

## A MAD MARRIAGE;

### The Heiress of Lawrence Park.

#### A STORY OF ABSORBING INTEREST.

BY MRS. H. B. COLEMAN.

##### CHAPTER XIII.

###### ONLY MARK.

Arthur glanced up with a slight smile.

"I believe it will be wise to heed the advice of 'A Friend,' he said, "and keep my eye upon Mr. Mark Alleyne, as well as the 'sirens.'

And although his heart was heavy, he laughed heartily, for the absurdity of the orthography was mirth-provoking.

"And I believe," he went on, thoughtfully, "the siren, meaning from his mother's face, and that gravely hopeless look coming back, which was growing habitual to 'I that had better make a call at Lawrence Park now. Ah, I see my own wisdom in accepting Mrs. Gabrielle St. Cyr's invitation to call there."

But Arthur had dreamt for a single moment of all that his acceptance of said invitation was destined to him, he would have hesitated before the next step was taken.

He made up his mind to call without delay.

Arthur was out, he knew, and would thus be spared the sight of her usurping Ruby's place in Ruby's home, and perhaps he might be able to find a stay there.

He returned to Lawrence Park, rang the bell, and sent in his card to the master of the house.

"I am making no mistake," shouted Arthur through the telephone. "Don't see it can be a mistake. The message is this: 'Baby Lawrence is found! She is dead! Found drowned in the lake below the city, and her body is in the morgue!'

Pale and trembling, Chief Ludlowe turned to Arthur.

"Shall we go there?" he asked, hurriedly. "Are you strong enough? Are you able to bear the sight, Arthur?"

For answer, Arthur Wynne picked up his hat, and started for the door.

His carriage was outside, and they were soon away like mad to that grimy place for the recognition of dead bodies.

Arrived there, they entered the great chill apartment, with its long, white-marble benches, upon which lay several dead bodies.

A moment's hesitation, and Arthur Wynne had reached the side of one.

A young girl! The upturned face was horribly disfigured, and quite unrecognizable.

But the half-open, staring eyes, wan of a deep, dark violet hue, and the long hair streaming over the dead and gaunt face upon the floor, were a rich, loved golden hair.

The body was sitting in a chair; and there was a bright, hair, all swollen with water, that had been found wrapped about the cold form.

Nothing by which the dead girl could be identified had been found upon the body—nothing.

Arthur averted his head; he could not endure the spectacle of that ghastly scene before him; and to think that she—his dandy darling—should lie there, exposed to the stare of rude men, nearly drove him mad.

At once, as he stood there, a strange feeling crept slowly over him like a chill. He was not a superstitious man, but Arthur Wynne could have sworn that a cold hand touched his and a light breath ruffled the hair up his uncovered brow, while a voice seemed to whisper in his ear: "Arthur!"

He started with a sudden exclamation, and, whirling fiercely around, caught Mr. Ludlowe's arm in a convulsive grip.

"Ludlowe!" he panted, hoarsely.

"My God! is not this a shock! See! I will prove it to you! The hands of the dead woman before us are much longer, and they are rough and soil-stained.

Ruby Lawrence had hands like snow flakes, and the hooves of Lawrence Park would hardly be expected to tell.

Besides this dress is of coarser material than any that she would have worn.

"And then, when she went away from Lawrence Park—when she escaped—they told me that she had worn a calcinum sponge (or, at least, such a garment) had disappeared from her wardrobe, but there was a shawl found upon this bed! And more," he went on, excitedly, "I found a small, torn piece of white lace, which was thrown into the lake, and was determined to get her out of the way, since enough has not clapped sight of her disappearance to disfigure her in this way."

"Lawrence, believe me—I am right, Ruby Lawrence is not dead! At all events, this is not her body!"

Mr. Ludlowe seized Arthur Wynne's hand in a silent pressure. His keen eyes were twinkling; he was full of admiration at the young detective's sagacity. He himself had already noticed the discrepancies referred to, but he wanted to see if Arthur would observe them.

"Glorious!" by Jove! muttered the Chief, under his breath. "Wynne was not born yesterday. He'll make his mark yet in the detective line. I am—"

"—I added," he added.

"I'll refute this awful calumny, though short cost me."

He closed the book, and turned his eyes upon the lively ground outside the window, his heart aching with thoughts of the lovely girl who had reigned there so short a time before; the petted idol of her father, queen of the household, beautiful Ruby Lawrence!

"My darling! My poor, wronged darling! I will right your wrongs; I'll refute this awful calumny, though short cost me."

He opened slowly, and stopped short. The door of the room opened slowly, and before him,

retired from her drive, a violet silk housedress, he swan's down, which lay dazzlingly fair; she

had a startled look, and had half believed by standing there before her white hands extended in a sweet smile upon her face.

"Good in you to call, Mr. Wynne," she began, graciously. "Mama's is out; I have just returned from my drive, and so took the liberty of representing mamma upon this occasion."

What could he do but murmur some low words of flattery, which made the color rush to her face for an instant, and she seated herself upon a silk couch close at his side.

"A lad passed over Arthur Wynne at the window."

How did he know what had this beautiful enchantress might have had in Ruby's downfall?

"Adel, was your escort this morning, Miss Lawrence?" he asked, a little out of breath.

"An anonymous letter!" exclaimed the young man, contemptuously. "Yes, Mr. Ludlowe, the advice contained within may be worth considering. Listen!"

And he read the contents of the mysterious note—ill-scribbled and poorly written—aloud to the chief:

"Mama! While you are searching for evidence, I will be your eyes, better keep your eye on Mark Alleyne. We didn't go to see Miss Adel Lawrence, the advice contained within may be worth considering. Listen!"

He groaned aloud in utter anguish and despair at the thought of the poor girl's unknown fate.

"My darling! my lost darling!" he cried, in depths of his heavy heart.

When they arrived at the police headquarters, they found a note there for Arthur, from an unknown source.

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