sure it is not either of her granddaughters."

"Indeed, no," said Sir Geoffrey reflectively. "No such sordid subject has ever been broached between us. Yet I had it from a reliable source."

"Well, I advise you to make very sure of it, Sir Geoffrey; it will be no kindness, either to yourself or the Lady Prudence, to marry her without that of your having anything you can call your own—except your debts."

"'Tis true," muttered the baronet. "If I cannot raise a thousand pounds—are Lady Prudence's debts so very great?" "I do not betray the secrets of one client to another," said Aarons, with a sinister smile. "Even now I have acted against my own interests in my desire to befriend two headstrong young people. Nay, I would gladly go further, and find a rich wife for your honor and a rich husband for the viscountess, if you would both listen to reason."

(Continued Next Week.)

**Other Way About.**  
"I s'pose I've known 10,000 mothers in my time."

"Well, I never knew but one mother who had the courage to go to the matinee while her daughter did the housework."

**Maud and the Judge.**  
Maud Muller raked the blooming hay. The judge came 'round to make a call. His purpose was to say, "I hope you'll vote for me this fall."

The daily average variation of the clock on the house of parliament is 0.97 of a second.

**A FATAL KNOCK.**  
"Say, we've got to do something right away to save our city."  
"What's threatening it?"  
"Why, the story's got around that we don't support our ball club."

## BACKACHE NOT A DISEASE

### But a Symptom, a Danger Signal Which Every Woman Should Heed.

Backache is a symptom of organic weakness or derangement. If you have backache don't neglect it. To get permanent relief you must reach the root of the trouble. Read about Mrs. Woodall's experience.

Morton's Gap, Kentucky.—"I suffered two years with female disorders, my health was very bad and I had a continual backache which was simply awful. I could not stand on my feet long enough to cook a meal's victuals without my back nearly killing me, and I would have such dragging sensations I could hardly bear it. I had soreness in each side, could not stand tight clothing, and was irregular. I was completely run down. On advice I took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and an enjoying good health. It is now more than two years and I have not had an ache or pain since. I do all my own work, washing and everything, and never have backache any more. I think your medicine is grand and I praise it to all my neighbors. If you think my testimony will help others you may publish it."—Mrs. OLLIE WOODALL, Morton's Gap, Kentucky.

If you have the slightest doubt that Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound will help you, write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. (Confidential) Lynn, Mass., for advice. Your letter will be opened, read and answered by a woman, and held in strict confidence.

**Reason Was Plain.**  
"My husband has deserted me and I want a warrant," announced the large lady.  
"What reason did he give for deserting you?" asked the prosecutor.  
"I don't want any lip from you. I want a warrant. I don't know what reason he had."  
"I think I understand his reason," said the official feebly, as he proceeded to draw up a warrant.

**Mother Goose in Poultry Trade.**  
It is reported that the following occurred in a small poultry store kept by the widow of the deceased merchant:  
"I should like to see a nice fat goose," said a customer, entering the shop.  
"Yes, sir," replied the boy. "Mother will be down directly."—Woman's Home Companion.

**While for a Time.**  
A Cleveland school teacher writes that she asked her class what was the difference between the expressions, "a while," and "a time," says the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Nobody seemed to have any idea on the subject. Finally the light of intelligence was seen to shine in the eyes of one little boy, and the teacher called upon him to save the intellectual honor of the class.  
"I know, teacher!" he cried eagerly. "When papa says he's going out for a while, mamma says she knows he's going out for a time!"  
That's one way of looking at it.

**PIMPLES COVERED FACE**  
1613 Dayton St., Chicago, Ill.—"My face was very red and irritated and was covered with pimples. The pimples festered and came to a head. They itched and burned and when I scratched them became sore. I tried soaps and they would not stop the itching and burning of the skin. This lasted for a month or more. At last I tried Cuticura Ointment and Soap. They took out the burning and itching of the skin, soothing it very much and giving the relief that the others failed to give me. I used the Cuticura Soap and Ointment about three weeks and was completely cured." (Signed) Miss Clara Mueller, Mar. 16, 1912.  
Cuticura Soap and Ointment sold throughout the world. Sample of each free, with 32-p. Skin Book. Address post-card "Cuticura, Dept. L, Boston." Adv.

**Absorbed.**  
A college professor noted for his concentration of thought, returned home from a scientific meeting one night, still pondering deeply upon the subject that had been discussed. As he entered his room he heard a noise that seemed to come from under the bed.  
"Is there someone there?" he asked absently.  
"No, professor," answered the intruder, who knew his peculiarities.  
"That's strange," muttered the professor. "I was almost sure I heard someone under the bed."

**Wise Young Man.**  
That was a very wise Cambridge student of whom the London story tellers were talking some time ago. One of his college friends finding himself without funds, went to this Solomon of students to borrow. He found him in bed. Seizing him by the shoulder, he shook him.  
"I say," he said, "are you asleep?"  
"Why do you ask?" queried the other, sleepily.  
"I want to borrow a sovereign."  
"Yes," said the other, turning over and closing his eyes. "I'm asleep."

**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 dollys. 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!"

**Submits Tamely.**  
"Is Scribble what you would call a struggling author?"  
"No, indeed. When an editor puts him out he doesn't offer the slightest resistance."

**CERTAINLY ANIMALS THINK.**  
Dinks—Do you believe that animals think?  
Winks—Certainly. Doesn't the car hog who takes up all the seat think he owns the car?  
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 Skeedee 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, hey?' and they have a row. And now he's sittin' out there watching a tramp painter gilding 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.

**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 Washington Case—**  
H. R. Hatch, 2516 Cedar St., Everett, Wash., says: "Severe pains in my back made me miserable. The kidney secretion turned in passing and looked like blood. My back got so bad I could hardly walk and my jar sent sharp stabs of pain through me. After specimens failed, Doan's Kidney Pills completely cured me."

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