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CHAPTER III.

In Which a Dog Trespasses.

PENELOPE was a perverse and calculating young person. She was her own mistress and privileged to ride as often as she pleased, but it seemed rather odd—although splendidly decorous—that she did not venture upon Mr. Shaw's estate for more than a week after her first encounter with the feudal baron. If she found a peculiarly feminine satisfaction in speculating on his disappointment, it is not to be wondered at. Womanly insight told her that Randolph Shaw rode forth each day and watched with hawklike vigilance for the promised trespasser. In her imagination she could almost hear him curse the luck that was helping her to evade the patrol.

One morning after a rain she rode with the duke to the spot where Shaw had drawn his line in the road. She felt a thrill of something she could not define on discovering that the wet soil on the opposite side of the line was disfigured by a mass of fresh hoof prints. She rejoiced to find that his vigil was incessant and worthy of the respect it imposed. The desire to visit the haunted house was growing more and more irresistible, but she turned it aside with all the relentless perverseness of a woman who feels it worth while to procrastinate.

Truth to tell, Randolph Shaw was going hollow eyed and faint in his ceaseless, racking watch for trespassers.

Penelope laughed aloud as she gazed upon the tangle of hoof prints. The duke looked as surprised as it was possible for him to look after the wear of the past night.

"Hang it all, Penelope," he said. "I didn't say anything, don't you know?"

"I was just thinking," she said hastily, "what fun it would be for us to explore the haunted house."

"Oh, I say, Pen, that's going out of the way for a little fun, isn't it? My word, it's a filthy old house with rats and mice and all—that no place for a ghost, much less a nice little human being like you. They're all like that."

"I think you are afraid to go," said she.

"Afraid of ghosts? Pshaw!" sniffed the duke, sticking out his chest.

"Yes, Shaw; that's whom you're afraid of."

"Now, see here, Pen, you shouldn't say that. Shaw's a d—, a cad. See what Cecil did to him. Remember that? Well, pooh! What would I do to him?" Penelope looked him over critically.

"I'll admit that you're larger and younger than Cecil," she confessed grudgingly. "But they say Mr. Shaw is a giant killer." The duke dropped his monocle and guffawed loudly.

"Good!" he cried in the ecstasy of pride. His worn, dissipated face lighted up with unwonted interest. "I say, Pen, that's the neatest thing you've said to me in a week. You've been so deduced cold of late. I don't understand. I'm not such a bad lot, you know."

"Tell that to Mrs. De Peyton and Mrs. Corwith. They're looking for the good in everything."

"By Jove, I believe you're jealous! This is the proudest moment of my life."

"Don't be silly! And don't try to make love to me any more. Wait until I'm married," she added, with a laugh, the irony of which escaped him.

"But, hang it all, suppose you should marry some one else and not me?"

"That's what I mean."

"Oh," he said, perplexed. Then, as if his stupidity called for an explanation: "I had a beastly night. Didn't go to bed till 4. But, I say, why can't I have the same privilege as these other chaps? Corwith makes love to you and so does Odwell, and, hang it, they're both married. It's rotten mean of 'em!"

"Their wives are accountable for their manners, not I. But, come; will you go to Reawood's with me?"

"I'd rather talk to you in that nice little corner of the billiard room at home if you—"

"But I don't need a brandy and soda. Oh!" This exclamation came with the discovery of an approaching horseman. "It's Mr. Shaw, I'm sure."

Randolph Shaw, loyal to his feudal promise, appeared in the road a couple of hundred yards away. He drew rein and from that distance surveyed the two who were so near to encroaching upon his preserves. He sat straight and forbidding in the saddle. For a full minute the two factions stared at each other. Then, without a sign of recognition, Shaw turned and rode rapidly away.

"He rides like a gentleman," commented Miss Drake, after reflection.

"Indian blood in him," remarked her companion.

"Let us go home," said she, whirling her horse like a dash. The duke had some difficulty in keeping abreast of her during the ride, and he lost sight of her altogether after they dismounted at Hazelhurst Villa.

The momentary glimpse of a real man set Penelope's opinions on edge.

for the remainder of the day and night. Shaw, whatever else he might be, was a man. Even while others addressed her in conversation she was absentmindedly recalling to memory certain English gentlemen at home who could stand comparison with this handsome fellow across the danger line. But to compare any one of the men in Lady Hazelhurst's house party—oh, it was absurd! She looked them over. Dull eyed, blase, frayed by the social whirl, worn out, pulseless, all of them. They talked automobile, bridge, women and self in particular. In the seclusion of a tête-à-tête they talked love with an ardor that lost most of its danger because it was from force of habit. One of the men was even now admitting in her ear that he had not spent an evening alone with his wife in four years.

"There's always something doing," he said. "A week or two ago, by Jove, you wouldn't believe it, but we had an evening turn up without a thing on hand. Strangest thing I ever knew. Neither of us had a thing on. We said we'd stay at home and go to bed early just to see how it felt. Well, what do you think? We sat up and read till half past 10 o'clock, and then both of us thought of it at the same time. We dressed and went down to Recto's and waited for the theaters to let out. Three o'clock when we got home. You can't imagine what a queer experience it is being all alone with one's wife."

"Don't you love your wife, Mr. Odwell?"

"Certainly! But there's always a crowd." Both of them glanced over at pretty Mrs. Odwell. She was looking down at her plate demurely while Reggie Van Voort talked straight into her pink ear, his eyes gleaming with the zest of invasion. "I say, Miss Drake, you won't mind talking to me awhile after dinner, will you?" went on Odwell, something like relief in his voice.

After dinner she was obliged to set him straight in a little matter. They were sitting on the terrace, and he had thrown away his half smoked cigarette, an act in itself significant. She had been listening patiently, from sheer habit and indifference, to what he was saying, but at last she revolted.

"Don't! You shall not say such things to me. I am not your kind, I fancy, Mr. Odwell," she said. "I don't know why you should tell me of your chorus girl friends, of your suppers and all that. I don't care to hear of them, and I don't intend that you shall use me as a subject of illustration. I am going upstairs."

"Oh, come now, that's rather rough, just as we were getting on so well! All the fellows do the same!"

"I know. You need not tell me. And you all have wives at home, too," with intense scorn.

"Never mind, Mr. Odwell; I'm going in." She left him and entered the house. For a minute or two he looked after her in wonder and then, softly whispering, made his way over to where De Peyton, through some oversight, was talking to his own wife. De Peyton unceremoniously announced that he was going upstairs to write a letter.

Penelope, flushed with disgust and humiliation, drew near a crowd of men and women in the long living room. Her brother was haranguing the assemblage, standing forth among them like an unconquered bantam. In spite of herself she felt a wave of shame and pity creep over her as she looked at him.

"Barnminster says the fellow ran when he saw him today," his lordship was saying. "But that doesn't help matters. He has been on my land again and again. Tompkins says, and Tompkins ought to know."

"And James, too," said the duke with a brangled roar.

"Can't Tompkins and his men keep that man off my land?" demanded Lady Hazelhurst. Every one took note of the pronoun. Her ladyship's temples seemed to narrow with hatred. Hazelhurst had told the men privately that she was passing sleepless nights in order to "hate that fellow Shaw" to her full capacity.

"My dear, I have given positive orders to Tompkins, and he swears he'll carry them out," said he hastily.

"I suppose Tompkins is to throw him into the river again."

"He is to shoot that fellow Shaw when he doesn't keep off our land. I've had enough of it. They say he rode his confounded plow horse all over the west end the other day."

Penelope smiled reflectively. "Trampled the new fern beds out of existence and all that. Hang him, Tompkins will get him if he persists. He has told the men to take a shot at the rascal at sight. Tompkins doesn't love him, you know."

Penelope went her way, laughing, and forgot the danger that threatened Randolph Shaw.

The next morning, quite early, she was off for a canter. Some magnetic force drew her toward that obliterated line in the roadway. Almost as she came up to it and stopped Randolph

Shaw rode down the hillside through the trees and drew rein directly opposite, the noses of their horses almost touching. With a smile he gave the military salute even as she gasped in silent conscious dismay.

"On duty, Miss Drake; no trespassing," he said. There was a glad ring in his voice. "Please don't run away. You're on the safe side."

"I'm not going to run," she said, her cheek flushing. "How do you know where the line is? It has been destroyed by the ravages of time."

"Yes. It has seemed a year. This thing of acting sentinel so religiously is a bit wearing." His great friendly dog came across the line, however, and looked bravely up into the enemy's face, wagging his tail. "Traitor! Come back, Bonaparte!" cried his master.

"Love me, love my dog," is my motto."

The conversation was not prolonged. Penelope began to find herself on rather friendly terms with the enemy. Confusion came over her when she remembered that she was behaving in a most unmaidenly manner. Doubtless that was why she brought the meeting to a close by galloping away.

The ways of fortune are strange, look at them from any point of view. Surprising as it may seem, like encounter happened on the following day and—aye, on the day after and every day for a week or more. Occasions there were when Penelope was compelled to equivocate shamefully in order to escape the companionship of the duke, the count or others of their ilk. Once when the guardian of the road was late at his post she rode far into the enemy's country, actually thrilled by the joy of adventure. When he appeared far down the road she turned and fled with all the sensations of a culprit, and he thundered after her with vindictiveness that deserved better results. Across the line she drew rein and faced him defiantly, her hair blown awry, her cheeks red, her eyes sparkling.

"No trespass!" she cried, holding up her gloved hand. He stopped short, for that was one of the terms of truce.

The next day he again was missing, but she was not to be caught by his stratagem. Instead of venturing into the trap he had prepared for her, she remained on her side of the line, smiling at the thought of him in hiding far up the road. If any one had suggested to her that she was developing too great an interest in this stalwart gentleman she would have laughed him to scorn. It had not entered her mind to question herself as to the pleasure she found in being near him. She was founding her actions on the basis that he was a real man and that the little comedy of adventure was quite worth while.

At length an impatient line appeared on her fair brow, a resentful gleam in her eyes. His remissness was an impertinence! It was the last time she would come—but a sudden thought struck her like a blow. She turned white and red by turns. Had he tired of the sport? Had the obvity worn off? Was he laughing at her for a silly coquette? The riding crop came down sharply upon her horse's flank, and a very deeply agitated young woman galloped off toward Hazelhurst Villa, hurrying as though afraid he might catch sight of her in flight.

A quarter of a mile brought a change in her emotions. British stubbornness arose to combat an utter rout. After all, why should she run away from him? With whimsical bravado she turned off suddenly into the trail that led to the river, her color deepening with the consciousness that, after all, she was vaguely hoping she might see him somewhere before the morning passed. Through the leafy pathway she rode at a snail's pace, brushing the low hanging leaves and twigs from about her head with something akin to petulance.

As she neared the river the neighing of a horse hard by caused her to sit erect with burning ears. Then she relapsed into a smile, remembering that it might have come from the game warden's horse. A moment later her searching eyes caught sight of Shaw's horse tied to a sapling and on Hazelhurst ground, many hundred feet from his own domain. She drew rein sharply and looked about in considerable trepidation. Off to the right lay the log that divided the lands, but nowhere along the bank of the river could she see the trespasser. Carefully she resumed her way, ever on the lookout, puzzled not a little by the unusual state of affairs.

Near the river trail she came upon the man, but he paid no heed to her approach. He sat with his face in his hands, and—she could not believe his eyes and ears—he was sobbing bitterly. For an instant her lips curled in the smile of scornful triumph, and then something like disgust came over her. There was mockery in her voice as she called out to him:

"Have you stubbed your toe, little boy?"

He looked up, dazed. Then he awoke, turning his back while he dashed his hand across his eyes. When he glanced back at her she saw that she was smiling. But she also saw something in his face that drove the smile away. Absolute rage gleamed in his eyes.

"So it is real war?" he said hoarsely, his face quivering. "Your pitiful cowards want it to be real, do they? Well, that's what it shall be, hang them! They shall have all they want of it. Look! This is their way of fighting, is it? Look!"

He pointed to his feet. Her bewilderment saw that his hand was bloody and a deathly sickness came over her. He was pointing to the outstretched, inanimate form of the dog

that had been his friend and comrade. She knew that the beast was dead and she knew that her brother's threat had not been an idle one. A great wave of pity and horror swept over her. Moisture sprang to her eyes on the moment.

"He—he is dead?" she exclaimed.

"Yes; and killed by some cowardly brute whose neck I'd like to wring. That dog—my Bonaparte—who knew no fear, who did no wrong! Your brother wants war, does he? Well, I'll give him all!"

"But my brother could not have done a thing like this," she cried, slipping

off the horse. The next I knew I was rushing blindly into the brush toward a place where I saw smoke curling like a fiend. Then came the second shot and the stinging in my arm. It brought me to my senses. I stopped and a moment later I saw a man running down along the bank of the stream. I—oh, well, there isn't any more to tell. I don't know who fired the shots. I couldn't see his face."

"It was Tompkins," she cried. "I know it was. He had his orders—but she checked herself in confusion.

"His orders? Do you mean to say—Miss Drake, did your brother instruct him to kill me?" She quailed beneath his look.

"I—I can't say anything more about it, Mr. Shaw," she murmured, so pitifully that he was touched. For a seemingly interminable length of time his hard eyes looked into hers, and then softened.

"I understand," he said simply. "You cannot talk about it. I'll not ask any questions."

"My brother is weak in her hands. She managed to say in extenuation.

"After all, it isn't a pleasant subject. If you don't mind we'll let it drop—that is, between you and me, Miss Drake. I hope the war won't break out!"

"Don't suggest it, please. I'd rather you wouldn't. We are friends, after all. I thought it was playing at war, and I can't tell you how shocked I am."

"Poor old Bonaparte!" was all he said in reply. She stooped and laid her hand on the fast chilling coat of the dog. There were tears in her eyes as she arose and turned away, moving toward her horse. Shaw deliberately lifted the dead animal into his arms and strode off toward his own land. She followed after a moment of indecision, leading the horse. Across the line he went and up the side of the knoll to his right. At the foot of a great tree he tenderly deposited his burden. Then he turned to find her almost beside him.

"You won't mind my coming over here, will you?" she said softly. He reached out and clasped her hand thoughtlessly with his blood covered fingers. It was not until long afterward that she discovered his blood upon the hand from which she had drawn her riding glove.

"You are always welcome," he said. "I am going to bury him here this afternoon. No; please don't come. I'll bring the men down to help me. I suppose they think I'm a coward and a bounder over at your place. Do you remember the challenge you gave me yesterday? You dared me to come over the line as far into Hazelhurst land as you had come into mine. Well, I dared last night!"

"You dared? You came?"

"Yes, and I went farther than you have gone, because I thought it was play, comedy, fun. I even sat upon your gallery just outside the billiard room—and smoked two cigarettes. You'll find the stubs on the porch railing if her ladyship's servants are not too exemplary." She was looking at him in wide eyed disbelief. "I was there when you came out on the lawn with the Frenchman."

"Did you hear what he was—what we were saying?" she asked nervously and going pale.

"No. I was not eavesdropping. Besides, you returned to the house very abruptly, if you remember."

"Yes, I remember," she said, a sigh of relief accompanying the warm glow that came to her cheek. "But were you not afraid of being discovered? How imprudent of you!"

"It was a bit risky, but I rather enjoyed it. The count spoke to me as I left the place. It was dark, and he mistook me for one of your party. I couldn't wait to see if you returned to renew the tête-à-tête."

"I did not return," she said. It was his turn to be relieved.

Local News

From Friday's Daily.

J. H. Smith and wife of Murray were passengers this morning for Omaha, where they spent the day.

Leonard Meisinger and Dwight Patterson were Omaha passengers this afternoon, going on No. 23.

Lee J. Mayfield, editor of the Louisville Courier, was in the city today looking after business at the court house.

Louis Spearhase met with a very painful accident this week while helping thresh. He was struck in the arm with a pitchfork.

Miss Celia Grauf and brother, August, of near Murray, came up this morning and boarded No. 15 for the metropolis, where they spent the day.

Lig Brown, the genial, whole-souled farmer from Kenosha, was in the city today looking after some business matters and visiting with his friends.

Robert Nickels, from near Murray, was in the city today looking after some business matters. He brought up with him some very fine peaches, which he sold on the market.

Mrs. H. M. Frans of Union is visiting at the C. R. Frans home for a few days. She was a pleasant caller at this office this morning for the purpose of renewing her subscription to this paper.