

The Witch of Cragenstone

By ANITA CLAY MUNOZ,

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Author of "In Love and Truth"

CHAPTER IX.

A COLOR, ashen gray, spread over Taunston's face, white foam came on his lips, and, removing his hat, he mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. For the moment he was stunned with disappointment and anger, so much so that he did not appear to hear Margaret's second imperative command to give way to her, and stood looking at her dumbly. A woman to scorn him! Since Taunston's majority in all the councils of the village his voice had ever been heard the loudest, carrying conviction with it. The people heeded him; he was a leader, and in his own family the women obeyed his sternest orders without question or even hesitation. In consequence as he had commanded all about him for so many years he knew no other way of attaining his desires, so he thought now to conquer this woman, the first to rise in his path to block it, by his usual harsh methods of procedure.

"Before I leave this place tonight thou'lt unsay those words or I shall force them from thee!" he said in a choked voice, endeavoring to suppress his passion.

Margaret laughed scornfully.

"Force!" she exclaimed, lifting her skirts preparatory to moving away in the opposite direction. "Thou'lt established a poor rule to win a woman, good cousin."

She stood before him, maddening in her fearlessness, her contempt of him and her beauty. With his heart full of baffled hope and despair at seeing failure close at hand, to control his desire to spring upon her and by sheer physical strength compel her to promise to marry him he dug his nails into his clenched hands until he almost forced the blood.

Not understanding his strong and passionate nature or indifferent to his suffering, Margaret continued lightly: "Thou'lt ever be so generous with this advice to me, Josiah, that before I go I'll give thee, forsooth, some small counsel in return. Learn, then, that while force may be successful in driving men and animals, fair words, a gallant bearing and loving attentions are shafts that soonest reach a woman's heart."

She moved away.

Josiah sprang toward her, laying a strong, detaining hand on her arm.

"Stay!" he exclaimed. "I would speak further. Dost think I heed thy foolish counsel? 'Tis time thou knew, cousin, that God made woman to serve man, to recognize his better judgment in thankfulness and to bow her head in submission to his will. An thou hadst thy way, Margaret, the world would be ruled by distaffs, an' all would come to ruin."

In the dull hopelessness that took possession of him at the sight of the detestation now openly expressed on her pale face his voice grew less harsh and his manner slightly entreating as he said, "Mayhap my ways are not so soft and squeamish as those of the wicked worldly men, at heart blackguards, that thou hast met abroad, but thou wouldst find me true, Margaret, and just, and under my direction thou wouldst see the value of my ways and follow the good example I would ever seek to set for thee."

"I want none of thee nor thine examples!" Margaret cried angrily. "And thou must cease thy persecutions! Know now for once and for all that I much dislike thee, that I loathe and hate thee, and that I hope our paths will never cross again!"

"An' thou hast no gratitude, woman, for my service on thine estate, for its present value on account of mine endeavors?"

"Thou hast had the yearly stipend that thou didst agree was sufficient," she replied. "Now an' for the last time, let me pass."

Seeing the expression of strength and resolution on her face and her manner so disdainful of him, Josiah sickened as a realization of his absolute inability to control this woman came over him. Almost crazed with despair, he spoke furiously, hardly knowing what he said.

"Hear me once more, an' then thou canst go the downward path thou hast chosen unmoled. The honest pur-

pose of an upright man is as a stench in thy nostrils because, wanton, thou lovest the wicked ways of thy French lover!"

Her blue eyes grew black, then fairly blazed. "Take care!" she said.

Josiah, unheeding, went on sneeringly, all the pent up hatred and jealousy in his heart coming out of his white lips in taunting phrases.

"Thy French lover, whose sweet enticings and gallant bearing thou dost so much admire—he that was to follow thee anon, to press his suit, woe thee an' live restfully on thine estate, spending thy gold for his pleasure until he died—why cometh he not? Whose arms intwine about him, keeping him away?"

"I warn thee to take care!" Margaret cried in deep anger.

"Where is thy truant lover? Soft hearted fool! Dost think he'er fared forth from Lunnun up these hills to see thee once his eyes fell on the beauty of the maids of that gay city? It angers me to see thee, my cousin, standing there a deceived woman, defending to an honest man the name of a poltroon, a blackguard and a libertine!"

With a quick motion she raised her hand and gave him a stinging slap across the face. He looked at her for an instant, not comprehending what had happened, with open mouth and staring eyes. Then as a realization of what she had done swept over him blood so angry flew to his head that it maddened him. Springing toward her, he caught her in his arms in a close embrace.

"Thou'lt kiss me where thou struck me," he cried with wild passion, "or else I'll kill thee!"

She rocked and swayed in his embrace.

"Josiah, I loathe thee! Let me go!"

"Then," he said, with gloating in his voice, "if'er thy gallant courter lover happen doth give thee thought enough to ride this way I'll make my boasts on thee! So kiss me, wanton, if not for love then for thy life!"

She felt his hot breath on her cheek, saw relentless determination in the steady eyes above her, and, desperately trying to free an arm, felt herself inclosed as in a vise of iron.

"Godfrey!" she called, now greatly frightened.

"Aye, call him! He'll come anon when he doth grow a-weary of the maids in Lunnun," he panted sneeringly.

Both young and strong, they struggled desperately, Margaret trying to reach his face with her clutching fingers, but he held down her hands and laughed at her tauntingly.

"Godfrey, Godfrey!"

Her voice rang out strong and clear through the forest.

"Doth some one call?"

Footsteps were heard running. Josiah loosed his hold slightly, listening.

"'Tis I, Margaret Mayland!"

"A man burst through the thicket and, with a sharp exclamation, caught Taunston by the shoulders, swung him round with the strength of a giant and with a well directed blow felled him to the ground, where he lay apparently lifeless.

"Godfrey!"

Margaret, white faced and fainting, was clasped in the embrace of her lover, who, holding her to his heart, looked at the prostrate figure with fierce glances of anger.

"The scoundrel doth move!" La Fabienne drew his sword. "I'll kill him where he lays!"

"Nay, dear Godfrey, have not murder on thy soul," she said tremblingly, with soft compelling. "'Tis my cousin, Josiah Taunston, who was but angered that I would not consent to wed with him."

La Fabienne's brow grew dark.

"God's pity! 'Twere not murder to finish that white lived hound! Rather 'twould be a deed of kindness to the world," he answered sternly, sheathing his sword with reluctance. "But to please thee, sweet, an' because I would not add further to thine horrors, I shall not molest him further."

He kissed her face and wound his arm about her in a manner affectionate and protecting.

"Come with me, Margaret."

She advanced a step or two, then paused, looking back hesitatingly.

"Is he dead, Godfrey? I think but of his mother and poor Hetty."

La Fabienne laughed scornfully.

"Nay, my love, fear not, but come with me. His kind dieth not so easily."

As the last sound of their voices died on the breeze Josiah Taunston, his face livid, with blood dropping from his nostrils, staggered to his feet and, clinging to a tree for support, glanced with wild eyes of hatred in the direction the lovers had taken.

"So, ho, thou hast arrived!" he panted with quick drawn breath. "Fool, thou didst not die, but art here! I the flesh to use thy persuasions with my cousin against me an' my rightful claims! Insistence an' firmness, had ye not come, would have I the long run won her, an' the farm lands would have been mine!"

He stood erect, endeavoring to stanch the flow of blood and muttering promises and threats to himself.

"But with that woman dangier's

arms about her, Josiah Taunston, thou hast no hope of Margaret Mayland now! So, ho, thou must use thy brain with subtle skill to smooth this complication out!"

Turning to go, he paused, shaking his finger in the direction they had taken, a sinister, wicked expression spreading over his drawn features.

"Happen now if matters fall out not to thy liking, Mistress Mayland, thou'lt recall to mind too late that I offered thee the best a man could offer kindly and in a good spirit until thou didst anger me beyond control. Thou didst flout me an' left me stunned an' bleeding for all thy knowledge dead—to walk away with thy choice. 'Fair words, a gallant bearing an' loving attentions,' he sneered, then shook his finger menacingly. "Thou hast them now, an', forsooth, something more that thou wot not of—an enemy, a man whose word will be taken here on all accounts an' who can bring thee into much disfavor; one who would have loved thee, but who now hates thee. Thou'lt live to regret this night, mistress, and I to remember it!"

Then he laughed a harsh, grating, merciless laugh, and, turning suddenly, groped his way down the path that led to the village.

CHAPTER X.

JUST out of the forest on a flat rock that topped a rising eminence of land stood Margaret Mayland by the side of her lover, who, taller than she, bent his dark eyes softly upon her face, reflecting in them the happiness shining so brightly in her own. Twilight had now withdrawn its last gray shadows from the earth, and night, warm, black and clear, with soft breezes stirring and the air heavy with the sweet redolence of wild flowers, fell on the mountain gently. Gradually the stars came out, first one at a time, timidly, then, as if gathering courage from additional numbers, they shone forth rapidly until the black arch of the heavens was a spectacle of dazzling brilliance.

Margaret, with happy confidence, stood close to her lover, who, with one arm thrown about her, stroked her soft hair caressingly. The stars with added lustre sparkled in cheerful radiance, the breeze grew fainter, then died away, and the hour was one of intense peacefulness. Suddenly from the direction of the village came the loud, unearthly sounds of the baying and howling of a dog—long, loud and to the superstitious, ominous howls—but Margaret and La Fabienne, entirely engrossed in each other, talked on happily, unheeding aught but the sound of their own voices and the joy of being together.

"An' so thou hadst the fever with no hands but those of strangers to tend thee?" Margaret was saying sorrowfully. "Tell me, Godfrey, more fully of thy miserable experiences."

"'Twould but pain thee, sweet."

"Nay, I would hear the fullest account," Margaret insisted. "Thou and good Gaston came to a house where there was a maid—continue, dear Godfrey."

"Much blame do I take to myself for my carelessness, heart's love," La Fabienne replied, "but for the moment my anxiety to be with thee put caution and heedfulness out of my mind. As I was telling thee, we came safely to a house below the fork in the mountain where the two roads lead in opposite directions. At first methought to continue our way on the defile winding upward to our right, but, glancing at the two dark, craggy roads, different at the end and steep, and realizing what a dire mishap it would be to wend our way on the wrong one, I asked for right direction from a maid at the cottage. Either from ignorance or a desire for mischief she said that Cragenstone lay at the end of the road leading to the left. So, trusting absolutely to her knowledge of the country hereabout, we fared forth on our journey."

"An' did thou meet no person to tell thee of this error?" Margaret inquired, with gentle sympathy.

"Marry! Not one soul except a poor lad of vacant mind who mouthed and chattered at us as we passed," he replied. "Soon the drizzling dampness changed to steady rain that fell harder and heavier as we progressed, until at last it came down in great sheets of water, blinding our vision, washing rocks and gravel down the rough and dangerous path and almost sweeping our horses off their feet. Such an awful mountain storm, such cloudbursts, we had ne'er seen in France. Brave Gaston was struck with terror, declared we would be lost and entreated me to turn our horses' heads, but I, disregarding him, pressed forward, knowing that thou wert expecting me, and myself seething with impatience to hold thee in mine arms."

He paused a moment, looking intently from his high place into the dark valley below him, Margaret's upturned face regarding his with anxious interest.

"What then, Godfrey?"

"Soon we came upon a stream that ran bubbling and foaming across our path. With many round oaths from Gaston and some sharp imprecations from myself, we contrived to get across it, but so nearly were our horses swept from under us by the swift current of the stream and so difficult was it for them to gain a footing on the steep embankment of slippery rocks on the other side, that, I truth, I thought we would be lost. After much maneuvering and some desperate chances we found shallower water, a little sand, and triumphantly gained the other side.

"Then night came on, and over the unknown road for a distance that seemed interminable we almost felt our way." And he laughed lightly at the recollection. "Gaston's lamentations and curses of thy country, sweet, and water running off me in streams, dampened mine ardor so that it was with dejection and rather heartless pleasure that we beheld the first flicker of light



"What then, Godfrey?"

from a window ahead of us on the road. Reaching the house, or, rather, cabin that it was, I knocked loudly for admittance. A querulous old voice bade me begone, cried feebly that there was a tavern for strangers a mile down the road, and that we had no manners to disturb a poor sick body at that time o' night. So we continued on our journey until we reached a house with signs of life about it that proved to be the tavern.

"A solemn visaged landlord received us, took our order for a good warm supper, called a boy to take the horses, and we entered.

"How great a distance to the Mayland farm? I inquired as he showed us to a room.

"The Mayland farm," he repeated in stupid bewilderment. "I ha' ne'er heard of it."

"Fool! Churl!" I exclaimed, my patience exhausted by the long series of discomforts. "Thou livest at Cragenstone and hath ne'er heard of the Mayland farm?"

"But this is the village of Sternedorf," he answered. "Cragenstone lieth on 't'her side of the mountain, across the forest. Prithree, sir, 'tis a long, tedious, roundabout journey from here to there." Margaret, in my surprise and disappointment at his information, I could have run him through, so desperate was I. The man's stolid, unsympathetic face and no better suggestion to offer than that we abide there until the ending of the storm maddened me, and, as though the fault of the mistake were his instead of mine, I bade the fellow begone in my surliest tones. "I would weary thee, heart's love, to tell thee all," he continued, with a sigh—"how the next day the storm raged, preventing our departure, and the next and next; how I took counsel repeatedly with the elders about the tavern as to the expediency of our setting forth and how they all assured me gravely that it would be impossible to ford the Skolvent stream. Then I grew listless and, to my surprise, seemed not to care; had no appetite; mine eyes swelled and smarted in my head, followed by nausea and hot fever. Then, dire calamity, I was attacked with the pest called measles, a disease raging in every house in the village, and, I lay ill of it for near a fortnight, and, Margaret, when I was strong enough and safe of contagion to come to thee all traces of the storm had passed, the stream was passable, and we rode forth, with blithe farewells to the sober faced loungers about the tavern door, down the mountain to last happily to Cragenstone. Sweet, art glad to see me?"

Margaret pressed the hand gently

that heid hers, saying, with a sigh of content: "Thou knowest well, dear Godfrey, how glad am I. Such nights of suspense, such burning fevers of impatience, such days of hourly heart-sick expectation, no mortal e'er before experienced. Methought perchance that thou wert dead, Godfrey, that thou wast so long in coming."

"Nay, heaven's gift of joy, I lived for thee."

"For a moment neither spoke; then La Fabienne said suddenly: "But tell me, Margaret, of thy cousin. Certes, he seemed an ill favored whelp enough. So he would wed with thee, my love?"

"What rare fortune, Godfrey, that thou didst come in time!" she exclaimed, with a shudder. "An' thou hadst delayed another minute that vile wretch had put his lips to mine."

La Fabienne's face darkened, and he exclaimed angrily as he laid his hand upon his sword.

"See my bodice how 'tis torn? And my kerchief is in ribbons, so desperate was our encounter. In my fright I screamed quite wildly."

"And thou didst call my name," he said fondly. "I recall my surprise at hearing it. Had thou news of mine arrival, Margaret?"

"Nay, dear Godfrey," she answered, with a little laugh that was half sob as she buried her face in the velvet folds of the puffed sleeve of his doublet. "Thy name, that does ever dwell securely in my heart, in my necessity sprang from thence to my lips, and they gave voice to it. Then thou, as if sent specially by kind Providence to rescue me, burst through the thicket and now—thou art here."

"Aye, I am here," he said, with particular emphasis. "But, sweet, art not awfully from standing so long?"

She slipped her hand through his arm.

(To be Continued.)

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Travelers Guide.

CENTRAL RAILROAD OF PENNA.

Condensed Time Table effective Nov. 28, 1904.

READ DOWN	STATIONS	READ UP
No. 1 No. 3		No. 2 No. 4
6:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		7:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
7:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		8:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
8:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		9:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
9:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		10:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
10:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		11:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
11:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		12:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
12:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		1:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
1:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		2:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
2:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		3:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
3:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		4:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
4:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		5:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
5:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		6:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte

LEWISBURG & TYONE RAILROAD.

Schedule to take effect Monday, May 29, 1905.

WESTWARD	STATIONS	EASTWARD
No. 1 No. 3		No. 2 No. 4
6:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		7:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
7:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		8:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
8:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		9:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
9:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		10:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
10:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		11:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
11:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		12:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
12:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		1:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
1:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		2:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
2:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		3:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
3:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		4:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
4:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		5:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
5:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		6:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte

LEWISBURG & TYONE RAILROAD.

Schedule to take effect Monday, May 29, 1905.

WESTWARD	STATIONS	EASTWARD
No. 1 No. 3		No. 2 No. 4
6:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		7:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
7:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		8:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
8:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		9:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
9:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		10:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
10:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		11:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
11:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		12:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
12:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		1:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
1:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		2:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
2:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		3:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
3:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		4:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
4:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		5:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
5:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		6:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte

BELLEFONTE & SNOW SHOE BRANCH.

Time Table in effect on and after Nov. 28th 1904.

MIX	STATIONS	MIX
No. 1 No. 3		No. 2 No. 4
6:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		7:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
7:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		8:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
8:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		9:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
9:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		10:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
10:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		11:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
11:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		12:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
12:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		1:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
1:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		2:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
2:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		3:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
3:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		4:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
4:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		5:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte
5:30 P. M. Lv. Bellefonte		6:30 A. M. Ar. Bellefonte

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Travelers Guide.

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Schedule in effect May 28, 1905.

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VIA TYONE—WESTWARD.

Leave Bellefonte, 9:30 a. m., week-days arrive at Tyone, 11:00 a. m., at Altoona, 1:00 p. m., at Pittsburg, 5:50 p. m., week-days, arrive at Tyone, 6:00 p. m., at Altoona, 3:10 p. m., at Pittsburg, 6:50 p. m.

VIA TYONE—EASTWARD.

Leave Bellefonte, 4:44 daily p. m., arrive at Tyone, 6:00 p. m., at Altoona, 6:55, at Pittsburg at 10:45.

VIA HARRISBURG—WESTWARD.

Leave Bellefonte, 9:53 a. m., week-days, arrive at Harrisburg, 11:00 a. m., at Harrisburg, 2:35 p. m., at Philadelphia, 4:47 p. m.

Leave Bellefonte, 1:05 p. m., week-days, arrive at Harrisburg, 4:44 p. m., at Harrisburg, 6:35 p. m., at Philadelphia, 10:47 p. m.

Leave Bellefonte, 4:44 p. m., daily, arrive at Tyone, 6:00 p. m., at Harrisburg, at 10:00 p. m., Philadelphia, 4:23 a. m.

VIA LOCK HAVEN—WESTWARD.

Leave Bellefonte, 1:25 p. m., week-days, arrive at Lock Haven, 2:10 p. m., week-days, arrive at Lock Haven, 2:10 p. m., week-days, arrive at Buffalo, 7:40 p. m.

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