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The Girl in the Crimson Cloak

By J. R. WILMOT

Gerry noted that the opened door was completely making the waiting form of John Ralton, and he hoped that John would not come out of his hiding-place until it was time to do so.

"That's easy," Gerry smiled. "First of all, I'm looking for a mutual friend, name of Mannisher. Secondly, my friend here is my guardian angel, Sergeant Forrother from Scotland Yard. He tells me that they're quite interested in you down on the Embankment."

A sudden flash of fear darted into the big man's eyes. "I'm standin' for no funny business this time," he growled, throatily. "I've a gun here that's thoin' to drill the pair of you. I've got a strong personal objection to people snoopin' around when I'm on a job. I'd like you to remember that."

Gerry ignored the man's pleasant-ness. "What have you done with Miss Ralton?" Gerry flung out the question with impatience.

"So you know about the lady, do you?" Gissard asked. "Start, ain't you? Well, I've an idea the lady's goin' to talk pretty soon, and when she does she's going to tell me what she's done with the Levinton Diamond and a nice little rope of pearls. I'm a reasonable man, I am. All I want is the inside dope. When I've got that, I'm as good as a lamb."

"You don't say!" muttered Gerry, between clenched teeth. "That's just too bad, Gissard. I hate to see a fellow going to so much trouble for nothing."

"What d'you mean by that?" snarled the big man, advancing a step, his hand flying to his pocket and bulging ominously. "Okay, John!" called Gerry, quietly.

Before the big man could turn, John Ralton had leapt from his hiding-place from behind the opened door and flung himself on to the fellow's shoulders.

The attack was so unexpected that Gissard was plunged off his guard. He wheeled around to meet a menace he had not even suspected. As he did so, Gerry Daynton, flinging the cords from around his body, scrambled to his feet. John Ralton's hands were gripping the man's throat, but before he could thrust himself free, Gerry Daynton's right about and caught Gissard plumb on the point of the jaw. The man gasped, and Ralton felt the man's body sag as the revolver, still clamped in his hand, clattered to the floor.

But Gerry took no notice of that. He sprang for the gun, and wheeled about just in time to see Omy Fiet standing in the doorway. "Take it easy in one glance far too much for his sense of perspective."

"Hands up!" shouted Gerry, jubilantly. "Easy there one glance at the inert figure of Bruno Gissard and obeyed Gerry's command without question. "Search him and then the gun to me," Gerry commanded. John took part in this attractive little parlor game.

Ten minutes later both men were trussed in a manner similar to what they had been a few moments before. Gerry turned to Forrother. "Sory there wasn't time to cut you adrift earlier, old man."

John Ralton was still rubbing the back of his head. "That's all right, Daynton. It was great fun watching you. But Gerry consulted his watch. It was ten o'clock. He smiled to himself. Gerry must be making a holiday of it with a vengeance.

When Gerry eventually descended the staircase he was more than surprised to see Uncle Gervaise standing in the hall. "Hello," greeted Gerry, lamely. "Anything the matter?"

"I don't know, Gerry. I thought I'd better hop across and see how you're getting along. Had a late night?"

"Very," Gerry told him, grinning. "And nearly got beaten up into the bargain. Come and sit at my table while I regale myself on rolls and coffee and I'll tell you what's been happening."

Gervaise didn't like the glint in his nephew's eyes. "All right," he said, "but I hope it's all right."

When Gerry had finished, and so far as he knew he had omitted nothing, Gervaise Levinton looked surprisingly uncomfortable. He leaned across the table before speaking. "You know, Gerry, I've suspected something of the sort for years. All the same, I can't think that Muriel knows anything about Clive's money. That's something we've got to settle with Squire, and by Jove, I'll see that the old fellow gets a square deal."

"Well, those are the facts, Uncle, and since it's a matter of family honour and all that sort of thing, it shouldn't be too difficult to get things settled amicably. Clive Mannisher's a very tolerant soul. He's obviously had a raw deal, and it's now up to the decent members of the family to make amends."

"But you haven't told me where the diamond is!" protested Gervaise. "Not that it matters, I suppose."

"Safe and sound in a safe deposit in London," Gerry told him. "So you won't be wanting to do anything about that. I suggest you send a wire to Superintendent Ash to say that your clever nephew, P. C. Ralton, has solved the mystery for him, and that there won't be any proceedings against anyone with the exception of two crooks who tried to carry him in on some information they'd received about the affair."

"I'll certainly do that," Gervaise consented readily. "An hour later Gerry introduced Uncle Gervaise to his friends at the villa. Clive Mannisher was exceedingly glad to see him, an emotion that was reciprocated. Gerry contrived to leave them together for a while, and he wandered out into the garden, where he found John and Suzanne. The girl appeared little the worse for her unpleasant experience. The brightness had returned to her eyes, and there was a smile in each of them.

"Do you think it can be arranged for Mr. Mannisher to return to London?" asked Suzanne, almost eagerly. "I'd so like to see him happen again."

"Uncle Gervaise has promised to see the Consular authorities as soon as possible," Gerry told her. "I suppose you will be returning also." John Ralton had wandered away. "Oh yes, John's due to recommence his studies next week, and I'll have to be at hand to look after him again."

"Yet it was John who looked after us last night," he reminded her. "John was splendid. If it hadn't been for John—"

A new light kindled in her eyes. "I'm glad you've said that, she told him, eagerly and sincerely. "Coming from you I can regard it as praise indeed."

"Why particularly from me?" "Because you're a policeman. I told John you were a policeman after we had left the restaurant that night when you feasted me."

"You told John that? But how on earth did you know?" Suzanne was laughing at him now. "I don't know," she said. "I just had a sort of feeling that you were. That's all."

"It must have been your guilty conscience," Gerry said, "because I'm sure I don't look like one, now do I?"

Suzanne regarded him critically. "No, I don't think you do. But hasn't all this spoiled your holiday?"

"Not a bit of it. I've rather enjoyed myself. I'd no idea when I went to Levinton Grange to see my uncle and aunt that I'd be involved in anything like this. But I'm glad, very glad, you see, in a way, it's meant helping you, and I think I've always wanted to do that."

"Have Mr. Mannisher," Suzanne said, suddenly, turning away from him to where the old man was coming towards them down the garden. "Everybody's fixed, Gerry, my boy," smiled Uncle Clive. "Gervaise is going to see the authorities right away. I've just reminded him that my passport should be with my things at Zamoroff's place."

"Well," sighed Gerry, "I hate to tear myself away but it'd better be popping along to see what my friend Sergeant Forrother is going to do about two people we left in the chateau last night."

"Gerry held out his hand to the girl. "Thanks a lot," he smiled. "You've been a brick. I'm glad those scoundrels got nothing out of you."

"You must come and have tea with us one day, Mr. Daynton," she said, quietly. "I'll be waiting for the invitation," said Gerry, releasing her hand.

"YOU MUST RETURN!"

Three months later. Christmas time. Two days before Christmas Day.

Levinton Grange had been suitably decorated for the occasion. Aunt Muriel and Gervaise had insisted that Gerry come down and spend Christmas with them. They were inviting a few friends.

There would be Clive, of course. Muriel had invited him to stay on at the Grange for as long as ever he liked. He'd forgiven Squire, too, although Muriel considered that Clive had been particularly generous about it. Anyhow, Squire had promised faithfully to do the right thing by his younger brother. He was very penitent.

Gerry was standing on the front porch when Gervaise drove up in his car. He was not alone. Gerry's eyes goggled. Suzanne and John were in the back. The girl waved a cheery hand as she caught sight of Gerry standing there. He hadn't expected this.

"Hello," he said, awkwardly. "It's ages since I came to tea, how's everything?"

The words sounded trite in Gerry's ears and he was conscious of his embarrassment. "Gerry held out his hand to the girl. He thought he understood."

Muriel Levinton came out just then, and Gervaise had the job of effecting the necessary introductions. Aunt Muriel was charming, and when Clive Mannisher came he was almost beside himself with delight.

That night Suzanne and Gerry managed to find themselves together for the first time since the girl's arrival.

It was after dinner. Suzanne was curled up on a divan in the lounge. "How's the holiday progressing?" she asked, inconsequently.

"It might be better," Gerry confessed from his position also on the divan. "How so?"

"Just a bit lonely, that's all."

"When do you return?"

"March."

"Looking forward to it?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Oh, hang it!" burst out Gerry. "What's the use of all this verbal sparring. You know why."

Suzanne straightened herself and gazed at him with large liquid eyes. "I'm sure I don't know."

"The girl never completed what she was about to say, because Gerry had suddenly crushed her violently to him and pressed his lips on her own. When he released her very gently, he said: "You know now, don't you? I'd just hate to have to go back alone—if ever I do go back."

A frightened look leapt into the girl's eyes. "But, of course, you must go back. It's your work."

"I don't know much about that."

"But you must—you must!" Suzanne insisted. "I don't like people who do nothing. I like people to have a definite purpose in life. That's why I—like you."

"Good for you, Suzanne! Good for you!"

It was Clive Mannisher's voice. They had not noticed the old man come into the lounge, and both of them gazed at him embarrassed.

Gerry Daynton was smiling as he indicated an arm around the girl's waist. "Come along!" he laughed. "Let's go and tell John he'll have to find a new housekeeper."

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Cardigan Head And Vicinity

Mr. Joseph Nicholson, Cardigan Head, spent the weekend in the city, visiting his sister, Mrs. Les Gillespie. Mr. Joseph McAulay (Jr.) P. E. I. telephone employee is spending a short time at his home in Cardigan Head.

Some car owners in this vicinity have had their cars running during the past week but owing to the heavy snowfall over the weekend the roads are now unfit for traveling and cars are once again put up.

Mrs. Charles Curran returned to her home in Baldwin's Road Thursday. She has been staying with her sister in the city since her illness in the city hospital. Her many friends are glad to have her back among them once more.

Mr. John Cairns, Baldwin's Road spent a few days, visiting friends and relatives in the city.

Mrs. Angus McLeod, Lorne Valley, was a visitor to the City during the past week.

Mr. John Corcoran, Baldwin's Road, was among the delegates who attended the Convention at Cardigan on Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Curran, Stanhope, were visitors to Cardigan during the past week.

Many friends are sorry to learn that Miss Mary U. Corcoran, Baldwin's Road, is confined to her home on account of illness all hope to see her about soon.

Mr. Nell Nicholson, Cardigan Head, was a recent visitor to the City.

Many fox ranches in this vicinity have already reported some very fine litters of fox pups.

Mr. Angus McLeod, student at P. W. C. who has been at his home in Lorne Valley for the past week on account of illness returned to the City on Monday to resume his studies. Mr. Charles Curran, Baldwin's Road, was a visitor to the City during the past week.



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Commencing on this date, until further notice, all paved and gravel highways in this Province are closed for motor vehicle traffic, except in such cases where the total weight of vehicle and load does not exceed 6,000 pounds.

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Dated the 5th day of April, A. D. 1938. By order, P. S. FIELDING Clerk of the Executive Council

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