

Dinna Forget OR LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

JOHN STRANGE WINTER

INTERNATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION.

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)
 In a moment the kitten, a little the worse for wear and tear, was safely in her mistress' arms, and a great fuss did she make over it. In the midst of it, Dick Alymer, knowing that his trefful horse was dancing about on the other side of the house, said good-bye again and escaped. "And, by Jove!" he said, as he turned out of the gates, "she does not know my name either. I seem bound to be mysterious today, somehow or other. Evidently she mistook me for Haines—or, rather, she mistook me for the other in the matter of names. Ah, well, she's going away tomorrow, and I don't suppose I shall see her again, or that it matters in the least whether she calls me Harris, or Haines, or Alymer," and then he added to the horse, "Get along, old man, will you?"

He slackened the pace, however, when he got to the turn of the road which skirted the sloping meadow in front of the Hall where "she" lived, and the horse crawled up the side of the hill as if it had been an Alpine height instead of a mere bend of the road. But there was no sign of her. As he passed he caught a glimpse of the gay flower-beds and a big tabby cat walking leisurely across the terrace, but Dorothy Strode was not to be seen, and when Richard Alymer recognized that fact he gave a jerk to the reins and sent the horse flying along in the direction of Colchester as fast as his four good legs would carry him.

CHAPTER III.
 DOROTHY STRODE said very little to her aunt about the gentleman who had brought her home from Lady Jane's tennis party. Not that she voluntarily kept anything back, but in truth there was very little for her to tell, very little that she could tell. The language of love is an eloquent one, but when you are one of the principal persons concerned you cannot give to another the history of a pressure of the hand or a look of the eyes, and still less of a tone of the voice which tells you all too eloquently of the state of feelings which you cause in that other one.

Yet when Miss Dimsdale came home from Colchester, having been fetched from Wrabness Station in an ancient victoria which had seen better days, drawn by a pair of cobs which, let use mercifully hope, would never see worse than they enjoyed in sleek comfort at present, she dutifully—ay, and with pleasure—gave her an animated description of the party. How Lady Jane had specially asked for her and had sent her dear love to her; how sorry she was, and everybody else, that Miss Dimsdale had had to go and see that tiresome lawyer on that particular afternoon; how Lady Jane had told her that her new white frock was exquisite, and that she ought always to wear full sleeves because they became her so well, and finally how there had been one of the officers from Colchester at the party and she had been his partner in several games of tennis, and finally that Lady Jane had sent him to see her safely to the gate. "Our gate, I mean, Auntie," said Dorothy, not wishing to convey a false impression.

"And David Stevenson, he wasn't there, I suppose?" said Miss Dimsdale, as she stepped her claret.

"No, Auntie, he wasn't," Dorothy answered. "You see, Lady Jane does not like David Stevenson very much."

"I know that," said Miss Dimsdale shortly.

On the whole Miss Dimsdale would have liked Dorothy to marry David Stevenson, who was young and a good enough fellow to make a good husband. He had a well-kept valuable farm of four hundred acres a mile or two from Gravesleigh, with a convenient and spacious house thereon, of which he was very anxious to make Dorothy mistress. But Dorothy had, with a strange perversity, said nay over and over again, and she seemed in no desire to change her mind now. Miss Dimsdale gave a sigh as she thought of it—for David Stevenson's mother had been her dearest friend—but all the same, she was not the woman to try to force the child's inclination.

"Mr. Harris asked me if he might call—if he might come and see me," said Dorothy presently, after a pause.

"Mr. Harris! and who is Mr. Harris?" asked Miss Dimsdale, started out of a reverie about David Stevenson's mother, who, by-the-by, unconsciously and dear friend as she was of Marion Dimsdale's, had stepped in and married the man of Marion's heart.

"Mr. Harris! He is the officer I told you about, Auntie, the one who brought me home," said Dorothy, in surprise that her aunt should not remember.

"Oh, yes—yes. And what did you say?"

"I told him that I thought he might."

"And when?"

"Oh, I told him to take his chance," Dorothy answered.

"Quite right," said Miss Dimsdale, who had no notion of making the way

of a gallant too easy and pleasant to him. "Well, we shall see what he is like when he comes, if we happen to be at home."

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"Auntie!" cried Dorothy.

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Dorothy's face fell, and Miss Dimsdale laughed. "There, child, there, I won't tease you about it. There it is on the chimney-shelf."

And Dorothy naturally enough jumped up and ran to open the box in which the belt was packed, opening it eagerly, and uttering a cry of delight when she saw the beautiful ornament lying within. It was a lovely thing, and in her pleasure and pride at the possession of it Dorothy almost forgot her new admirer, Mr. Harris.

Not quite though, for when she slipped it on over her pretty white dress and ran to the pier-glass between the windows of the drawing-room to see the effect of it, she suddenly found herself wondering how he would think she looked in it, and instantly the swift color flashed into her cheeks, so that she hardly liked to turn back to face the gaze of her aunt's calm, far-seeing eyes.

Miss Dimsdale meanwhile had walked to the window, and was looking out into the soft evening dusk.

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A gesture of impatience was Dorothy's answer, a gesture accompanied by an equally impatient sound, but she never thought of making good use of her time and escaping out of the room, as a girl brought up in a town might have done. No, she left the glass and went across the room to the table where her work-basket stood, and took up an elaborate table-cover which she had been working at in a more or less desultory fashion for six months past, and by the time David Stevenson was shown in she was stitching away as if for dear life. Miss Dimsdale, on the contrary, did not move from the window until she heard the door open, then she went a few steps to meet him.

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Miss Dimsdale, in dismay. "Oh, I will come at once. Dorothy, stay and talk to David," she added, for Dorothy had made a movement as if she, too, wanted to go and hear more about Janet's trouble.

CHAPTER IV.
 HOWEVER, in the face of her aunt's distinct command, she had no choice but to remain where she was, and she took up the work again and began a-stitching vehemently as if she would fain see her vexation into the pretty pattern.

David Stevenson, on the contrary, was more than well satisfied at the way in which matters had fallen, and inwardly blessed that trouble of Janet Benham's as much as Dorothy did the contrary. He jerked his chair an inch or so nearer to hers, and leaned forward with his elbows upon his knees. Dorothy sat up very straight indeed, and kept her attention strictly upon her work.

"Who was that fellow I saw you talking to this afternoon, Dorothy?" he asked.

"A man that Lady Jane asked to see me home," answered Dorothy, promptly.

"Oh, you have been to Lady Jane's?" in a distinctly modified tone.

"Yes, I had been to Lady Jane's," returned Dorothy, matching a bit of yellow silk with minute care. "Way didn't you go?"

"Because I wasn't asked," said he curtly. "Lady Jane never asks me now—she's taken a dislike to me."

"Well, I can't help that," said Dorothy, indifferently.

"I don't know so much about that," he said, rather gloomily. "I think you might if you liked. Not that I want you to trouble about it, or that I care a single brass farthing about Lady Jane or her parties. In any case, I should only go because I might meet you there."

"Oh, that's a poor enough reason," cried Dorothy, flippantly.

There was very little of the mute lover about David Stevenson, and whenever he found that Dorothy was, in spite of good opportunities, slipping further and further away from him, he always got impatient and angry.

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"Who was that fellow I saw you talking to this afternoon, Dorothy?" he asked.

"A man that Lady Jane asked to see me home," answered Dorothy, promptly.

"Oh, you have been to Lady Jane's?" in a distinctly modified tone.

"Yes, I had been to Lady Jane's," returned Dorothy, matching a bit of yellow silk with minute care. "Way didn't you go?"

"Because I wasn't asked," said he curtly. "Lady Jane never asks me now—she's taken a dislike to me."

"Well, I can't help that," said Dorothy, indifferently.

"I don't know so much about that," he said, rather gloomily. "I think you might if you liked. Not that I want you to trouble about it, or that I care a single brass farthing about Lady Jane or her parties. In any case, I should only go because I might meet you there."

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