Jacqueline of Golden River

by Victor Rousseau

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JACQUELINE! JACQUELINE!

Paul Howlett, listening at night in the darkness of his room, felt as if approached by an intense fear. He follows the dog in a gambling house and, on coming out, is attacked by a man armed with a large amount of money. She is beautiful and to distinguish her from two assistants he takes her to dinner.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

When the tallish deputied on in front of the house I glanced hastily up and down the road. There was another cab at the east end of the square, standing with its engine on, as were approaching me or stationary. I opened the front door quickly and splitted my companion, then preceded her up the unexpected stairs to my little apartment on the top floor.

As I opened the door of my apartment the dog pushed past me. Again I had forgotten it; but it had not forgotten its mistress.

"Till tomorrow, mademoiselle," I said. "And won't you tell me your name?"

"Jacqueline," she answered. "And yours?"

"Paul," I said.

"As well as Monsieur Paul, then, and take my gratitude with you for your goodness."

I let her hand fall and listened down the stairs, and chatting, for a moment there was a wedding ring upon her finger

CHAPTER II.

Back in the Room.

The situation had become more perplexing than ever. Who was this girl? Why was she in such danger? Who was Jacqueline, and how had she got into my room? I had merely been offering aid to a young woman in distress; how she was occupying my rooms and I was hurrying along Trinity street, careless as to my destination and feeling as though the whole world was crumbling about my head because she were a wedding ring.

As I passed up the street the real cab which I had seen at the east end came rapidly toward me. It passed, and I stopped and looked after it. I was certain that it slackened speed outside the house in which Jacqueline resided; but again it went on quickly until I came to view in the distance.

Had I given the pursuers a clue by my acquaintance?

I watched for a few moments longer, but the vehicle did not return and I slackened the idea from my mind. After all, New York was a civilized city, and I could be sure of the girl's safety before the street door lock and that of my apartment door. So I refused to yield to the impulse to go back and assure myself that she was all right. I must find a hotel and get a good night's sleep.

As I went on new thoughts began to crowd upon me. Where was the girl whose life I had, perhaps, unwittingly saved? Who was she? And how much could be believed?

Had she not probably left her husband on some Canadian city and come to New York to enjoy her holiday to her own friends? Had she, perhaps, merely have advertised to Daisy's door and actually have succeeded in gaining admission?

Perhaps she was worse than I was even now imagining!

Perhaps I had been and left her—my friend, if I turned back.

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The Scene Stamped Itself Upon My Brain.

The building. I described a moment then I drew a match from my packet and struck it on the wall, to see a figure against my trousers leg.

It was a figure that I knew.

I went toward the curtains and found a spiral hanging from the curtain through my lips in a voice that I could not recognize as mine.

"Jacqueline!" I whispered, "is it you?"

"Yes, it is I," said the voice of Jacqueline. "Oh, Paul, I am so glad!"

Now I was, under the curtains, and she was in my arms. I could have been a weary dream, but I knew that it was not mental. It might have been a weary dream, but I knew that it was not the world of the rocking spectacles.

"Before," I was saying, "I had climbed the girl on the curtain, and I had found her in my arms. I had found her in my arms. I had found her in my arms.