

of that they nominated him to join with the others in the crime; he was to prove his constancy, they said. But instead, he gave a warning, so that the assassins were obliged to change their plans. Have you read of it in the journals? You will see that they killed the poor King and the prince, in the street, near the public offices. At first it was to be on the quay, when they landed; but of that my brother gave secret warning, and on the quay they were very carefully guarded. Why did they not guard them as carefully for the rest of the journey? I cannot say; but the thing happened, as now you know, and my brother and I fled to England to escape the vengeance of the republican committee, who knew of the warning he had sent, and who were angry that the Queen and the other prince had not been killed, too. You may read the journals, but you do not know what terrible things are going on in Lisbon, even now."

"But surely you are safe here!"
 "On the contrary, our enemies followed us by a ship that left the day after our own. We have changed our lodgings twice; but to-day I have been followed by two men—men that I have seen in Lisbon. I was terrified, and could not guess what to do. I came into the gardens here from the street, and walked about in the narrow courtyards, but they still followed. I think I must have escaped them for a moment when I turned into this court; but I found that there was no way out, so I ran up these stairs; and when I heard you coming up, I feared they must have seen me enter, and were still pursuing me. I did not suppose it to be a friend, such a kind friend. If you will not be angry that I call you my friend?"

"To this, Reginald Drinkwater, flushing with delight and stammering with confusion, made a wild and random answer.
 "It is delightful to hear you say it," he said, continuing, "and I wish I could do more—much more—anything—to make you say it again. Surely I can help you in some other way—some more important way?"

She smiled sadly and shook her head.
 "That is very noble of you," she said; "but I think there is nothing—nothing at least that might not be dangerous, which I should have no right to ask of you."

"But tell me what it is," protested Reginald vehemently, "and I will do it. Surely my knowledge of this country may be of use to strangers like you and your brother?"

"I have been in England before," she said, "though, of course, you must understand your own country better than I. And perhaps—when I have told my brother of your kindness—perhaps he may know of some way in which you might help us if you will let me remind you of your offer."

"If you will only promise that, whatever it is you will ask me, you will make me happy," declaimed Reginald, with enthusiasm. "Will you promise it?"

"Senor," she began, looking up at his face—"but you have not told me your name."

Reginald repeated it, with an odd feeling that it had become a duller and less imposing name since he had last seen it, pointed on his "book," that very afternoon.

"Mr. Reginald Drinkwater," she said—and at that name became beautiful on her lips—"I will promise." She extended her hand. "I am Lucia da Silva."

The light in the courtyard was grown dull and dusk in the short February afternoon.

"Perhaps it will be safe to go now," she said, rising and bending to peer once more from the window. "I—" she added, "if you will do one little thing for me! Will you go first and see if they are watching. There are two men, one rather tall, though not very, and one short; both dark men; they must not see me go!"

Reginald repeated that he was ready to do anything, but suggested, in the meantime, tea from his gas-stove. His visitor, however, begged with a very pretty anxiety to be excused. She must lose no more time, she said, for already her brother would be alarmed at her long absence. And so Reginald left her and descended the staircase to scout from the front door.

As he went he was aware of someone hurrying down before him on the lower flights; and when he emerged from the door he saw a man walking sharply near the corner of the court. The man was alone, however, and though certainly not short, nor small, but stoutly built, was scarcely of a stature that anyone would

call tall, but of about middle height. Reginald followed to the corner, and there watched while the stranger disappeared round the next, and his footsteps died away toward Middle Temple Lane. This would seem to have been merely a visitor leaving some of the lower rooms, and whatever he was, he was gone; so Reginald returned, looking out sharply as he went. Nowhere was there a pair of lurking men—nowhere, indeed, a pair of men at all. A clerk or two hurrying home early, a tradesman's boy with a basket and a tuneless whistle, an old messenger with his badge, and nobody else; nobody hiding in doorways, nobody lounging. Clearly the chase must have been abandoned. So he returned with his report, and found the beautiful fugitive awaiting him in the doorway. Could she go? Was the way quite clear?

Reginald Drinkwater took coat, gloves, and stick, and the two went out together. From her description it seemed clear that she had entered the temple by the Middle Temple Lane gate; so now Reginald made it a point of strategy to leave by way of Whitefriars, where he knew a cab could be found in a quiet street.

The cab was found, and then Reginald met a certain disappointment. For Lucia would not even permit him to accompany her for even part of the way.

and brooms and a constant perambulation of her unclean self, which was in theory presumed to result in an accession of cleanliness to the premises. He returned perhaps a trifle later than usual, but found Mrs. Churcher still in possession—waiting, in fact, for him at the door.

"There's bin a young lady 'ere to see yer, sir," she announced in that voice of greasy huskiness by which the Temple laundress is distinguished from the rest of her sex. "A foring young lady, as give the name of Silver or de Silver. She wouldn't wait, but she said p'raps she'd call ag'in, sir."

"Did she say anything else?"
 "No, sir; she didn't leave no other message."

Reginald was angry with himself for his delay in Fleet-street and questioned further. The young lady had been gone, now, some twenty minutes or half an hour. No, she hadn't said anything in particular, beyond asking for him, and bringing in with her Mrs. Churcher's bunch of keys, which she had supposed to be Mr. Drinkwater's, left in the outer door by accident.

Reginald had his lunch sent in, and kept within doors for the rest of the day; but he saw nothing of Lucia da Silva. After breakfast next morning he perceived with uncommon severity that the weather was damp and foggy, and afforded some sort of excuse for hanging about in his rooms, or at farthest on

"Of course—I have promised. I will do anything. What is the plan?"

"I will say what my brother thinks. We have been going out, my brother and I, every evening, in a cab, to dinner at a restaurant. Will you come with me to-night, instead of my brother?"

Could there be a pleasanter deed of heroism? Reginald heard the proposal with perhaps as much relief as surprise, for this was an act of devotion that he was quite ready to perform every day of his life. "It will give me the greatest pleasure," he said. "Where shall I come for you?"

"This is where we are staying," she replied, and handed him a card. It was that of a house—obviously a boarding-house—in a quiet square near the New River Head; a place that Reginald remembered to have seen in his wanderings in London, and to have noticed because of its contrast of character with the neighbouring streets.

"You must not come to the front door," she resumed, "as you will understand when I explain. There is a foot-path behind the houses, with stables. Each house has a door in the garden wall, and you must come to the fourth, where I shall be waiting before six o'clock; let us say half-past five."

"That will be early for dinner, won't it?"

"Oh, we need not go to dinner at once. Often my brother and I go out early. The house is on the north side of the square, remember. Will you come? I must not wait here—my brother is expecting me. You will come?"

Nothing should stop him, Reginald resolved, that left him with legs to stand on, and he said so, in more elegant terms. And even as he was gathering his wits to frame certain inquiries that should not seem to pry, she was gone, with a press of the hand and a glance from her black eyes that kept him vastly elated for ten minutes; at the end of which period it dawned on him, as it might have done before, that it must be intended that he should assume the character of Lucia's brother for the evening, together with the liabilities of that relationship, including any odd bullet that his enemies might consider a suitable token of their sentiments. With that his elation sensibly diminished, and it occurred to him that it was much pleasanter to listen to Lucia's praises of his magnanimity than to do anything to deserve them.

Still, it was an adventure, and he was in for it beyond withdrawal; moreover, the danger somewhat did not affect him as very immediate. The design appeared fairly clear. He was to enter the house from the back unserved, and to leave it from the front, so as to draw off the attention of the watchers. Then, while the house was free from their observation, Lucia da Silva would make his escape and find some other retreat. "You must not come to the front door," Lucia had said, "as you will understand when I explain." But she had explained nothing as yet and no doubt meant to reserve explanations till his arrival; though the plan seemed clear enough.

On the whole, he decided that he must dress for dinner. He could not tell whether or no Lucia da Silva had brought a dress suit with him, that being one of the things he had meant to ask; but it could make little difference, either way. So dress he did.

The fog thickened during the day, and it was dark some time before the hour fixed. Reginald left his cab a street or two away, and walked the remaining distance. The square was not difficult to find, nor the footway behind the garden wall; and as he reached the fourth of the doors, it opened while his hand was raised to tap, and he could see Lucia's dim figure within.

"Hush!" she said. "Do not speak now. It is most noble of you."

She took his arm, led him in, and quietly fastened the door. The garden was a small enough space, but they traversed it slowly and noiselessly; and Reginald began to feel that this was something more like an adventure than any previous experience of his life. They climbed a short flight of stone steps, and entered the house by a door which stood ajar; and then she spoke again.

"There is a cab waiting," she said. "Will you turn up your coat collar? If you will do that, and pull your hat a little forward, you will look much like my brother."

He did as he was bid, and they emerged into the hall, lighted by a dim gas-jet. He now could see that Lucia was already prepared with hat and cloak. She opened the front door.



"Hush," she said. "Do not speak now. It is most noble of you."

"You are most kind, but it is better—much better that I go alone," was all she would say; but there was that in her manner which made it final.

Reginald accepted his defeat.
 "Where shall I tell the man to drive?" he asked.

For a moment she hesitated, with an odd look of doubt, which Reginald found himself resenting. Then she said:

"Perhaps I shall not drive all the way; it may be better not. Tell him to go first up Farrington road."
 "And you will not forget your promise?"

"To ask you for help? No—I shall not forget it. Perhaps I shall come quite soon—when I have talked with my brother."

With that the cab was gone, and Reginald Drinkwater tried hard to realise as he went home across King's Bench Walk in the dark the visible fact that here, indeed, was romance and adventure, after all, in workaday London, and himself in the midst of it.

On the next morning after the visit of the wonderful Portuguese, Reginald, his breakfast finished, took his daily morning stroll in Fleet-street. He did this partly out of respect for Fleet-street, and a feeling that he was in some vague way growing literary in its precincts, but chiefly because for an hour after breakfast Mrs. Churcher, the laundress, made his rooms unendurable with pails

the stairs and lobby, while Mrs. Churcher performed her daily rites. But he waited and watched in vain till Mrs. Churcher had been gone an hour, and more.

Then at last there was a timid tap at his door, which he opened instantly, to see Lucia before him.

"I have come," she said, "only because I have made you a promise. Do you remember the promise?"

"Indeed, I do—that you would tell me if I could be in any way of service to you and your brother. Tell me now, what I can do."

"I think, perhaps, you might not like it."

"If it will serve you—and your brother—I shall delight in it. I will do anything. What is it?"

"They have discovered our lodgings—the men."

"The men who were watching you?"
 "Yes. How, I do not know. Perhaps they followed the cab—perhaps some other way; who can tell? They have found us out again, and we must go; but they are watching us, and it is difficult."

"Where will you go?"

"That is for my brother to settle; but I think he has plans if—if we have a friend—a devoted, noble friend who will help us. Will you be the noble friend?"